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DUBNOW-INSTITUT

# Jahrbuch • Yearbook

XVIII 2019

A large, elegant white cursive signature, likely reading 'Dubnow', is centered on the dark blue background. The signature is fluid and stylized, with long, sweeping lines.

JAHRBUCH DES DUBNOW-INSTITUTS (JBDI)  
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## Editorial

Am 7. März 2019 referierte der Doyen der österreichischen Geschichtswissenschaften *Gerald Stourzh* (Wien) auf Einladung des Leibniz-Instituts für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur – Simon Dubnow und der Leipziger Juristischen Gesellschaft im Bundesverwaltungsgericht Leipzig über ein am selben Ort im Juni 1936 vom Reichsgericht gesprochenes einschneidendes Urteil. Es bedeutete die Eliminierung des liberal-demokratischen Prinzips der Rechtsgleichheit und kam damit einer Begründung der juristischen Diskriminierung von Juden im Nationalsozialismus gleich. Die achtzehnte Ausgabe des *Jahrbuchs des Dubnow-Instituts/Dubnow Institute Yearbook* eröffnet mit einer Schriftfassung dieses Vortrags. Im *Allgemeinen Teil* folgt hierauf *Arno Dusini* (Wien), der sich in einer vertiefenden Analyse dem Verhältnis der Sprachkritik Karl Kraus' zur Geschichte widmet, indem er drei verschiedene Zeitabschnitte von dessen Werk in den Blick nimmt und insbesondere den Begriff der Phrase und dessen Beziehung zur Realität beleuchtet. Verbindungen zur drängendsten politischen Aktualität macht der Beitrag von *Frank Golczewski* (Hamburg) sichtbar, der die komplexen historischen Beziehungen zwischen Juden und Ukrainern im 20. Jahrhundert vor dem Hintergrund der ukrainischen Nationsbildung untersucht. Ausgehend von der Analyse der Trauerrede, die der Sprachwissenschaftler und Leiter des Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut Max Weinreich für die jüdisch-polnische Ethnografin Regina Lilientalowa verfasst hat, erläutert *Sarah Ellen Zarrow* (Bellingham, Wash.) die Bedeutung des Genderaspekts sowie der unterschiedlichen geografischen und sprachlichen Herkunft (Jiddisch vs. Polnisch) für eine treffendere Analyse des Beitrags jüdischer Intellektueller in den frühen Jahren der Zweiten Polnischen Republik. *Yael Levi* (Jerusalem) ediert und kommentiert einen bisher unveröffentlichten Brief des jiddischen Schriftstellers Scholem Alejchem aus dem Jahr 1907, als dieser sich erstmals in den Vereinigten Staaten aufhielt. Der Brief berichtet aus erster Hand über die Begeisterung des Verfassers angesichts einer Begegnung mit kurz zuvor aus Russland eingewanderten jüdischen Kindern während eines Besuchs bei der Educational Alliance, einer deutsch-jüdischen philanthropischen Institution in New York. *Gregor Feindt* (Mainz) verbindet Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte und legt eine interessante mikrohistorische Studie vor, die sich auf die Schicksale jüdischer Arbeiter in der tschechoslowakischen Schuhfabrik Bat'a in den Jahren vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg fokussiert. Er zeigt, dass die Auswanderung vieler von ihnen nicht so sehr auf eine humanitäre Initiative als vielmehr auf Entscheidungen der Unternehmensleitung zurückzuführen ist. Nicht zuletzt spiegelt sich hierin die Firmenphilosophie, die darauf ab-

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zielte, ein neues Bild des Arbeitnehmers zu schaffen, in dem Mobilität eine Schlüsselrolle spielte. Der in Galizien geborene Journalist und Schriftsteller Rabbi Binyamin (Yehoshua Radler-Feldman) ist in der Forschung über das politische und kulturelle Leben im britischen Mandatsgebiet Palästina noch wenig bekannt. *Avi-ram Tzoref* (Jerusalem) gibt hier einen Einblick in die Bedeutung dieser in vielerlei Hinsicht atypischen Figur – streng orthodox, Sozialist, uneingeschränkter Unterstützer der jüdischen Einwanderung nach Eretz Israel und gleichzeitig absolut überzeugt von der Notwendigkeit einer friedlichen und gleichberechtigten Koexistenz von Arabern und Juden in Palästina – und stellt seine frühzeitige Kritik an der Kolonialpolitik des Zionismus in den Jahren der zweiten Alija vor.

Auch dieser Band enthält zwei Schwerpunkte. Der erste, von *Kata Bohus* (Tromsø) und *Elisabeth Gallas* (Leipzig) herausgegebene entstand im Zuge der Vorbereitung der 2021 im Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt eröffneten Ausstellung *Unser Mut: Juden in Europa 1945–48/Our Courage: Jews in Europe 1945–48* und geht auf eine Kooperationskonferenz des Museums und des Dubnow-Instituts zurück. Er ist den jüdischen Erfahrungen in Europa in den Jahren unmittelbar nach dem Holocaust gewidmet. Die Beiträge befassen sich mit Sozial- und Alltagsgeschichte – beispielsweise dem Genderaspekt –, politischer Entscheidungsfindung und Diplomatie. Sie bilden die Vielfalt der unterschiedlichen, oft mehrdeutigen und vagen Antworten auf die Bedürfnisse und Probleme ab, die mit dem Versuch verbunden waren, das jüdische Leben in verschiedenen Ländern Europas (Polen, Ungarn, Bundesrepublik Deutschland) nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg sowohl als Gemeinschaft als auch individuell wieder aufzubauen. Ausgangspunkt des zweiten Schwerpunktes, herausgegeben von *Lukas Böckmann* und *Jan Gerber* (beide Leipzig), war ein Forschungskolloquium im Dubnow-Institut im Sommer 2018 mit Einzelvorträgen und einem in Kooperation mit der Freien Universität Berlin organisierten Gespräch mit Bernardo Kucinski (São Paulo) über jüdische Geschichtserfahrung in Brasilien. Er bietet einen einführenden Überblick über Juden im Lateinamerika des 20. Jahrhunderts und versammelt Aufsätze aus unterschiedlichen Fachgebieten wie der Literatur-, Politik- und Sozialgeschichte bis hin zur Rezeption der Psychoanalyse. Obgleich der Fokus des Schwerpunktes auf Argentinien liegt, wo der Beitrag der jüdischen Gemeinde nicht nur zahlenmäßig, sondern auch historisch besonders beachtlich war, sind auch andere Länder präsent, etwa Chile in einem Artikel zur Geschichte der komplizierten Beziehungen zwischen Juden und der Militärdiktatur oder Brasilien in einer Spurensuche nach der jüdischen Präsenz im Œuvre der jüdisch-brasilianischen Schriftstellerin ukrainischer Herkunft Clarice Lispector.

Die Rubriken setzen mit dem von *Annette Weinke* (München/Jena) verfassten *Gelehrtenporträt* über John (Hans Hermann) Herz ein, das geradezu

paradigmatisch zeigt, welch großes Potenzial in der Erforschung von Rolle, Motivationen und Auswirkungen jüdischer Partizipation in Recht und internationalen Beziehungen steckt. *Rafi Tsirkin-Sadan* (Ra'anana) befasst sich in den *Dubnowiana* mit einem weniger bekannten Aspekt im Werk Simon Dubnows: seinem literaturkritischen Wirken in russischer Sprache. Dabei stellt er insbesondere dessen Beziehungen zu den wichtigsten russischen literaturtheoretischen Strömungen seiner Zeit heraus. Im Abschnitt *Aus der Forschung* rekonstruiert *Zarin Aschrafi* (Leipzig) den (biografie)historischen Entstehungskontext der Zeitschrift *Babylon*, deren erste Ausgabe 1986 in Frankfurt am Main erschien und hinter deren Gründung eine Gruppe nachgeborener jüdischer Intellektueller mit ihren Versuchen steht, eine Integrationsperspektive im Deutschland nach dem Holocaust zu finden. In den letzten zehn Jahren ist eine Vielzahl von Studien über Gershom Scholem erschienen, die von Biografien (über ihn selbst oder seine ganze Familie) bis hin zu Werken reichen, die versuchen, seine historiografische Arbeit über die Geschichte der jüdischen Mystik in die verschiedenen Kontexte – den deutschen, israelischen und sogar den amerikanischen – einzuordnen, in denen er sich bewegte. *Enrico Lucca* (Leipzig) bespricht im *Literaturbericht* die wichtigsten dieser neueren Veröffentlichungen und analysiert Umfang und Ausrichtung dieses neuen Forschungsgebiets.

Abschließend möchte die Herausgeberin dieses Bandes allen Beteiligten, die an seiner unter erschwerten Bedingungen realisierten Veröffentlichung mitgewirkt haben, herzlich danken, allen voran den Autorinnen und Autoren der Beiträge wie auch den Herausgeberinnen und Herausgebern der beiden Schwerpunkte. Ein besonderer Dank geht ferner an Petra Klara Gamke-Breitschopf, Leiterin der wissenschaftlichen Redaktion, für die Koordination der gesamten Arbeit an diesem Band. In der Verantwortung von Enrico Lucca lag das Peer-Review-Verfahren, dank dessen auch diese Ausgabe als Refereed Journal erscheinen kann. Margarita Lerman hat federführend an der Textredaktion mitgewirkt. Das Gesamtlektorat lag ein weiteres Mal in den Händen von André Zimmermann, während Tim Corbett und Jana Duman wiederum das englischsprachige Lektorat und die Übersetzungen ins Englische besorgt haben. Die Übersetzung eines Artikels aus dem Hebräischen ins Deutsche hat Sebastian Schirrmeister angefertigt. Es ist eine besondere Freude, zum Schluss ankündigen zu können, dass unser Jahrbuch ab diesem Band als gedrucktes Buch und zeitgleich als Open-Access-Ausgabe erscheint, was bedeutet, dass alle Artikel ab Erscheinungsdatum kostenfrei online zugänglich sind.

Yfaat Weiss

Leipzig/Jerusalem, Herbst 2022



# Allgemeiner Teil





Gerald Stourzh

»Denn es ist nicht alles gleich, was Menschenantlitz trägt.« – Die NS-Doktrin der Ungleichheit der Menschen im Lichte eines Reichsgerichtsprozesses aus dem Jahr 1936

Am 27. Juni 1936 wurde in diesem Hause das Urteil des 1. Zivil-Senats des Reichsgerichts in der Sache Thevag (Theater- und Verlags-AG Zürich) gegen UFA (Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft, Berlin) verkündet.<sup>1</sup> Verhandelt wurde eine Klage der UFA gegen die Thevag auf Rückzahlung von 26 000 Reichsmark. Diese Summe hatte die UFA an die Thevag als Vorschusszahlung für den Kauf der Rechte an einem Filmmanuskript und für die Regietätigkeit des Drehbuchautors und Regisseurs Erik Charell gezahlt. In letzter Instanz, also in der Revisionsklage der Thevag gegen die UFA vor dem Reichsgericht, gewann die UFA; die Thevag musste die 26 000 Reichsmark zurückzahlen. Erik Charell war Jude.

Ich werde die NS-Doktrin von der Ungleichheit der Menschen vor allem anhand dieses Urteils behandeln. Bereits in älteren Arbeiten habe ich dieses Urteil mehrfach kommentiert und greife daher heute auf einige meiner früheren Ausführungen zurück.<sup>2</sup> Ich werde aber auch erstmals Ergebnisse der Untersuchung von Archivalien des Bundesarchivs Berlin präsentieren und erstmals den Verfasser der höchst umstrittenen Urteilsbegründung nennen können. Auch eine Reihe von Irrtümern, die im Umlauf sind, werde ich korrigieren müssen.

- 1 Der vorliegende Text ist die Druckfassung zu einem Vortrag, den sein Verfasser auf Einladung des Leibniz-Instituts für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur – Simon Dubnow und der Leipziger Juristischen Gesellschaft am 7. März 2019 im Bundesverwaltungsgericht Leipzig, dem ehemaligen Reichsgerichtsgebäude, gehalten hat.
- 2 Zuletzt: Gerald Stourzh, Die moderne Isonomie. Menschenrechtsschutz und demokratische Teilhabe als Gleichberechtigungsordnung. Ein Essay, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2015, 91 f. Ausführlicher, aber seither revidiert: ders., Menschenrechte und Genozid, in: ders., Spuren einer intellektuellen Reise. Drei Essays, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2009, 103–155, hier 134–150 (nach dem Text der Wiener Abschlussvorlesung des Verfassers aus dem Jahr 1997).

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## »Wesen mit Menschenantlitz«: Eine kurze Begriffsgeschichte

Zunächst möchte ich lediglich zwei Sätze aus der Urteilsbegründung zitieren:

»Die frühere (>liberale<) Vorstellung vom Rechtsinhalte der Persönlichkeit machte unter den *Wesen mit Menschenantlitz* keine grundsätzlichen Wertunterschiede nach der Gleichheit oder Verschiedenheit des Blutes; sie lehnte deshalb eine rechtliche Gliederung und Abstufung der Menschen nach Rassegesichtspunkten ab. Der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung dagegen entspricht es, im Deutschen Reiche nur Deutschstämmige (und gesetzlich ihnen Gleichgestellte) als rechtlich vollgültig zu behandeln.«<sup>3</sup>

Über den Verfasser dieser Worte, den bisher als Referenten nicht bekannten Reichsgerichtsrat Dr. Georg Müller, werde ich später ausführlicher berichten. Ich möchte zunächst bei dem schönen, wenn auch etwas pathetischen Wort von den »Wesen mit Menschenantlitz« verweilen. Warum sprach das Gericht nicht einfach von »Menschen« oder »der menschlichen Person«? Warum so poetisch vom »Menschenantlitz«?

In der politischen und öffentlich-rechtlichen Publizistik vor allem der Zwanziger- und frühen Dreißigerjahre des 20. Jahrhunderts kommt das »Wesen mit Menschenantlitz«, zumal in der Form »die Gleichheit alles dessen, was Menschenantlitz trägt«, sehr häufig vor. So häufig, dass offenbar niemand mehr den Urheber dieser Formulierung nannte, viele ihn auch gar nicht mehr kannten. Ich will die Geschichte meiner längeren Suche nach dem Ursprung der Rede vom Menschenantlitz hier möglichst kurz zusammenfassen.<sup>4</sup>

Die Geschichte beginnt bei Johann Gottlieb Fichte, heute besser als glühender Vorkämpfer der deutschen Einheit denn als Republikaner und Verfechter der Gleichheit aller Menschen bekannt. In Fichtes Schriften aus der Revolutionszeit findet sich der Ausdruck »Menschliches Antlitz« oder »Menschenantlitz« als Symbol für die allgemeinen Menschenrechte. 1793 schrieb er über die Rechte neugeborener Kinder: »Wenn einer, der mensch-

3 Die Akten des Rechtsfalles Thevag gegen Universum-Film mit Urteil des 1. Zivilsenats des Reichsgerichts vom 27. Juni 1936 sind unter der folgenden Signatur archiviert: Bundesarchiv (nachfolgend BArch) Berlin-Lichterfelde, Bestandsnummer R 3002, Archivnummer (= Nr. des Aktenbandes) 102300, Akte Nr. I 297/1935 (häufig zit. I 297/35). In der Folge zitiert unter der Signatur mit Hinweis auf einzelne Archivstücke, am wichtigsten der maschinschriftliche Text des Urteils, bestehend aus Urteil, Tatbestand und Urteilsbegründung, hier Urteilsbegründung (Hervorhebung des Verfassers).

4 Ausführlicher hierzu Gerald Stourzh, »Die Gleichheit alles dessen, was Menschenantlitz trägt«, in: Hedwig Kopetz/Josef Marko/Klaus Poier (Hgg.), *Soziokultureller Wandel im Verfassungsstaat. Phänomene politischer Transformation. Festschrift für Wolfgang Mantl zum 65. Geburtstag*, 2 Bde., Wien/Köln/Graz 2004, hier Bd. 1, 183–196, wiederveröffentlicht in: Gerald Stourzh, *Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte. Ausgewählte Studien 1990–2010*, Wien/Köln/Graz 2011, 269–282.

lich Antlitz trägt, unfähig ist, seine Menschenrechte zu behaupten, so hat die ganze Menschheit Recht und Pflicht, sie statt seiner auszuüben«. <sup>5</sup> 1794 hielt Fichte seine Zürcher Abschlussvorlesung *Über die Würde des Menschen*. Wichtig war ihm die Gemeinsamkeit aller Menschen – ob Sklaven, Wilde oder Verbrecher –, die Würde eines jeden, der zu sagen vermöchte: »Ich bin – Wo Du auch wohnst, du, der du nur Menschenantlitz trägst [...]«. <sup>6</sup> Die Bedeutung des zukünftigen Deutschlands als »Reich des Rechts« war verbunden mit dem Appell an Freiheit und Gleichheit, die Grundlagen dieses Reiches. Ich zitiere eine berühmt gewordene Stelle etwas abgekürzt: »[E]in wahrhaftes Reich des Rechts, [...] für Freiheit, gegründet auf Gleichheit alles dessen, was Menschengesicht trägt.«

Hier also Menschengesicht, nicht Antlitz. Diese Worte finden sich in Fichtes nachgelassener *Staatslehre* von 1813, eine Stelle, die Fichte selbst noch im gleichen Jahr wörtlich in ein kürzeres, ebenfalls nachgelassenes Dokument, das sogenannte politische Fragment, übernommen hatte. <sup>7</sup>

Bekanntheit und Verbreitung dieser Worte erfolgten in zwei verschiedenen Überlieferungssträngen. In erster Linie ist Ferdinand Lassalle zu nennen, ein begeisterter Fichte-Verehrer, der die bewussten Worte in zwei Texten über Fichte zitierte. <sup>8</sup> Ein zweiter Traditionsstrang, mehr in Richtung Bildungsbürgertum gehend, war Friedrich Meineckes sehr erfolgreiches Buch *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* von 1908; es folgten fünf Auflagen bis 1922. Im Fichte-Kapitel durfte das berühmte Zitat, richtig zitiert, nicht fehlen. <sup>9</sup> Gleichwohl hat sich im Übergang vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert durch häufige Fehlzitierungen das Wort »Menschenantlitz« durchgesetzt.

- 5 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urtheile des Publicums über die französische Revolution. Erster Theil, in: Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 42 Bde., Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1964–2012, hier Bd. 1.1: Werke 1791–1794, hg. von Hans Jacob und Reinhard Lauth, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1964, 193–296, hier 285.
- 6 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Über die Würde des Menschen. Beym Schlusse seiner philosophischen Vorlesungen gesprochen von J. G. Fichte, in: ders., Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, hier Bd. 1.2: Werke 1793–1795, hg. von Hans Jacob und Reinhard Lauth, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1965, 79–89, hier 89.
- 7 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Die Staatslehre, oder über das Verhältnis des Urstaates zum Vernunftreiche, in: Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämtliche Werke, hg. von Immanuel Hermann Fichte, 8 Bde., Berlin 1845/1846, hier Bd. 4, Berlin 1845, 369–600, hier 423. Wörtlich übernommen in: Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Aus dem Entwurfe zu einer politischen Schrift im Frühlinge 1813, in: Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämtliche Werke, Bd. 7, 546–573, hier 573.
- 8 Ferdinand Lassalle, Fichtes politisches Vermächtnis und die neueste Gegenwart (1860), in: Gesamtwerke. Ferdinand Lassalle, hg. von E. Schirmer, Bd. 10, Leipzig o. J. [1909], 327–368, hier 367, sowie ders., Die Philosophie Fichtes und die Bedeutung des deutschen Volksgeistes (1862), in: ebd., 279–325, hier 316.
- 9 Friedrich Meinecke, Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat, München 1908, 126.

1918 bot sich Fichtes Persönlichkeit, republikanisch und deutschgesinnt, geradezu an, zu einem »Heiligen« der Weimarer Republik stilisiert zu werden; mehrere Publikationen widmeten sich ihm, ich nenne hier nur die Dissertation des später in der Bonner Republik eine bedeutende Rolle spielenden Staatsrechtlers Gerhard Leibholz. 1922 erschien die Dissertation des erst Einundzwanzigjährigen – das war damals möglich! – mit dem Titel *Fichte und der demokratische Gedanke*.<sup>10</sup> Leibholz bezeichnete ihn darin als Staatsphilosophen der in der Republik zu verkörpernden Ideen. Das Fichte-Zitat fand Eingang in wichtige Werke der damaligen Staatslehre, kritisch beurteilt – wie nicht anders zu erwarten – in Carl Schmitts Verfassungslehre von 1928,<sup>11</sup> positiv gewertet etwa von Hermann Heller.<sup>12</sup> Zusammenfassend: Das Wort vom Menschenantlitz hatte in der Weimarer Zeit etwa jene symbolhafte Bedeutung, die seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg dem Begriff »Menschenrechte« zukommt. Daher wurde es relativ bald zum Angriffsziel der Nationalsozialisten. Ein Wiener Nationalsozialist namens Robert Körber polemisierte schon 1928 gegen »die internationalen liberalen Staatsgrundgesetze, von denen das ›heiligste‹ heißt: Gleichberechtigung alles dessen, was Menschenantlitz trägt«.<sup>13</sup>

Ein Generalangriff der Nazis auf das geflügelte Wort erfolgte im November 1935 in einer von der SS herausgegebenen Broschüre mit dem Titel *Der Untermensch*. Als Anführer der Untermenschen wurde »der ewige Jude« bezeichnet, eingeleitet wurde die Schrift auch mit Worten Heinrich Himmlers:

»Solange es Menschen auf der Erde gibt, wird der Kampf zwischen Menschen und Untermenschen geschichtliche Regel sein, gehört dieser vom Juden geführte Kampf gegen die Völker, soweit wir zurückblicken können, zum natürlichen Ablauf des Lebens auf unserem Planeten. Man kann beruhigt zu der Überzeugung kommen, dass dieses Ringen auf Leben und Tod wohl genau so Naturgesetz ist wie der Kampf des Pestbazillus gegen den gesunden Körper.«

Zu beachten ist, wie im folgenden Auszug *ex negativo* auf das Menschenantlitz Bezug genommen wird, bevor das Verdammungsurteil gegen den Fichtesatz ausgesprochen wird:

»Der Untermensch – jene biologisch scheinbar völlig gleichgearbeitete Naturschöpfung mit Händen, Füßen und einer Art von Gehirn, mit Augen und Mund, ist doch eine ganz andere, eine furchtbare Kreatur, ist nur ein Wurf zum Menschen hin, *mit menschenähn-*

10 Gerhard Leibholz, *Fichte und der demokratische Gedanke*. Ein Beitrag zur Staatslehre, Freiburg i. Br. 1922.

11 Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre*, München 1928, 226.

12 Hermann Heller, *Staatslehre* (1934), hg. von Gerhart Niemeyer, Leiden 1970, 219.

13 Robert Körber, *Eine deutsche Antwort dem preussischen 5er-Ausschuss*. Zugleich ein Mahnwort an Deutschlands akademische Jugend, Wien 1928, 15.

*lichen Gesichtszügen* – geistig, seelisch jedoch tiefer stehend als jedes Tier. Im Inneren dieses Menschen ein grausames Chaos wilder, hemmungsloser Leidenschaften: namenloser Zerstörungswille, primitivste Begierde, unverhüllteste Gemeinheit.

Untermensch, sonst nichts!

Denn es ist nicht alles gleich, was Menschenantlitz trägt. – Wehe dem, der das vergisst!«<sup>14</sup>

## Klarstellungen zur Streitsache

Neun Monate später – und übrigens elf Monate nach den Nürnberger Gesetzen vom September 1935, dem Reichsbürgergesetz und dem Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre<sup>15</sup> – verwies also auch das Reichsgericht im Juni 1936 auf die nun nicht mehr geltende Gleichberechtigung aller Wesen mit Menschenantlitz. Zugleich nannte es in der Urteilsbegründung die Basis dieser neuen Auffassung: die Gleichheit oder Verschiedenheit des Blutes. Die Bedeutung von »Blut« in der NS-Rassenlehre ist außerordentlich, wie das erwähnte Nürnberger Gesetz, kurz Blutschutzgesetz genannt, demonstriert. Man muss übrigens, wenn Nazis von Juden sprachen oder wenn man die Entrechtung, Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden unter ihrer Herrschaft betrachtet, immer von Juden im Sinne der Nürnberger Gesetze sprechen. Denn es handelte sich keineswegs nur um Juden als Mitglieder der jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft, sondern auch um die große Zahl christlich getaufter oder konfessionsloser Personen jüdischer Herkunft.

Wir wenden uns wieder dem Rechtsstreit zwischen Thevag und UFA zu.<sup>16</sup> Ausgangspunkt war zu Beginn des Jahres 1933 der Plan der UFA, einen Film mit dem damals schon berühmten Erik Charell als Drehbuchautor und

14 Dieser Abschnitt wird in einer Darstellung der Internetseite *juraforum* als Text einer Rede Heinrich Himmlers bezeichnet. Siehe o. A., Untermensch. Erklärung zur Bedeutung und Verwendung des Begriffs, <<https://www.juraforum.de/lexikon/der-untermensch>> (18. Juli 2022; Hervorhebung des Verfassers). Tatsächlich wird der Text nur von Zitaten Himmlers eingerahmt.

15 Das am gleichen Tage beschlossene Reichsflaggengesetz wurde ursprünglich nicht zu den Nürnberger Rassengesetzen gezählt.

16 Mit Datum 23. November 2019 wurde eine Arbeit über dieses Thema von Assessor Thomas Fuchs im Internet veröffentlicht: Ders., Ein Skandalurteil – oder der ganz normale Wahnsinn im Dritten Reich?, <<https://www.zukunft-braucht-erinnerung.de/ein-skandalurteil-oder-der-ganz-normale-wahnsinn-im-dritten-reich>> (18. Juli 2022). Es handelt sich um eine Arbeit, die offensichtlich infolge einer ausführlichen Rezension meines Leipziger Vortrags in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* entstanden ist: Andreas Platthaus, Kein Recht für Juden, in: ebd., 9. April 2019, 9. Ich habe keinen Anlass, aufgrund dieser Arbeit die Erzählung oder die Interpretationen in meinem Vortrag zu ändern. In einigen Anmerkungen wird es jedoch Hinweise auf die genannte Arbeit geben.

Regisseur zu drehen. Charell, 1894 in Breslau als Erich Karl Löwenberg geboren, zuerst als Tänzer ausgebildet und mit dem Charell-Ballett in Europa unterwegs, hatte sich Anfang der 1920er Jahre der Regie und Produktion von Revuen und Operetten zugewandt. Er wurde von Max Reinhardt geschätzt und gefördert, verhalf den Comedian Harmonists zum Durchbruch und war erster Förderer von Zarah Leander und Hans Albers. Seine erfolgreichste Schöpfung ist die Operette *Im weißen Rössl am Wolfgangsee* mit Musik von Ralph Benatzky. 1933 wollte die UFA ein von Charell verfasstes Drehbuch zu *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* mit Charell als Regisseur verfilmen. Als Odysseus war Hans Albers vorgesehen. Am 24. Februar 1933, also etwa drei Wochen nach der Ernennung Hitlers zum Reichskanzler – dies ist erstaunlich! –, schloss die UFA mit der schweizerischen Thevag einen Vertrag (Manuskriptvertrag), demzufolge die UFA für den Preis von 130 000 Reichsmark alle Urheber-, Aufführungs- und Verlagsrechte einschließlich des Verfilmungsrechts an Charells Werk *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* erwarb. Dieser Betrag sollte in monatlichen Raten von 26 000 Reichsmark gezahlt werden, die erste Rate wurde am 1. März 1933 überwiesen. Am gleichen Tag schloss die UFA einen Vertrag mit Charell für die Regie des Odysseus-Films ab (Regievertrag), der aber in der hier berichteten Geschichte keine große Rolle spielte. In diesen Wochen begann sich die Lage in Deutschland rasch zu ändern; noch im März gab es die ersten schweren Ausschreitungen gegen Juden, die im von der SA organisierten Boykott jüdischer Geschäfte am 1. April ihren Höhepunkt erreichten. Am 5. April trat die UFA unter Hinweis darauf, dass Charell nicht in der Lage sei, seine Regietätigkeit bei ihr auszuüben, schriftlich vom Manuskriptvertrag mit der Thevag zurück. Sie berief sich darauf, dass sie laut Punkt 6 des Vertrags zum Rücktritt berechtigt sei, falls Charell »durch Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlichen Grund«<sup>17</sup> die vertraglich vereinbarten Aufgaben nicht durchführen könne. Gleichzeitig trat die UFA auch vom Regievertrag mit Charell zurück. In einem schiedsgerichtlichen Verfahren zwischen Charell und UFA erging am 21. Juni 1933 der Spruch, dass Charell aus dem Regievertrag keinerlei Ansprüche gegen die UFA zustünden.

Charell, der dank Tantiemen finanziell sehr gut gestellt war, ging in die Emigration nach Amerika und kehrte erst 1950 nach München zurück, wo er 1974 verstarb. Die Thevag allerdings verweigerte die Rückzahlung der von der UFA schon überwiesenen ersten Rate von 26 000 Reichsmark. Daraufhin klagte die UFA auf Rückzahlung.

17 BArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, Urteil und Tatbestand.

An dieser Stelle ist ein Einschub erforderlich. Der erste Autor, der auf das Reichsgerichtsurteil von 1936 und seine üble antisemitische Formulierung aufmerksam gemacht hat, war der berühmte deutsch-jüdische Jurist und Politologe Ernst Fraenkel (1898–1975), und zwar schon in der 1936 bis 1938 geschriebenen Urfassung seines großartigen Werkes *Der Doppelstaat*. In diesem Werk hat Fraenkel die Gleichzeitigkeit des im NS-Regime existierenden »Maßnahmenstaates« – totale Willkür vor allem von SS und Polizei, insbesondere der Gestapo – und eines an den Buchstaben von Gesetzen und Verordnungen sich klammernden »Normenstaates« aufgezeigt.<sup>18</sup>

Fraenkel hat sich allerdings bei der Schilderung dieses Falles mehrfach geirrt. Er stellt nicht klar, dass es zwei Verträge gab und die strittige Formel der Verhinderung »durch Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlichen Grund« nicht im Regievertrag zwischen UFA und Charell, sondern nur in dem zweiten Vertrag zwischen der UFA und der schweizerischen Thevag zu finden ist. Die Rücktrittsklausel im Vertrag mit Charell war anders und allgemeiner formuliert als jene im Vertrag mit der Thevag, nämlich für den Fall, dass der Vertrag mit Charell »aus irgendeinem Grund unwirksam sein oder unwirksam werden oder nicht durchführbar werden sollte« (Punkt 11 des Regievertrags zwischen der UFA und Charell). Darauf werde ich noch zurückkommen. Weiter schreibt Fraenkel, als kurz nach der Vertragsunterzeichnung »die große antisemitische Hetze begann«, habe sich die Filmgesellschaft vom Vertrag losgesagt und »die Honorarzählung« verweigert. Das Reichsgericht habe »die Klage abgewiesen«.<sup>19</sup> Es ging aber, wie wir gerade gesehen haben, nicht um eine Honorarzählung und nicht um einen Kläger wegen versagter Honorarzählung, sondern um die Weigerung der schweizerischen Thevag, die von der UFA geforderte Rückzahlung zu leisten. Und darin gab das Reichsgericht als oberste Revisionsinstanz der UFA und nicht der Thevag recht. Erik Charell ist an dem Prozess, der am 27. Juni 1936 in Leipzig entschieden wurde, überhaupt nicht beteiligt gewesen.

18 Ernst Fraenkel kannte ich persönlich sehr gut, wir waren zwischen 1964 und 1969 im gleichen Institut der Freien Universität Berlin tätig und in häufigem Kontakt miteinander. Ich verehrte und verehere ihn, der dreißig Jahre älter war als ich, sehr.

19 Ernst Fraenkel, *Der Doppelstaat*, in: ders., *Gesammelte Schriften*, hg. von Alexander von Brünneck, 6 Bde., Baden-Baden 1999–2001, hier Bd. 2: *Nationalsozialismus und Widerstand*, Baden-Baden 1999, 33–266, hier 148.

## Tod und bürgerlicher Tod

In der Klage der UFA gegen die Thevag war ihr wichtigstes Argument der Punkt 6 des zwischen den beiden geschlossenen Manuskriptvertrags. Dort war vereinbart, dass, sollte der Regievertrag zwischen Charell und der UFA undurchführbar werden, weil Charell »durch Krankheit, Tod *oder ähnlichen Grund*«<sup>20</sup> nicht zur Durchführung seiner Regiearbeit imstande ist, die UFA zum Vertragsrücktritt berechtigt und die Thevag zur Rückzahlung der bereits geleisteten Beträge verpflichtet sei. Die Worte »oder ähnlichen Grund« wurden nun die wichtigsten der ganzen Streitsache. In der Klage führte die UFA an, die Formulierung erstrecke sich auf sämtliche Fälle persönlicher Verhinderung.

»Infolge des völligen und wider Erwarten schleunigen Umschwungs in Denkart und Geschmack des deutschen Volkes könne ein Film, an dem ein Nichtarier mitwirke, innerhalb des Deutschen Reiches nicht mehr vorgeführt werden; auch Rechtsvorschriften stünden jetzt entgegen. Charell sei demnach aus einem in seiner Person liegenden Grunde [Nichtariereigenschaft!] außerstande, die in Aussicht genommene Tätigkeit zu leisten; der mit ihm geschlossene Regievertrag sei undurchführbar geworden.«<sup>21</sup>

Die Thevag hielt dagegen, man habe bei den Vertragsverhandlungen betreffend »ähnlichen Grund« wie Tod oder Krankheit nur von Hindernissen leiblicher oder geistiger Art wie etwa nervösen Störungen gesprochen. Aus einem späteren Schreiben des Thevag-Prozessbevollmächtigten geht hervor, dass sich die Vertragschließenden damals ausdrücklich einigten, dass bei »ähnlichem Grund« an Fälle von Geistesgestörtheit zu denken sei; die Vertreter der UFA hätten einen konkreten Fall genannt, wo »eine Geistesgestörtheit mitten in der Arbeit eingetreten sei; der betr. Fall wurde im Einzelnen erörtert.«<sup>22</sup> Auch sei die UFA bereit gewesen, den Vertrag trotz bereits erfolgter »Machtergreifung durch die NSDAP« abzuschließen. Die UFA habe in voller Kenntnis der Folgen gehandelt, die unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus zu erwarten gewesen seien. Dies ist ganz offensichtlich nicht der Fall gewesen und zeigt, dass die UFA-Verantwortlichen die neue Situation zunächst erstaunlicherweise unterschätzten. Die erste Instanz (Landgericht) gab der Klage der UFA recht, allerdings nicht wegen des »ähnlichen Grundes«, sondern weil die Geschäftsgrundlage des Vertragsverhältnisses nachträglich weggefallen sei.

20 BAArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, Urteil und Tatbestand (Hervorhebung des Verfassers).

21 Ebd.

22 BAArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, Schreiben Justizrat Dr. H. Schrömgens an das Reichsgericht, 25. Oktober 1935.



Die Thevag ging in die zweite Instanz (zum Kammergericht). Die Akten des Verfahrens sind im Landesarchiv Berlin nicht vorhanden, man kann aber ausführliche Informationen über das Urteil des Kammergerichts vom 22. August 1935 der Urteilsbegründung des Reichsgerichts und dem Schreiben des Thevag-Vertreters vom 25. Oktober 1935 an das Reichsgericht entnehmen.<sup>23</sup> Auch das Kammergericht gab der UFA recht, und zwar unter Zugrundelegung der Formel »Krankheit, Tod oder ähnliche[r] Grund«. Es verwarf die Argumentation der Thevag, unter »ähnlichem Grund« seien lediglich »pathologische« Ursachen wie Geistesstörung, Invalidität, Verstümmelung zu verstehen. Das Kammergericht befand, die allgemeine Fassung des Zusatzes gehe viel weiter; sie erstreckte sich »auf alle Fälle, in denen Charell durch einen in seiner Person liegenden Umstand an der Ausübung der vertraglich bedungenen Tätigkeit verhindert sein sollte«. Diese Abstellung auf Hinderungsgründe wegen persönlicher Verhältnisse gestatte, eigens angeführten Fällen von Krankheit und Tod andere Gründe gleichzusetzen. Unter der politischen Entwicklung seit Abschluss des Vertrages sei Charells jüdische Abstammung zu einem solchen Hinderungsgrunde geworden, der sich unmittelbar aus seiner Person ergab und ihn in seiner Eigenschaft als Nichtarier betraf.<sup>24</sup>

Zwischen dem Kammergerichtsurteil und dem Urteil dritter Instanz gab es Vergleichsverhandlungen, die Anfang Dezember 1935 von der UFA angeregt worden war.<sup>25</sup> Die Verhandlungen wurden im April 1936 als gescheitert gemeldet.<sup>26</sup>

Dem 1. Zivilsenat des Reichsgerichts<sup>27</sup> lag am 27. Juni 1936 der Bericht des Reichsgerichtsrats Dr. Georg Müller vor, bestehend aus den Teilen »Tatbestand« und »Entscheidungsgründe«.<sup>28</sup> Der Berichterstatter informierte zustimmend über die Urteilsbegründung der zweiten Instanz und kommen-

23 BArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35.

24 Ebd., Urteil des Kammergerichts, ausführlich zit. in den Entscheidungsgründen des Reichsgerichts.

25 Ebd., Schreiben des Prozessbevollmächtigten der Thevag Dr. Schrömgens an das Reichsgericht, 5. Dezember 1935.

26 Ebd., Schreiben des Prozessbevollmächtigten der UFA Dr. G. Petersen an das Reichsgericht, 8. April 1936.

27 Den Vorsitz hatte Dr. Triebel inne, weitere Mitglieder des Senats waren die Herren Silber, Dr. G. Müller, Weinkauff und Heidenhain. Landgerichtsdirektor Hermann Weinkauff machte später in der Bundesrepublik große Karriere. Er wurde 1950 zum Präsidenten des Bundesgerichtshofs ernannt. Dies entnehme ich mit Dank an Thomas Fuchs für diese bemerkenswerte Information der Publikation: Ders., Ein Skandalurteil – oder der ganz normale Wahnsinn im Dritten Reich? Weinkauff blieb Präsident bis zu seiner im Jahr 1960 erfolgten Pensionierung.

28 BArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, Teile des Urteils vom 27. Juni 1936. Der Akte liegt auch das handschriftliche Konzept Georg Müllers bei.

tierte, dass die Auslegung des Kammergerichts unterstützt werde »durch die leitenden Gedanken, nach denen seit der Machtübernahme durch den Nationalsozialismus der Befugniskreis des Einzelnen rassemäßig bedingt ist«. Nun folgt jene Passage, die zu Beginn bereits zitiert wurde und zum besseren Verständnis der Zusammenhänge hier im unmittelbaren Kontext wiederholt wird. Ich gebe ungekürzt den zentralen »politischen« Teil der Entscheidungsgründe wieder:

»Die frühere (>liberale<) Vorstellung vom Rechtsinhalte der Persönlichkeit machte unter den Wesen mit Menschenantlitz keine grundsätzlichen Wertunterschiede nach der Gleichheit oder Verschiedenheit des Blutes; sie lehnte deshalb eine rechtliche Gliederung und Abstufung der Menschen nach Rassegesichtspunkten ab. Der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung dagegen entspricht es, im Deutschen Reiche nur Deutschstämmige (und gesetzlich ihnen Gleichgestellte) als rechtlich vollgültig zu behandeln. Damit werden grundsätzliche Abgrenzungen des früheren Fremdenrechts erneuert und Gedanken wiederaufgenommen, die vormals durch die Unterscheidung zwischen voll Rechtsfähigen und Personen minderen Rechts anerkannt waren. Den Grad völliger Rechtlosigkeit stellte man ehemals, weil die rechtliche Persönlichkeit ganz zerstört sei, dem leiblichen Tode gleich; die Gebilde des >bürgerlichen Todes< und des >Klostertodes< empfangen ihre Namen aus dieser Vergleichung.«<sup>29</sup>

»Wenn in Nr. 6 des Manuskript-Vertrages vom 24. Februar 1933 davon die Rede ist, daß Charell »durch Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlichen Grund nicht zur Durchführung seiner Regietätigkeit imstande sein sollte«, so ist unbedenklich eine aus gesetzlich anerkannten rassepolitischen Gesichtspunkten eingetretene Änderung in der rechtlichen Geltung der Persönlichkeit dem gleichzuachten, sofern sie die Durchführung der Regietätigkeit in entsprechender Weise hindert, wie Tod oder Krankheit es täten.«<sup>30</sup>

Die Frage, warum der Berichtersteller Müller den »bürgerlichen Tod« in den Entscheidungsgründen genannt hat, ist nicht leicht zu beantworten. Dass Juden im NS-System »Personen minderen Rechts« waren und dass damit auf Statusunterscheidungen älteren Rechts zurückgegriffen wurde, hätte vielleicht zur Begründung der Unmöglichkeit, Charell als Regisseur zu beschäftigen, ausgereicht. Der weitere Schritt, auch den Status völliger bürgerlicher Rechtlosigkeit anzusprechen, den bürgerlichen Tod und den Klostertod, ist ein gewaltiger Sprung.

29 Dieser Satz geht eindeutig auf eine Stelle in Otto von Gierkes *Deutsches Privatrecht* zurück, auf die Müller in seinen »Nachweisen von Belegen älterer Literatur« ausdrücklich verweist. »Eine vollkommene Zerstörung der Persönlichkeit war mit der Friedlosigkeit verknüpft. Nach ihrem Verschwinden wurde im französischen Recht die von einigen deutschen Strafgesetzbüchern aufgenommene Strafe des *bürgerlichen Todes* ausgebildet.« Es folgt auch ein Hinweis auf den Klostertod. Siehe Otto von Gierke, *Deutsches Privatrecht*, 3. Bde., Leipzig 1895–1917, hier Bd. 1: Allgemeiner Teil und Personenrecht, Leipzig 1895, 364 (= § 42 II Punkt 1 »Friedlosigkeit« und Punkt 2 »Klostertod«; Hervorhebung im Original).

30 BArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, Urteil, Entscheidungsgründe.

Der bürgerliche Tod (*mors civilis; mort civile*) hat sich aus mittelalterlichen Ursprüngen vor allem im französischen Recht entwickelt.<sup>31</sup> Im deutschen Recht spielte er eine ganz geringe Rolle, etwa in den Territorien Bayern und Baden, die in der Napoleonischen Zeit französisches Recht übernommen hatten. Er wurde Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts überall abgeschafft, in Frankreich selbst 1854. Die genaueste Darstellung findet sich im französischen Code civil von 1804 in den Artikeln 22 bis 33. Der bürgerliche Tod war eine Folgestrafe, verbunden mit der vorherigen Verhängung einer »Kapitalstrafe«. Als solche galt im 19. Jahrhundert vor allem die Todesstrafe, bis Mitte des Jahrhunderts auch die lebenslange Galeerenstrafe. Die *mort civile* bedeutete den Verlust aller bürgerlichen Rechte, insbesondere des Rechts, Eigentum zu haben oder zu erwerben, Verträge oder eine Ehe zu schließen, zu erben oder zu vererben und als Zeuge aufzutreten. Bestehende zivile Ehen galten als aufgelöst (das kirchliche Eheband blieb bestehen). Es gab allerdings einen Anspruch auf »Alimentation« – sonst wäre ja der bürgerliche Tod dem physischen Tod durch Verhungern gleichzusetzen gewesen. Der sogenannte Klostertod bedeutete vor allem, dass Mönche und Nonnen unfähig waren, Eigentum und andere Rechte zu erwerben, zu besitzen oder darüber zu verfügen, zu erben oder zu vererben.

Die Nennung des bürgerlichen Todes bei Müller mag damit zu erklären sein, dass eben jene Formel »durch Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlichen Grund« ihn veranlasste, eine Analogie zwischen dem dort angeführten physischen Tod und einem »ähnlichen« juristischen Ausdruck herzustellen. Ein Hinweis in diese Interpretationsrichtung ist vielleicht darin zu sehen, dass Georg Müller, wie gerade erwähnt, bei Otto von Gierke Formulierungen zum bürgerlichen Tod fand, die er direkt für seine Urteilsbegründung umformte. Müller hat minutiöse Vorstudien zu den Themen jüdisches Sonderrecht, verminderte Rechtsstellung und eben bürgerlicher Tod betrieben. Als Anhang zum handschriftlichen Entwurf der Urteilsbegründung finden sich »Nachweise von Belegen älteren Rechts« mit Nennung von zwölf Autoren zwischen 1840 und 1930, darunter Eichhorn, Savigny, Phillips, Beseler, Otto Gierke, Hübner, mit genauer Angabe von Seiten und Paragraphen (zum bürgerlichen Tod

31 Siehe hierzu sehr gründlich Brigitte Borgmann, *Mors civilis. Die Bildung des Begriffs im Mittelalter und sein Fortleben im französischen Recht der Neuzeit*, in: *Ius commune. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte*, Bd. IV, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, 81–157, <[https://www.rg.mpg.de/2240587/ic04\\_05\\_borgmann.pdf](https://www.rg.mpg.de/2240587/ic04_05_borgmann.pdf)> (mpg.de) (18. Juli 2022). Sehr umfangreich zur Geschichte der Formel vom »bürgerlichen Tod« ist die Arbeit von Thomas Fuchs, *Ein Skandalurteil – oder der ganz normale Wahnsinn im Dritten Reich?*

besonders Gierke und Hübner).<sup>32</sup> Nie ist jedoch in der von Müller angegebenen Literatur der bürgerliche Tod in Verbindung mit der Rechtsstellung der Juden erwähnt worden. Diesen Zusammenhang herzustellen, blieb offenbar Müller vorbehalten.

Der damals 68-jährige Berichtersteller Müller war seit jungen Jahren überzeugter Antisemit, wie im nächsten Abschnitt zu zeigen sein wird. Das könnte auch die eigentlich unerhörte Selbstverständlichkeit erklären, mit der Müller »unbedenklich« zum Schluss kam, »eine aus gesetzlich anerkannten rassepolitischen Gesichtspunkten eingetretene Änderung in der rechtlichen Geltung der Persönlichkeit« sei als ein Tod oder Krankheit »ähnliche[r] Grund« anzuerkennen.

Es sind diese Sätze, die den Zorn Ernst Fraenkels entfachten, ganz besonders auch das Wort »unbedenklich«. Ich zitiere:

»Unbedenklich« – man muss ein Gefühl für die Nuancen der deutschen Sprache haben, um die Ungeheuerlichkeit dieser Entscheidung zu ermessen. Wenn das höchste deutsche Gericht ohne zu zögern über 600 000 Menschen zum »bürgerlichen Tod« verdammt und sich dann mit ein paar Phrasen aus der Kanzlistensprache rechtfertigt, erübrigt sich jeglicher Kommentar.«<sup>33</sup>

An anderer Stelle schrieb Fraenkel:

»Schließlich hat das Reichsgericht selbst den in Deutschland lebenden Juden die Eigenschaft von Personen im Rechtssinne abgesprochen. In einer Entscheidung vom 27. Juni 1936 verurteilte das höchste deutsche Gericht die deutschen Juden zum »bürgerlichen Tod.«<sup>34</sup>

32 Nur in Auswahl: Carl Friedrich Eichhorn, Einleitung in das Deutsche Privatrecht mit Einschluß des Lehensrechts, 5., von Karl Friedrich Eichhorn verbesserte Aufl., Göttingen 1845, 240–245, § 81: Verminderte Rechtsfähigkeit der Juden; Georg Phillips, Grundsätze des gemeinen deutschen Privatrechts mit Einschluß des Lehnrechts, 2 Bde., 3., verbesserte Aufl., Berlin 1846, hier. Bd. 1, Kap. 3: Unterschiede zwischen Einheimischen und Fremden, 318 f.; Friedrich Carl von Savigny, System des heutigen römischen Rechts, 9 Bde., Berlin 1840–1856, hier Bd. 2, Berlin 1840, 60 ff., § 68: »Dreyfach capitis diminutio«: »[...] der Ausdruck capitis diminutio steht für jede Degradation der Rechtsfähigkeit«, sowie ebd., § 78: Juristische Bedeutung der Infamie, und ebd., § 83: Heutige Anwendbarkeit der Lehre von der Infamie. Ferner: Georg Beseler, System des gemeinen deutschen Privatrechts, Leipzig 1847, 2 Bde, hier Bd. 1, 342 f., § 65: Einheimische und Fremde, Zu Otto von Gierke über bürgerlichen Tod und Klostertod siehe ders., Deutsches Privatrecht, Bd. 1: Allgemeiner Teil und Personenrecht, 364 (= § 42 II Punkt 1 »Friedlosigkeit« und Punkt 2 »Klostertod«). Ausführlich referiert zu bürgerlichem Tod und Klostertod der ebenfalls von Müller zitierte Rudolf Hübner, Grundzüge des deutschen Privatrechts, 5., durchgesehene Aufl., Leipzig 1930, 56 f., § 7: Ende der Rechtsfähigkeit, II Vernichtung der Rechtsfähigkeit trotz Fortdauer des Lebens, Punkt 2: Der bürgerliche Tod, und Punkt 3: Der Klostertod, jedoch ohne jeden Hinweis auf die Rechtsstellung der Juden. Zu dieser siehe ebd., 94–98, § 12: Religion, II Die privatrechtliche Stellung der Juden.

33 Fraenkel, Der Doppelstaat, 148.

34 Ebd., 147.

Auch der Historiker Dirk Blasius hat in einem sehr eindrucksvollen Aufsatz von einer »Verurteilung in den ‚bürgerlichen Tod‘« gesprochen. Blasius verweist übrigens irrtümlich auf den »Vertrag eines jüdischen Filmregisseurs und einer Filmgesellschaft«. Einen solchen Vertrag gab es, wie wir gesehen haben, aber es war nicht der Vertrag, über den das Reichsgericht im Juni 1936 urteilte, und es war nicht der Vertrag, auf den sich die zitierte Äußerung des Richters Müller bezog. Blasius spricht nur von *einem* Vertrag; es ist der sogenannte Regievertrag. Es handelte sich aber um einen anderen, den Manuskriptvertrag zwischen UFA und Thevag.<sup>35</sup> Es wäre nicht auszusprechen, dass sowohl bei Fraenkel als auch bei Blasius die Rede von der »Verurteilung« damit zusammenhängt, dass beide irrigerweise den Vertrag zwischen Charell und der UFA im Sinne hatten, nicht den Vertrag zweier Gesellschaften.

Auch in dem Online-Lexikon *juraforum* ist das Urteil aus dem Jahr 1936 unrichtig wiedergegeben worden. Ich zitiere:

»Im Nationalsozialismus wurde die Rechtstellung jüdischer Bürger als ›bürgerlicher Tod‹ bezeichnet. Das Reichsgericht ermöglichte so etwa 1936 der UFA die Kündigung eines Vertrages mit dem jüdischen Regisseur Eric [sic] Charell, obwohl der Vertrag nur eine Kündigung vorsah, wenn Charell ›durch Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlichen Grund nicht zur Durchführung der Regietätigkeit im Stande‹ sei. Die Eigenschaft ›Jüdischsein‹ entspreche somit laut Reichsgericht dem bürgerlichen Tod [...].«<sup>36</sup>

Daran ist eigentlich alles falsch. 1) Juden waren seit den Nürnberger Gesetzen nicht mehr »Bürger«, sondern lediglich »Staatsangehörige«. 2) Das Reichsgericht ermöglichte 1936 nicht die »Kündigung« eines Vertrags zwischen UFA und Charell, denn dieser Vertrag war schon 1933 durch Schiedsspruch einvernehmlich gelöst worden. 3) Wieder bleibt unbekannt, dass es zwei Verträge gab und dass die Formel von »Krankheit, Tod oder ähnliche[m] Grund« eben nicht aus dem Vertrag mit Charell, sondern aus dem Vertrag mit der Thevag stammte. 4) Der Ausdruck »bürgerlicher Tod« ist, soweit ich sehe, außer in diesem Urteil sonst nirgends von NS-Seite verwendet worden.

Müllers Text hebt in besonders brutaler und demütigender Weise die NS-Lehre von der Ungleichheit der Menschen hervor. Doch der »Rechtssatz« (heute: Leitsatz), der jeweils abschließend den juristisch wesentlichsten In-

35 Dirk Blasius, »Bürgerlicher Tod«. Der NS-Unrechtsstaat und die deutschen Juden, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 41 (1990), 129–144, hier 139. Blasius wiederholt seine irrtümliche Annahme, es handle sich beim Prozess vor dem Reichsgericht um ein Verfahren aufgrund eines Vertrags »zwischen einem jüdischen Filmregisseur und einer Filmgesellschaft«. Ders., *Zwischen Rechtsvertrauen und Rechtszerstörung. Deutsche Juden 1933–1935*, in: ders./Dan Diner (Hgg.), *Zerbrochene Geschichte. Leben und Selbstverständnis der Juden in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a. M. 1991, 121–137, hier 135.

36 Art. »Bürgerlicher Tod«, in: *Juraforum* (Online-Lexikon) <<https://www.juraforum.de/lexikon/buergerlicher-tod>> (18. Juli 2022).

halt eines Urteils kurz zusammenfasst – als Informationsquelle für die zukünftige Rechtsprechung – und ebenfalls von Müller formuliert wurde, enthält den Begriff »bürgerlicher Tod« nicht. Dieser Rechtssatz lautet:

»Ist vertraglich Rücktrittsbefugnis für den Fall vereinbart, dass ein Spielleiter (Filmregisseur) ›durch Tod, Krankheit oder ähnlichen Grund‹ außerstande sein sollte, seine Tätigkeit durchzuführen, so kann die Nicht-Arier-Eigenschaft des Spielleiters als ein solcher Grund angesehen werden.«<sup>37</sup>

Hinzugefügt war ein Hinweis auf das Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch (BGB, § 157): »Verträge sind so auszulegen, wie Treu und Glauben mit Rücksicht auf die Verkehrssitte es erfordern.«

Das Urteil des 1. Zivilsenats des Reichsgerichts selbst bestand lediglich aus zwei Sätzen: »Die Revision gegen das Urteil des 27. Zivilsenats des Kammergerichts zu Berlin vom 22. August 1935 wird zurückgewiesen. // Die Kosten der Revisionsinstanz werden der Revisionsklägerin auferlegt.« Das Urteil bedeutete konkret die Verpflichtung der schweizerischen Thevag zur Rückzahlung von 26 000 Reichsmark. Hierzu zwei Punkte:

Erstens wurde in dem »Rechtssatz«, wie gerade erwähnt, zwar die »Nicht-Arier-Eigenschaft« des Spielleiters festgehalten, der »bürgerliche Tod« jedoch nicht eigens genannt. Ich sehe also eine Konkretisierung der drei Worte »oder ähnlichen Grund« durch »die Nicht-Arier-Eigenschaft« gegeben, aber nicht notwendigerweise durch die Worte »bürgerlicher Tod«.

Hier ist eine juristische Feinheit zu erwähnen, auf die das Kammergericht hingewiesen hatte: Dass nämlich die beiden von der UFA abgeschlossenen Verträge – Regievertrag mit Charell und Manuskriptvertrag mit der Thevag – gerade durch die unterschiedliche Formulierung der Rücktrittsklausel miteinander verzahnt waren. Während die UFA vom Vertrag mit Charell aus beliebigem Grund zurücktreten konnte, habe man (eigentlich zur größeren Sicherheit für die Thevag) im Vertrag mit der Thevag das Rücktrittsrecht an einen in Charells Person liegenden Grund der Verhinderung seiner Tätigkeit gebunden – daher die umstrittene Formel »Krankheit, Tod oder ähnlicher Grund«.

Zweitens ist zu bedenken, dass der »bürgerliche Tod« kein Begriff des damals im »Normenstaat« geltenden Rechts war. Es ist meines Wissens der Begriff des bürgerlichen Todes in keinem nachfolgenden Gerichtsurteil oder zur Begründung administrativer Maßnahmen verwendet worden. Ein Beispiel: Eine der *mors civilis* entsprechende sofortige Auflösung von bestehenden Ehen gab es nicht. Die ab 1938 zunehmende Abfolge von Grässlich-

37 BArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/102300, Akte I.297/35, eigenes Blatt im Anschluss an das Urteil (Hinzufügung in Klammern: »Würdigung eines am 24. Februar 1933 geschlossenen Vertrages über Urheberrechtserwerb und Verfilmung; der Erwerber ist am 5. April 1933 zurückgetreten.«).

keiten wurde anders – vor allem mit dem in sein Gegenteil verkehrten Wort »Schutzhaft«, das die Tore zum KZ und Ärgerem öffnete – oder im Zuge des »Maßnahmenstaates« und seiner totalen Willkür gar nicht begründet.<sup>38</sup> Erst sozusagen »nachträglich«, nachdem im Rahmen des NS-«Maßnahmenstaates« Tausende und Abertausende von Juden deportiert und umgebracht worden waren, kam der NS-»Normenstaat« dem »bürgerlichen Tod« ganz nahe. Mit der 13. Durchführungsverordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 1. Juli 1943 wurde den Juden das Recht auf den gesetzlichen Richter genommen, indem statuiert wurde, dass strafbare Handlungen von Juden durch die Polizei geahndet würden; es wurde ihnen auch das Vererbungsrecht genommen, indem festgelegt wurde, dass das Vermögen eines Juden nach seinem Tode dem Reich verfällt. Allerdings betraf dies doch noch immer mehrere Tausend Juden (allein in Wien befanden sich am 31. Dezember 1944 noch 5 799 Juden im Sinne der Nürnberger Gesetze, die meisten von ihnen in »Mischehen« lebend).<sup>39</sup>

### Der Jurist hinter dem Urteil: Georg Müller

Ich möchte mich nun der Person des Verfassers dieses Urteils zuwenden. Es erstaunt immer wieder, wie selten, wenn überhaupt, in juristischen oder rechtshistorischen Arbeiten Gerichtsurteile als Quellentexte herangezogen werden, ohne die Frage nach den Namen der Richter und vor allem des oder der Referenten zu stellen, die hinter dem Urteil eines mehrköpfigen höheren oder höchsten Gerichts verborgen sind. Im angloamerikanischen Raum werden bekanntlich Richter namentlich genannt, und man erfährt auch die Namen der Gerichtsmitglieder, die Texte ausgearbeitet haben – Urteilsbegründungen oder gegebenenfalls Minderheitsvoten. In Deutschland ist das nur beim Bundesverfassungsgericht der Fall. Doch eine Recherche in den Archivalien kann interessante Aufschlüsse bringen. In diesem Fall handelte es sich also um den schon mehrfach genannten Reichsgerichtsrat Dr. Georg Müller

- 38 Die ersten Deportationen hatte es schon vorher gegeben, obwohl erst am 25. November 1941 die 11. Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz festlegte, dass Juden, die ihren Aufenthalt im Ausland haben oder nehmen, die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft entzogen wird und ihr Vermögen dem Reich verfällt. Die Deportationsgebiete im Osten, Generalgouvernement, Reichskommissariat Ost und Reichskommissariat Ukraine, die als Teil des Reichsgebietes galten, wurden nur für Zwecke der 11. Durchführungsverordnung zum »Ausland« erklärt, um Zugriff auf das Vermögen der Deportierten zu erhalten.
- 39 Siehe die vorzügliche Dissertation von Philomena Leiter, *Assimilation, Antisemitismus und NS-Verfolgung. Austritte aus der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Wien 1900–1944* (unveröffentlichte Diss., Universität Wien, 2003), 504.

(1868–1945). Müller hatte Jura in Straßburg und Berlin studiert. 1890 trat er als Referendar in den Staatsdienst ein. Er wirkte an verschiedenen Gerichten, zuletzt als Oberlandesgerichtsrat in Naumburg. Im Ersten Weltkrieg war er als Hauptmann der Landwehr an der Ostfront und an der Westfront eingesetzt. 1922 wurde er ins Reichsgericht berufen, 1925 zum Reichsgerichtsrat ernannt.<sup>40</sup> Bis zu seiner Pensionierung zum Jahreswechsel 1936/37 wirkte er am Reichsgericht. Er galt als Spezialist für gewerblichen Rechtsschutz. Im November 1933 trat Müller dem Bund nationalsozialistischer deutscher Juristen bei;<sup>41</sup> er wurde anscheinend nie Mitglied der NSDAP. Müller war verheiratet und hatte einen Sohn. Bei einem Luftangriff auf Leipzig am 6. April 1945 kam er in seiner nahe dem Reichsgericht gelegenen Wohnung ums Leben.

Müller ist aber zusätzlich als Buchautor, überwiegend eher schmaler Bändchen, in der Öffentlichkeit aufgetreten. Die Mehrzahl seiner Schriften befasste sich mit dem Zugang zum Recht sowie mit Recht und Staat im Werk bedeutender Persönlichkeiten wie Bismarck oder Richard Wagner, vor allem aber mit Persönlichkeiten der deutschen (und auch österreichischen) Literatur. Seine Belesenheit ist außerordentlich. Aus der Lektüre dieser Schriften, in denen er persönlichen Ansichten und Überzeugungen oft freien Lauf lässt, ergibt sich ein Profil, das ich kurz gefasst wie folgt charakterisieren möchte: Nationalkonservativer und Protestant, glühender Bismarck-Verehrer, Kritiker der römisch-katholischen Kirche und – in noch größerem Maße – der Weimarer Republik, vor allem aber überzeugter Antisemit.

Nur eine kleine Auswahl entsprechender Äußerungen aus einigen seiner Schriften kann hier wiedergegeben werden. 1923 erschien das Büchlein *Bismarcks Gedanken über den Staat*, herausgegeben in einer »Reihe nationaler Schriften« mit dem Obertitel »Deutscher Michel, wach auf!«. Müller betonte, dass Bismarck den Staat als lebendiges Wesen, als Organismus angesehen habe. Verschiedene bildliche Wendungen bei Bismarck »beruhen auf der Vorstellung, dass der Staat nicht weniger als die *Wesen mit Menschenantlitz* etwas Lebendiges ist.«<sup>42</sup> Und dann heißt es sehr bald: »Helläugig erkannte er [Bismarck], den meisten seiner Zeitgenossen voraus, die Bedeutung der Rasse fürs Leben der Völker und den Bestand der Staaten. An Gleichheit der Rassen glaubte er nicht.« Wie Mommsen, so Müller weiter, »empfand auch er im Juden den Träger eines Völkerzersetzungsgiftes«. Später, so Müller, fand sich Bismarck an leitender Stelle öffentlich zu Rück-

40 BAArch Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 3002/PA 627, Personalakten Georg Müller.

41 Ebd.

42 Georg Müller, *Bismarcks Gedanken über den Staat*, Hannover/Leipzig 1923, 11 (Sperrung im Original, kursive Hervorhebung des Verfassers). Das Buch ist im eindeutig rechtsgerichteten Verlag Ernst Letsch erschienen.



sicht und Schweigen genötigt. »Aber Hausgespräche verraten auch später natürliche Abneigung wider das wurzellose Volk.«<sup>43</sup> Das war 1923! Müller erwähnte mit Wohlwollen Bismarcks tiefe Abneigung gegen die Sozialdemokratie. Zum Abschluss schrieb Müller bittere Worte zur deutschen Gegenwart: »heute, wo wir in Unehre durch schmachvollen Selbstverrat unterm Fuß erbarmungsloser Feinde liegen«. Ich brauche nicht viel mehr Zitate zur Charakterisierung seines Denkens zu bringen. In einer Broschüre über *Recht und Staat in unserer Dichtung* von 1924 meinte er zu Lessings Lustspiel *Die Juden* und zu *Nathan der Weise*, hier wie dort werde das Merkmal des Unterschieds zwischen Juden und Christen »im Glauben« gesucht, jedoch »die nach langem Irrtum endlich in der Gegenwart, allzuspät vielleicht, erkannte Bedeutung der Rasse für den lebendigen Inhalt eines Staatswesens völlig beiseite gelassen«.<sup>44</sup>

1928 erschien Müllers Broschüre *Das neue Rechtsbuch der katholischen Kirche* über das *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Abgesehen von Fehlern die Ostkirchen betreffend ist dies eine lesbare Zusammenfassung für Laien. Sie endet mit der Feststellung, die Kirche befinde sich im Schlusskampf der Gegenreformation, und endet mit einem Satz des Evangeliums: »Ich bin nicht gekommen, Frieden zu senden, sondern das Schwert.« Das Büchlein enthält überdies ein verräterisches Eigenschaftswort zu dem Schriftsteller Paul de Lagarde, »dem *unsterblichen* Hundertjährigen«.<sup>45</sup> Lagarde war Professor für orientalische Sprachen in Göttingen, hauptsächlich jedoch politischer Schriftsteller, der einen ganz üblen Antisemitismus predigte. Auch ein »deutsches Christentum« versuchte er zusammenzustellen. Einen solchen Mann als »unsterblich« zu qualifizieren, verrät viel über Müllers Geisteshaltung.

Schließlich erschien 1934 die kleine Schrift *Staat, Volk und Recht bei Richard Wagner*. Ein Satz genügt: »Seine [Wagners] Überzeugungen von der seelisch-leiblichen Lebenswichtigkeit der *Rasse* führte ihn folgerichtig zur Ablehnung jüdischen Wesens in Geistesleben, Wirtschaft und Staat.«<sup>46</sup> Es bedarf keiner weiteren Beispiele.

43 Ebd., 7 und 58.

44 Ders., *Recht und Staat in unserer Dichtung*. Flüchtige Bilder für nachdenkliche Leute, Hannover 1924, 42.

45 Ders., *Das neue Rechtsbuch der katholischen Kirche*, Langensalza 1938, 69 und 68 (Hervorhebung im Original unterstrichen).

46 Ders., *Staat, Volk und Recht bei Richard Wagner*, Berlin-Grünwald 1934, 20 (Hervorhebung im Original). Obwohl ausführlich über seinen sozialen Hintergrund schreibend, wird keine der hier genannten Publikationen Müllers in der von Thomas Fuchs veröffentlichten Arbeit erwähnt. Ders., *Ein Skandalurteil – oder der ganz normale Wahnsinn im Dritten Reich?*

## Folgerungen

Zum Schluss sei auf einige Überlegungen zurückgegriffen, die schon früher genannt wurden. Ich komme wieder auf den schon zweimal erwähnten Satz in Georg Müllers Urteilsbegründung zurück: »Die frühere liberale Vorstellung vom Rechtsinhalt der Persönlichkeit« habe unter den Wesen mit Menschenantlitz keine grundsätzlichen Wertunterschiede nach der Gleichheit oder Verschiedenheit des Blutes gemacht, der Nationalsozialismus aber sehr wohl. Seine Worte erinnern übrigens an dieselbe, nicht unähnlich formulierte Unterscheidung, die bald nach Beginn des gleichen Jahres 1936 im amtlichen Kommentar zum Reichsbürgergesetz veröffentlicht worden war und dem Richter Müller wohl bekannt gewesen sein musste. Der Verfasser der Einleitung Wilhelm Stuckart hielt zunächst fest, dass die Nürnberger Gesetze »die blutmäßig bedingte klare Scheidung zwischen dem Deutschtum und Judentum« auf eine »gesetzliche Grundlage« stellten. Sie fassten die wesentliche rechtliche Unterscheidung wie folgt zusammen:

»Den Lehren von der Gleichheit aller Menschen und von der grundsätzlich unbeschränkten Freiheit des Einzelnen gegenüber dem Staat setzt der Nationalsozialismus hier die harten, aber notwendigen Erkenntnisse von der naturgesetzlichen Ungleichheit und Verschiedenheit der Menschen entgegen. Aus der Verschiedenheit der Rassen, Völker und Menschen folgen zwangsläufig Unterscheidungen in den Rechten und Pflichten des Einzelnen. Diese auf dem Leben und den unabänderlichen Naturgesetzen bestehende Verschiedenheit führt das Reichsbürgergesetz in der politischen Grundordnung des deutschen Volkes durch.«<sup>47</sup>

Damit war die grundlegende Unterscheidung zwischen »voll Rechtsfähigen« und »Personen minderen Rechts«, wie es Müller formulierte, klar zum Ausdruck gebracht. Die genauere Gestaltung dieser Unterscheidung war vielfältig und wandelbar, und die Kluft zwischen »voll Rechtsfähigen« und »Personen minderen Rechts« wurde von 1933 bis 1945 immer tiefer, bis der Zustand fast vollständiger Rechtlosigkeit auch im »Normenstaat« etwa Mitte 1943 erreicht war. Im »Maßnahmenstaat«, im Staat der Gestapo- und SS-Willkür, ist dieser Zustand schon wesentlich früher erreicht worden. Die von 1933 an immer stärker und fühlbarer fortschreitende Diskriminierung im »Normenstaat« als notwendige Vorstufe zu Verfolgung und schließlich Vernichtung ist sehr überzeugend von dem Kriminologen Herbert Jäger (1928–2014) dargetan worden, der

47 Wilhelm Stuckart/Hans Globke, Kommentare zur deutschen Rassengesetzgebung, München/Berlin 1936, hier Bd. 1: Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935. Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935. Gesetz zum Schutze der Erbgesundheit des deutschen Volkes (Ehegesundheitsgesetz) vom 18. Oktober 1935. Nebst allen Ausführungsvorschriften und den einschlägigen Gesetzen und Verordnungen, 15 und 25.

meines Erachtens viel zu wenig Beachtung seitens der Zeithistoriker erfahren hat. Jäger hat in seinem Werk *Verbrechen unter totalitärer Herrschaft* (1967) die Kontinuität und Abfolge »Entrechtung – Verfolgung – Vernichtung« dargestellt und vor allem auf die häufig unzureichende Beachtung der ersten Phase aufmerksam gemacht.<sup>48</sup> Manche Zeithistoriker, wie etwa Reinhard Rürup oder Dirk Blasius, haben die große Rolle der Entrechtung – die ja in den Jahren der zunehmenden Verfolgung und Vernichtung weitergeführt wurde – ebenfalls klar herausgearbeitet; andere wieder haben stärker die Verbindung zwischen Schoah und der Entwicklung des Kriegsgeschehens betont (wie Hans Mommsen). Ich selbst würde mich der erstgenannten Gruppe zuordnen.<sup>49</sup>

Die normativ und rhetorisch (siehe »bürgerlicher Tod«) fortschreitende Entrechtung ist aber von einem zweiten Phänomen begleitet worden. Die totale »Entmenschlichung« der Juden in der nationalsozialistischen Diktion, die grauenhafte Darstellung als »Untermensch«, der Vergleich mit Krankheitserregern und Ungeziefer – all dies war eine ganz entscheidende Vorbereitung zur und Einübung in die physische Vernichtung. Herbert Jäger hat geschrieben: »Ist eine Minorität erst dem Ungeziefer gleichgestellt, so ist der Schritt zum ›Ausrottungs‹-Vorsatz nicht mehr allzu groß.«<sup>50</sup> Aus der übergroßen Zahl der Belege greife ich noch einen einzigen heraus. Er stammt vom obersten Parteirichter der NSDAP, Walter Buch. Noch vor dem Novemberpogrom 1938, während des Nürnberger Parteitages im September, rief Buch aus: »Der Jude ist kein Mensch. Er ist eine Fäulniserscheinung.« Diese Rede wurde übrigens ausgerechnet in der Zeitschrift *Deutsche Justiz* veröffentlicht.<sup>51</sup> Buch endete durch Suizid 1949.

Die in Leipzig im Juni 1936 entschiedene Rechtssache Thevag gegen UFA ist ein durch den besonders demütigenden Verweis auf den bürgerlichen Tod auffallendes Dokument. Der aus dieser reichsgerichtlichen Entscheidung deduzierte »Rechtssatz« scheint allerdings, wie oben gezeigt, eher eng angelegt. Die rhetorische Bedeutung dieses Falles übertrifft wohl seine juristische Bedeutung. Er bleibt gleichwohl ein Markstein in der 1933 einsetzenden und rasch anschwellenden Diskriminierung der jüdischen Bevölkerung unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft.

48 Herbert Jäger, *Verbrechen unter totalitärer Herrschaft. Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Gewaltkriminalität*, Olten/Freiburg i. Br. 1967, 352 (Neuaufgabe 1982). Siehe auch ders., *Makrokriminalität. Studien zur Kriminologie kollektiver Gewalt*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989.

49 Siehe bereits Gerald Stourzh, *Menschenrechte und Genozid*, 144–147. Ich habe für den vorliegenden Text auf Passagen aus meiner Wiener Abschlussvorlesung zurückgegriffen; erstmals hier veröffentlicht sind alle ungedruckten Quellen aus dem Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, insbesondere auch zum bisher unbekanntem Richter Georg Müller.

50 Jäger, *Verbrechen unter totalitärer Herrschaft*, 353.

51 Walter Buch, *Des nationalsozialistischen Menschen Ehre und Ehrenschatz*, in: *Deutsche Justiz. Rechtspflege und Rechtspolitik. Amtliches Blatt der deutschen Rechtspflege* 100, Ausgabe A, H. 42, 21. Oktober 1938, 1657–1664, hier 1664.



Arno Dusini

Das »Dritte Reich« der Phrase:  
Karl Kraus 1913, 1919 und 1933  
(Mit einer Note zu Paul Celan)

*Für Kurt Krolop (1930–2016)*

»Diese Bewandnis hat es mit allem, was Kraus schrieb: es ist ein gewendetes Schweigen, ein Schweigen, dem der Sturm der Ereignisse in seinen schwarzen Umhang fährt, ihn aufwirft und das grelle Futter nach außen kehrt.«

Walter Benjamin, *Karl Kraus* (1931)<sup>1</sup>

Dass für Karl Kraus die Sprache der »Mittelpunkt aller Erkenntnis« gewesen sei – diese glückliche Formulierung, die Werner Kraft (1896–1991) mit dem Zusatz versehen hat: »[...] kaum anders als für die griechischen Naturphilosophen das Feuer oder das Wasser« –, muss notwendig die Frage danach aufwerfen, wie sich das sprachkritische Werk des Karl Kraus zur Historie verhält.<sup>2</sup> Fälle, in denen mit derartiger Gewalt Sprachwissen und menschliche Verbrechen aufeinanderstoßen, gibt es wenige. Es ist die Leistung des im böhmischen Jičín 1874 geborenen und in Wien 1936 verstorbenen Karl Kraus, in diesem furchtbaren Zusammenstoß die Grundlagen eines Gesellschaftsvertrages sichtbar gemacht zu haben, ohne die nach wie vor keine menschliche Gesellschaft als Zivilgesellschaft gelten und existieren kann.

Tiefe und Reichweite des krausschen Unternehmens sind dabei zuallererst der von Anbeginn an pragmatischen Grundlegung des Problems gedacht. In ihrem Anwurf vielleicht nur vergleichbar den Projekten Ludwig Wittgensteins, insbesondere den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*, oder dem Werk Michail M. Bachtins, insbesondere der Fragment gebliebenen Schrift über die *Sprechgattungen*, ist Kraus' literarische Soziologie der Sprache in ihrem Innersten auf das gesellschaftliche, politische und historische Geschehen geichtet. Unvereinbar mit dem souverän ausgespielten Konzept der sogenannten Sprachkrise der Wiener Moderne, ist die harsche Sprachkritik des Karl

- 1 Walter Benjamin, Karl Kraus, in: ders., *Gesammelte Schriften*, hg. von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 Bde. in 14 Teilbänden, Frankfurt a. M. 1991, hier Bd. 2/1: Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge, 334–367, hier 338.
- 2 Werner Kraft, Karl Kraus. Beiträge zum Verständnis seines Werkes, Salzburg 1956, 175.

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Kraus nicht ästhetische Kritik »an der Sprache«, sondern »Kritik am Sprechen der Epoche«. <sup>3</sup> »Epoche« bezeichnet hier eine ins Extrem stürzende und gestürzte Zeit, für die Kraus keinen Augenblick zögerte, sprachliche Hypothek aufzunehmen, bis hin zur Gefährdung der eigenen Existenz.

Es sind gerade die Aporien der Spätphase, in der sich die kraussche Text- und Spracharbeit nur mehr auf die so präzise wie verzweifelte Untertitelung der Ideologie und der Taten des Nationalsozialismus verwiesen sieht, die Anlass geben zu zweierlei Schlussfolgerungen. Zu der einen, allgemeineren, dass »Sprachkritik« nur sinnvoll sein kann, wenn sie sich zugleich als Verhandlung ihrer Grenzen begreift, und zwar *in concreto*, das heißt im jeweiligen historischen Moment – Sprachkritik in ihrem ethischen und aufklärerischen Auftrag aufzusuchen bedeutet, sie nicht transhistorisch als stabil gegebenes und unangreifbares Feld zu konzipieren, sondern sie in ihren historischen Idiosynkrasien aufzusuchen, also an jenen Bruchstellen, die sich aus den Spannungen zwischen Historie und Sprechen ergeben. Andererseits führen diese Aporien zu der spezifischeren Schlussfolgerung, der zufolge die Kraus-Rezeption, fasziniert von der Geste ihres Ahnherrn, immer schon Gefahr lief, jenes autoritäre Konstrukt von Autorität und Autorschaft mitzutransportieren, von dem Kraus' Schreiben von Anfang an getragen war: die Überzeugung nämlich, dass der Lauf der Geschichte tatsächlich von einer einzigen Stimme, durch ihren sich immer wieder herstellenden, unverwechselbaren Sprechakt, gewendet werden könne. Nur wenige Schriften zu und über Kraus sind frei von dieser in die eigene Autorschaft verlängerten Illusion: Abgelöst von ihrem historischen Sprechursprung, gerät sie ins Hohle und geht jener Qualität verlustig, die Kraus auch noch in letzter sprachlicher Ohnmacht den Verehrten und Opfern bewahrt hat: *sympátheia*. Welches Wort, um an Krafts eingangs zitierten Hinweis auf die griechischen Naturphilosophen anzuschließen, nicht einfach wiederzugeben ist mit dem deutschen Wort »Mitleid«, wie es seit dem 18. Jahrhundert Verwendung findet. Gegen *bíos* ist es vielmehr im Sinn von *zoé*, also von »nacktem Leben«, zu übersetzen als »Zusammen-affiziert-Sein«. <sup>4</sup>

Gegen eine Verabsolutierung des literarischen Feldes, insbesondere gegen den Eindruck von Kontinuität, den die zwischen April 1899 und 1936 erschienene, seit 1912 von ihrem Herausgeber allein verfasste Zeitschrift *Die Fackel* zu etablieren vermag, schlagen die folgenden Überlegungen eine maßgebliche Differenzierung vor. Die Sprachkritik des Karl Kraus, wie sie

3 Helmut Arntzen, *Karl Kraus und die Presse*, München 1975, 39.

4 Art. »Sympathie«, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, hg. von Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer und Gottfried Gabriel, 13 Bde., Basel 1971–2007, hier Bd. 10, Basel 1998, 751–762, bes. 751.

in den 922 Nummern, 415 Hefen und 30 000 Seiten der *Fackel* dargelegt ist, soll in drei Phasen begriffen werden, die mit den historischen Epochen der Vorkriegszeit, des Ersten Weltkrieges und des Nationalsozialismus konvergieren. Dass die in ihrer historischen Wirklichkeit so unterschiedlichen Etappen ihren verbindlichen Begriff dabei im sprachlichen Phänomen der »Phrase« finden, wird nicht überraschen. Seit je ist »Phrase« ein insbesondere für die österreichische Literatur außerordentlich typisches sprachliches Erkenntniselement, das sich prominent durch die verschiedensten Gattungen und Schreibprojekte zieht. Ob Johann Nepomuk Nestroy, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Ingeborg Bachmann, Franz Schuh oder Marlene Streeruwitz – an der »Phrase« hat sich in der österreichischen Literatur auch alles literarische Sprachdenken zu bewähren.

### Paul Celan und Karl Kraus

Der Dichter Paul Celan hat auf die bitteren Erfahrungen einer vor allem im deutschsprachigen Raum vereinnahmenden Rezeption der noch 1944/45 entstandenen *Todesfuge* unter anderem mit dem programmatischen, seinerseits auf musikalische Kompositionstechniken verweisenden Gedicht *Engführung* reagiert.<sup>5</sup> Dessen Stellenwert ist unbestritten: Es beschließt den Band *Sprachgitter*, der 1958 erschien, im nämlichen Jahr, in dem Celan den Literaturpreis der Stadt Bremen entgegennahm, und zwar nicht zuletzt für seinen früheren, aus dem Jahr 1952 stammenden Gedichtband *Mohn und Gedächtnis*, der auch die *Todesfuge* enthielt. Peter Szondi, der Philologe und Freund Celans, war einer der Ersten, die nachdrücklich darauf hingewiesen haben, wie sehr Celans Poetik sich vor allem gegen falsche Vereinnahmung auszubilden hatte. Szondis klassisch gewordene Studie *Durch die Enge geführt. Versuch über die Verständlichkeit des modernen Gedichts* würdigt Celans *Engführung* denn auch, Zeile für Zeile, als Partitur eines Eingedenkens, als einen Akt, der den Lesenden einen Weg der Anerkennung und des Andenkens eröffnet.<sup>6</sup> Das allerdings nur unter der Voraussetzung, dass die Gedichte gegen alle metaphorisierende Lesart als bis ins kleinste Detail real auszu-

- 5 Paul Celan, *Die Gedichte*. Neue kommentierte Gesamtausgabe. Mit den zugehörigen Radierungen von Gisèle Celan-Lestrange, hg. und kommentiert von Barbara Wiedemann, Berlin 2018, 117–122.
- 6 Hier zit. nach Peter Szondi, *Durch die Enge geführt. Versuch über die Verständlichkeit des modernen Gedichts*, in: ders., *Schriften*, hg. von Jean Bollack u. a., 2 Bde., Frankfurt a. M. 1978, hier Bd. 2, 345–389 (zuerst franz.: *Lecture de Strette. Essai sur la poésie de Paul Celan*, in: *Critique* [1971], H. 288, 387–420).

buchstabierende Erinnerungen an die Opfer des Holocaust gelesen würden. Damit stellte sich Szondi dezidiert gegen die geläufige Einordnung Celans in eine deutsche Traditionslinie hermetischer Lyrik, also gegen eine Strategie der Textauslegung, die dem Nicht-Verstehen-Wollen der eigenen Geschichte die Figur fremder, vorgeblich unverständlicher Rede verlieh. Eine offensiv betriebene Hermetisierung der celanschen Texte hat heute, nicht zuletzt dank akribischer Bemühungen vonseiten der Textkritik, ihre Wirkungskraft weitgehend eingebüßt. Was in der Auslegung dieses für die deutsch-jüdische Geschichte so zentralen Textes indes nicht wahrgenommen wurde, ist der Umstand, dass er nicht nur »viele Stimmen«<sup>7</sup> eingeführt, sondern dass – exakt an einer Stelle, wo es um das Verstummen von Stimmen geht – Celans Text sich wörtlich auf Kraus' berühmtestes und nach wie vor umstrittenstes Gedicht *Man frage nicht* bezieht.

Kraus hatte bekanntlich im Oktober 1933 nach der deutschen Machtübergabe an die Nationalsozialisten anstelle des großen, für die Publikation weitgehend fertiggestellten Heftes der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht* ein bloß vier Seiten umfassendes *Fackel*-Heft veröffentlicht.<sup>8</sup> Dieses enthielt, neben einer zweieinhalbseitigen Grabrede auf den Freund und Architekten Adolf Loos, die am 13. September 1933 auf Schloss Janowitz in Böhmen verfassten und in einer handschriftlichen Fassung der Schlossherrin und geliebten Freundin Sidonie von Nádherný gewidmeten Zeilen »Man frage nicht, was all die Zeit ich machte [...]« (die Antwort hätte nur lauten können: Er schrieb an der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht*).<sup>9</sup> Der kurze, aus dem Off des Janowitzer Schlossparks gesprochene Text stellt Karl Kraus' erste Äußerung zu der »neuen Zeit« dar und spricht das Schweigen des Herausgebers der *Fackel* als das Problem des Sprach-»Verstummens« vor den Taten und der Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus aus. Dass, wie es im Gedicht heißt, »kein Wort« mehr »traf«, ist als Feststellung gemeint: »Das Wort entschlief, als jene Welt erwachte.« Paul Celan nimmt auf Anfangs- und Schlusszeile dieses Textes in der zweiten der neun Passagen von *Engführung* direkt Bezug:

Nirgends  
fragt es nach dir –

Der Ort, wo sie lagen, er hat  
einen Namen – er hat  
keinen. Sie lagen nicht dort. Etwas  
lag zwischen ihnen. Sie  
sah nicht hindurch.

7 Ebd., 351.

8 Die *Fackel*, XXXV. Jahr (1933), H. 888, 4.

9 Das Nádherný gewidmete Blatt findet sich transkribiert in Karl Kraus, *Wiese im Park*. Gedichte an Sidonie Nádherný, hg. von Friedrich Pfäfflin, Frankfurt a. M./Leipzig 2004, 92.



Sahn nicht, nein,  
redeten von  
Worten. Keines  
erwachte, der  
Schlaf  
kam über sie.

Der Satz des Kraus-Gedichtes wird von Celan pronominal überschrieben: »der Schlaf kam über sie« bewahrt nicht nur das von Kraus gemeinte »Wort«, sondern erinnert in den »Worten« auch an »sie«, an Personen. So trägt sich das »entschlafene« Wort ein in die Unmöglichkeit der Kommunikation derer und mit denen, die in den namenlosen Lagern »lagen«. <sup>10</sup> Es liegt in diesen wenigen Versen das Axiom allen Schreibens angesichts von Auschwitz: die irreparabel zerschlagene Zugehörigkeit in Wort und Physis. Im zentralen fünften Abschnitt des nach Art einer Spiegelfuge gebauten Gedichts »führt« Celan »eng«:

Deckte es  
zu – wer?

Kam, kam.  
Kam ein Wort, kam,  
kam durch die Nacht,  
wollt leuchten, wollt leuchten.

Asche.  
Asche, Asche.  
Nacht.  
Nacht-und-Nacht. – Zum  
Aug geh, zum feuchten.

Nur so viel: Klaus Reichert hat in einem wunderbar erhellenden Aufsatz auf von Celan ins Deutsche gebrachte *Strukturen des Hebräischen* aufmerksam gemacht, darunter die »hebräische Superlativbildung durch Wortverdopplung«, durch die es möglich wird, »auch solches superlativisch zu setzen, was seiner Art nach nicht steigerungsfähig ist«. »[W]as das hebräische Substrat hier für die Interpretation des Unerhörten zu leisten vermag«, <sup>11</sup> sei in unserem Zusammenhang wörtlich aufgenommen – die Doppelungen der Worte »Asche« und »Nacht« (strukturell wäre von der Figur des Hendiadyoins, des

10 Auch hier ist die *Todesfuge* in den Zeilen der *Engführung* als Palimpsest erkennbar: Celan hatte bei der Abfassung der *Todesfuge* in der *Izvestja* Berichte über das Ghetto Lemberg gelesen; die Deutschen nannten das zentrale Lager (eigentlich »Janowska am westlichen Stadtrand von Lemberg«) »Judenlag«. Siehe den Kommentar in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, 688 f.

11 Klaus Reichert, *Hebräische Züge in der Sprache Paul Celans*, in: Werner Hamacher/Winfried Menninghaus (Hgg.), *Paul Celan*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, 156–169, hier 158.

»eins durch zwei« zu sprechen) bergen in ihrer besonderen Form lautlich Gewaltiges: »Asche« enthält die gemeinsamen Laute der beiden Elternnamen Leo Antschel (1890–1942/43) und Friederike Schragner (1895–1942/43). Die »Nacht« wiederum gibt den Schriftzeichen des Wortes »Asche« Platz im wiederholten Klage- und Trauerlaut »Ach«, der sich übrigens auch in Paul Celans zweitem Vornamen »Pessach« findet. »Zum / Aug geh, zum feuchten«: Auf dem »engsten« Raum des Gedichts erfüllt sich, was Celan in der *Ansprache anlässlich der Entgegennahme des Literaturpreises der Freien Hansestadt Bremen* (1958) so ausspricht:

»Erreichbar, nah und unverloren blieb inmitten der Verluste dies eine: die Sprache. Sie, die Sprache, blieb unverloren, ja, trotz allem. Aber sie mußte nun hindurchgehen durch ihre eigenen Antwortlosigkeiten, hindurchgehen durch furchtbares Verstummen, hindurchgehen durch die tausend Finsternisse todbringender Rede. Sie ging hindurch und gab keine Worte her für das, was *geschah*; aber sie ging durch dieses Geschehen. Ging hindurch und durfte wieder zutage treten, »angereichert« von all dem«. <sup>12</sup>

Was bei Kraus am Ende des Schreibens steht, steht bei Celan vor dem Anfang.

Wie lässt sich nun, von einem so verlängerten Ende her, eine Sprachkritik darstellen, die zu ihrer Zeit nichts unversucht ließ, »ein menschenwürdiges Verhältnis von Sprache und Wirklichkeit zu begründen« beziehungsweise »wiederherzustellen«?<sup>13</sup>

### 1913: »Die akustische Maske«

Als Anfang April 1899 die erste Nummer der *Fackel* erscheint, heißt es programmatisch auf Seite 2: »kein tönendes ›Was wir bringen‹, aber ein ehrliches ›Was wir umbringen‹ hat sie sich als Leitwort gewählt. Was hier geplant wird, ist nichts als eine Trockenlegung des weiten Phrasensumpfes [...]«. Edward Timms hat in diesem Zusammenhang auf die Bedeutung des »Mo-

12 Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, hg. von Beda Allemann und Stefan Reichert unter Mitwirkung von Rolf Bücher, 5 Bde., Frankfurt a. M. 1983, hier Bd. 2: *Gedichte*, 185 f. (Hervorhebung des Verfassers).

13 Franz Schuh, *Das technoromantische Abenteuer. Überlegungen zu Karl Kraus und »Die letzten Tage der Menschheit«*, in: Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Tragödie in 5 Akten mit Vorspiel und Epilog*, Salzburg/Wien 2014, 779–799, hier 787.

tivs der Maske«<sup>14</sup> aufmerksam gemacht, das nicht nur die ersten Nummern der *Fackel* emblematisch zierte, sondern auch »den frühen Artikeln von Kraus, insbesondere seiner Pressekritik, innere Kohärenz«<sup>15</sup> verleihe. Mit Hinweis auf die besondere Theatralität des repräsentativen öffentlichen Lebens im damaligen Österreich legt Timms nahe, in der Maske das Äquivalent zur sprachlichen Phrase zu sehen: »Kraus' ganze Wahrnehmung scheint von einem Sensorium für Masken und Verkleidungen geprägt [...]«.<sup>16</sup>

Bemüht man sich um eine Bestimmung des Begriffs »Phrase«,<sup>17</sup> lässt sich dieser tatsächlich nicht schwer durch »Maske« ersetzen. Man nehme einen der Definitionsversuche:

»Eine Phrase wendet sich an die Umstehenden, sie ist nämlich ein Phänomen der Gesellschaft, auch wenn sie die individuellen Züge der jeweiligen Sprecher oder Schreiber trägt und sie geradezu herausarbeitet. Sie besteht aus Floskeln, mit denen man versucht, sich und anderen eine Lage zu erklären (oder einzureden). Aber die Lage ist ganz anders, als die Phrase suggeriert. Die Phrase hilft eine Lüge auszuhalten oder durchzusetzen, sie verrät potentiell jedoch auch, was durch sie verschleiert werden soll. Aus der Kritik der Phrase, wie sie Karl Kraus vornimmt, kommt heraus, was wirklich los ist [...]«.<sup>18</sup>

Die konstitutive Rolle, welche die Affinität von Phrase und Maske in der Genese des krausschen Sprachdenkens spielt, kann indes den entscheidenden Unterschied nicht übersehen lassen, dass die menschliche Sprache, anders als die Maske, als semiologisches System imstande ist, sich selbst rational zu reflektieren. Dieses Differenzmerkmal, das sie von allen anderen Informationssystemen abhebt (von Roman Jakobson in die allgemein-linguistische Bestimmung der »poetischen Funktion« gefasst), gibt schlicht vor, dass die menschliche Sprache beschreiben kann, wie sie selbst in ihren Zeichen funktioniert. Sie vermag ihre semiologische Verfasstheit also zu durchleuchten und – darin liegt das Entscheidende – für die Konstitutierung von Bedeutung zu aktivieren. Erwähnenswert ist das in unserem Kontext, weil diese Besonderheit die bis dahin auf stilistischen Instinkt und sprachliche Intuition angewiesene »Sprachkritik« als objektiv fassbare Erkenntnisteknik beschreib-

14 Edward Timms, Karl Kraus, Satyriker der Apokalypse. Leben und Werk 1874 bis 1918. Eine Biographie, aus dem Englischen von Max Looser und Michael Strand, Frankfurt a. M. 1999, 71.

15 Ebd., 72.

16 Ebd., 74.

17 Linguistisch bestimmt ist die »Phrase« durch die Merkmale: *Polylexikalität* (also Mehrgliedrigkeit); *Festigkeit* (der Austausch einzelner Elemente führt zum Verlust der integralen semantischen Bedeutung); *Idiomatizität* (wobei hier unterschieden wird zwischen a) Teilidiomatizität [einzelne Teile der Phrase behalten ihre usuelle, freie Bedeutung] und b) Vollidiomatizität [die Komponenten werden semantisch transformiert]). Siehe dazu Christine Palm, *Phraseologie. Eine Einführung*, Tübingen <sup>2</sup>1997. Eine systematische Untersuchung des krausschen Phrasengebrauchs steht aus.

18 Schuh, *Das technoromantische Abenteuer*, 784.

und überprüfbar macht: Die sprachliche Analyse ideologischer Positionen ist nicht mehr auf die Bejahung oder Verwerfung derselben angewiesen, sondern kann linguistisch argumentiert werden.

Nun zeigt sich allerdings, dass Kraus selbst sich niemals mit der Absicht getragen hat, die Strategien seiner Sprachkritik metasprachlich, geschweige denn konkret technisch auszuformulieren. In dem noch eigenhändig konzipierten, postum von Philipp Berger herausgegebenen Band *Die Sprache* (1937) ist stattdessen von »sprachlichem Zweifel« zu lesen: »Wäre denn eine stärkere Sicherung des Moralischen vorstellbar als der sprachliche Zweifel?«<sup>19</sup> In der *Fackel* spricht Kraus davon, dass es sein »Amt« sei, »die Zeit in Anführungszeichen zu setzen und sie in diesen Klammern ihr ureigenes Gesicht verzerren zu lassen, wissend, daß ihr Unsäglichstes nur von ihr selbst gesagt werden kann.«<sup>20</sup> An wieder anderem Ort, in dem Essay *Nestroy und die Nachwelt* (1912), bemerkt Kraus, dass der nestroysche Witz nicht auf die »edlen Regungen« seiner Figuren ziele, sondern es »nur auf ihre Phrasen abgesehen« habe. Die daran anschließende These lässt sich verlässlich als Selbstcharakterisierung verstehen: »Nestroy ist der erste deutsche Satiriker, in dem sich die Sprache Gedanken macht über die Dinge. Er erlöst die Sprache vom Starrkrampf, und sie wirft ihm für jede Redensart einen Gedanken ab.«<sup>21</sup>

Kraus' Verfahren, so wiederum Werner Kraft,

»ist an jeder Stelle kasuistisch, aber darum sinnvoll, weil die Sprache als Organon aller Erkenntnis vorausgesetzt wird: der Sprachdenker ist an der Frage, ob und inwieweit seine Ergebnisse mit denen einer vorhandenen oder erst zu schreibenden wissenschaftlichen Sprachlehre zusammenfallen, nicht wesentlich interessiert. Er geht vielmehr jeweils auf sein Ziel, die Lösung nämlich von Einzelfragen, mit dem ungeheuren Vertrauen, daß der Sprache, die denkt und das Gedachte als Geschriebenes richtig festhält, schon das ›Richtige‹ über das jeweilige Sprachproblem einfallen werde.«<sup>22</sup>

Meine Annahme lautet von daher, dass Kraus' erste Phase der Sprachkritik von einem tiefen »Vertrauen« in das »Sich-Gedanken-Machen der Sprache über die Dinge« gekennzeichnet ist, also von einem intuitiven Glauben in die selbstreflexive Kraft des Sprachlichen, die die Wirklichkeit zur Kenntlichkeit bringen könne. Dabei geht Kraus' Verständnis von Sprache grundlegend von einer an der Literatur geschulten Vorstellung von Sprachvermögen aus: Gerade die Literatur und deren Rezitation (Letzteres zeigen die berühmten

19 Karl Kraus, *Schriften*, hg. von Christian Wagenknecht, 20 Bde. in 2 Abteilungen, Frankfurt a. M. 1986–1994, hier Bd. 7: *Die Sprache*, Frankfurt a. M. 1987, 371 f.

20 Ders., *Erfahrung*, in: *Die Fackel*, XV. Jahr (1913), H. 381–383, 42–48, hier 43.

21 Ders., *Nestroy und die Nachwelt*. Zum 50. Todestage, in: ders., *Heine und die Folgen*. *Schriften zur Literatur*, hg. und kommentiert von Christian Wagenknecht und Eva Willms, Göttingen 2014, 151–174, hier 162.

22 Kraft, *Karl Kraus*, 188.

krausschen Vorlesungen) ermöglichen in ihrem Abgleich eine Analyse des öffentlichen journalistischen, juristischen und politischen Sprechens.

Aus dem Jahr, in dem Kraus den oben genannten Nestroy-Aufsatz veröffentlicht, stammt denn auch ein Text, der als paradigmatisch für Kraus' analytisches Verfahren gelten kann, nicht zuletzt weil er die Phrase als blutige Waffe behauptet und zugleich mit allen Konsequenzen vorführt. Der Text trägt den doppeldeutigen Titel *Die Phrase im Krieg* und ist datiert mit »Mai 1913«:

»Blut ist unter allen Umständen nötig. Barbarische Völker brauchen es, um endlich in den Besitz der Phrase zu gelangen: wir, um die Phrase herunterzuwaschen. Es ist bereits so weit gekommen, dass im Zusammenhang mit der Flottendemonstration der Wunsch ausgesprochen werden kann, es möge eine ›Klippe umschiffen‹ oder ein ›Ufer erreicht‹ werden. Klippen lassen sich aber nur auf dem Festland umschiffen, zum Beispiel bei einer Krida, und Ufer werden nur in Plaidoyers erreicht. Seitdem Kaufleute Klippen umschiffen und Advokaten Ufer erreichen, können es die Admirale nicht mehr tun. Wahrlich, man ist im Wasser, wenn auf dem Wasser mit Vergleichen aus dem Wasser gearbeitet wird. In geistig bankerotten Zeiten wird statt der Anschauungsmünze das Papiergeld der Phrase verausgabt. Wenn statt der Dinge Bilder von anderen Dingen bezogen werden, steht es schlimm genug. Aber wenn diese Bilder auch dort noch gebrauchsfähig sind, wo die Dinge schon bei den Dingen sind, wenn Ufer eine Umschreibung für Ufer und Klippe eine Phrase für Klippe ist – dann ist ein Krieg unvermeidlich!«<sup>23</sup>

Zunächst scheint hier alles sehr einfach. Der Text arbeitet durchgehend mit phraseologischen Minimalpaaren, die einmal grammatisch definiert, das andere Mal metaphorisch codiert sind und gegeneinander überkreuzt werden. Alles hängt dabei an der Unterscheidung von wörtlicher und übertragener Rede: »Seitdem Kaufleute Klippen umschiffen und Advokaten Ufer erreichen, können es die Admirale nicht mehr tun«. Komplexer wird es, wenn man in Rechnung stellt, dass der Text das blutige Potenzial der Phrase einerseits zur Barbarei hin (»Barbarische Völker brauchen [Blut], um endlich in den Besitz der Phrase zu gelangen«) ebenso offenhält wie andererseits zur Zivilisation (»wir [brauchen das Blut], um die Phrase herunterzuwaschen«). Biblisch dagegen ist der Satz eingeleitet, der die Unterscheidung zwischen wörtlicher und übertragener Rede unter bestimmten Umständen als obsolet oder eben überflüssig darstellt: »Wahrlich, man ist im Wasser, wenn auf dem Wasser mit Vergleichen aus dem Wasser gearbeitet wird«. Es sind genau solche Momente scheinbarer Souveränität im krausschen Schreiben, in denen die kasuistische Übertreibung, auch aus dem Nachhinein, prophetische Züge annimmt. Was Kraus im Einzelnen vorausschauend zu perhorreszieren vermag, wird sich im politischen Bruch jenes kulturellen Vertrages realisieren, auf den Sprachkritik angewiesen bleibt: Wenn Dinge und Handlungen sich

23 Karl Kraus, *Die Phrase im Krieg*, in: *Die Fackel*, XV. Jahr (1913), Heft 374–375, 3.

nicht mehr an ihrer Sprache messen, wenn sich die Maske nicht mehr vom Gesicht und das Gesicht nicht mehr von der Maske unterscheiden lassen, verlieren alle Zeichen ihre Verlässlichkeit. Was realiter geschieht, ist dann nur mehr als Zustand zwischen Geschehen und Verstellung zu haben, nicht aber in der »Vorstellung, was das alles in Wirklichkeit« sei.<sup>24</sup> Kraus (und das verbindet ihn mit Saussures Sprachtheorie) ahnt sehr früh: Wenn die Zeichen arbiträr werden, ist der Versuch, »in den Formen« der Sprache »über sie zu denken«,<sup>25</sup> gleichbedeutend mit dem Eintritt in ein Spiegelkabinett.

### 1919: *Die Gasmask*e

Für die zweite Phase der Sprachkritik steht der heute wohl bekannteste Text von Kraus, die in ihren meisten Szenen noch im Krieg entstandene *Tragödie in fünf Akten mit Vorspiel und Epilog, Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*.<sup>26</sup> Allein das Personenverzeichnis des 220 Szenen umfassenden Werkes nimmt nahezu 50 Seiten ein. Die in der Tragödie niedergelegten Ereignisse scheinen auf den ersten Blick keiner Sprachkritik mehr zu bedürfen. Kraus bemerkt in der Präambel zu den *Letzten Tagen*:

»Die Aufführung des Dramas, dessen Umfang nach irdischem Zeitmaß etwa zehn Abende umfassen würde, ist einem Marstheater zugedacht. Theatergänger dieser Welt vermöchten ihm nicht standzuhalten. Denn es ist Blut von ihrem Blute und der Inhalt ist von dem Inhalt der unwirklichen, undenkbaren, keinem wachen Sinn erreichbaren, keiner Erinnerung zugänglichen und nur in blutigem Traum verwahrten Jahre [...]«.<sup>27</sup>

Und Kraus weiter:

»Die unwahrscheinlichsten Taten, die hier gemeldet werden, sind wirklich geschehen; ich habe gemalt, was sie nur taten. Die unwahrscheinlichsten Gespräche, die hier geführt werden, sind wörtlich gesprochen worden; die grellsten Erfindungen sind Zitate. Sätze, deren Wahnwitz unverlierbar dem Ohr eingeschrieben ist, wachsen zur Lebensmusik. Das Dokument ist Figur; Berichte erstehen als Gestalten, Gestalten verenden als Leitartikel; das Feuilleton bekam einen Mund, der es monologisch von sich gibt; Phrasen stehen auf zwei Beinen – Menschen behielten nur eines. Tonfälle rasen und rasseln durch die Zeit und schwellen zum Choral der unheiligen Handlung. Leute, die unter der Menschheit gelebt und sie überlebt haben, sind als Täter und Sprecher einer Gegenwart, die nicht Fleisch, doch Blut, nicht Blut, doch Tinte hat, zu Schatten und Marionetten

24 Schuh, *Das technoromantische Abenteuer*, 785.

25 Kraft, Karl Kraus, 188.

26 Kraus, *Schriften*, Bd. 10: *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Tragödie in fünf Akten mit Vorspiel und Epilog*, Frankfurt a. M. 1986.

27 Ebd., 9.

abgezogen und auf die Formel ihrer tätigen Wesenlosigkeit gebracht. Larven und Lemuren, Masken des tragischen Karnevals, haben lebende Namen, weil dies so sein muß und weil eben in dieser vom Zufall bedingten Zeitlichkeit nichts zufällig ist.«<sup>28</sup>

Um der nicht enden wollenden Vielfalt der Stimmen auf engstem Raum gerecht zu werden, sah sich Kraus also veranlasst, aus der Prosaform der periodischen *Fackel* in die dramatische Form zu wechseln. Auch wenn sie zuerst in der *Fackel* steht: Es ist die Tragödie im klassischen abendländischen Sinn, zu deren Autorität Kraus Zuflucht nimmt. Wenn mediengeschichtliche Zuspidzungen versucht haben, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* als Archiv zu lesen, so geht das am Wesentlichen der Sache vorbei: Die Tragödie führt das Zitat als Sprechen, als Handlung konkreter Personen vor. Kraus, der sich nach einer Formulierung von Elias Canetti »jeder Einzellerscheinung des Krieges gestellt« hat,<sup>29</sup> geht mit der tragischen Form weit über jede Archiv-idee hinaus:

»Was er in diesem Falle satirisch verkürzte, war gut verkürzt, was er übertrieb, so präzis übertrieben, daß es eben in dieser Übertreibung erst Bestand hatte und unvergeßlich wurde. Der Weltkrieg ist vollständig, ohne Trost und Schonung, ohne Verschönerung, Verringerung, und vor allem, was das Wichtigste ist, ohne Gewöhnung in die *Letzten Tage der Menschheit* eingegangen. Was sich darin wiederholte, blieb in jeder seiner Wiederholungen gleich entsetzlich. Man staunt darüber, daß es einen Haß von solchen Ausmaßen je gegeben hat, einen Haß, der selbst dem Weltkrieg gewachsen war, der sich mit sehender Wut in ihn verbiß und vier Jahre lang nicht losließ.«<sup>30</sup>

Selbst keiner, der dem autoritären Wort abgeschworen hätte, reiht Canetti den Autor von *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* mit »Aristophanes, Juvenal, Quevedo, Swift und Gogol [...] unter die gezählten großen, die tödlichen Satiriker der Menschheit«<sup>31</sup> ein und gewinnt aus der Begegnung mit Kraus den für sein Schreiben so zentralen Begriff der »akustischen Maske« gerade dort, wo dieser für Kraus schon tief ambivalent geworden war.<sup>32</sup>

Die Qualität des Werkes ist nur vor dem Hintergrund der Anstrengung zu ermessen, die eine Verdichtung des Grauens zuerst auf sprachliche Weise zuwege bringt: vier Jahre Krieg zu zehn Abenden Marstheater. Dass dabei das, was sich in der Form der Tragödie wiederholte, »in jeder seiner Wieder-

28 Ebd., 9 f.

29 »[...] nicht eine Stimme gibt es, die er überhört hätte, von jedem spezifischen Tonfall des Krieges war er besessen und gab ihn zwingend wieder.« Elias Canetti, *Der neue Karl Kraus* (1974), in: ders., *Das Gewissen der Worte*, Frankfurt a. M. 1985, 254–278, hier 257 f.

30 Ebd., 258.

31 Ders., *Karl Kraus, Schule des Widerstands* (1965), in: ebd., 42–53, hier 46.

32 In dem Essay *Karl Kraus, Schule des Widerstands* spricht Canetti mehrfach von »akustischem Zitat«. Der Begriff »akustische Maske« findet sich u. a. in Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, Hamburg 1960 (Sonderausgabe 1984), Kap.: *Die Figur und die Maske*, 428–433.

holungen gleich entsetzlich« blieb, verdankt sich paradoxerweise einer für Kraus bis dahin ungewöhnlichen Zurücknahme der eigenen Autorschaft in die verstärkte Regie des Materials. 1914 formuliert er in Voraussicht auf *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*:

»Vor dem Totenbett der Zeit stehe ich und zu meinen Seiten der Reporter und der Photograph. Ihre letzten Worte weiß jener, und dieser bewahrt ihr letztes Gesicht. Und um ihre letzte Wahrheit weiß der Photograph noch besser als der Reporter. Mein Amt war nur ein Abklatsch eines Abklatsches. Ich habe Geräusche übernommen und sagte sie jenen, die nicht mehr hörten. Ich habe Gesichte empfangen und zeigte sie jenen, die nicht mehr sahen. Mein Amt war, die Zeit in Anführungszeichen zu setzen, in Druck und Klammern sich verzerren zu lassen, wissend, dass ihr Unsäglichstes nur von ihr selbst gesagt werden konnte. Nicht auszusprechen, nachzusprechen, was ist. Nachzumachen, was scheint. Zu zitieren und zu photographieren.«<sup>33</sup>

Zeugenschaft bedeutet an dieser Stelle Ausstellung schuldhafter Phrasenhaftigkeit. So aber Sprachkritik nur eine Perspektive und keinerlei Alternative des Sprechens mehr zu projizieren vermag, erlangt auch die »Phrase« in ihr neuen Stellenwert. Den Krieg, im Medium der Phrasen geführt, in diesen darzustellen, öffnet nämlich der Möglichkeit Tür und Tor, das mörderische Tun wiederum auf seine vermeintlich rhetorischen Effekte zu reduzieren. Was als »Phrase« in seiner pragmatischen Konsequenz tragisch zur Ausfaltung gebracht wird, kann unmittelbar wiederum zur Phrase gemacht werden: »Phrase« wird wieder Phrase, und zwar in genau dem Augenblick, in dem sie ihrer blutigen Tatkraft überführt wird. Dass »Operettenfiguren die Tragödie der Menschheit« spielten, ist ein Problem, das Kraus selbst akut wahrgenommen und das ihn zur Warnung veranlasst hat:

»Die Handlung, in hundert Szenen und Höllen führend, ist unmöglich, zerklüftet, heldenlos wie jene. Der Humor ist nur der Selbstvorwurf eines, der nicht wahnsinnig wurde bei dem Gedanken, mit heilem Hirn die Zeugenschaft dieser Zeitdinge bestanden zu haben. Außer ihm, der die Schmach solchen Anteils einer Nachwelt preisgibt, hat kein anderer ein Recht auf diesen Humor. Die Mitwelt, die geduldet hat, daß die Dinge geschehen, die hier aufgeschrieben sind, stelle das Recht, zu lachen, hinter die Pflicht, zu weinen.«<sup>34</sup>

Der Zeuge hat noch die Lächerlichkeit seiner Zeugenschaft zu notieren; erst im *Epilog* zu den *Letzten Tagen der Menschheit* finden die Phrasen im apokalyptischen Umkreis von »Doktor-Ing. Abendrot aus Berlin« tatsächlich als »Gasmasken« ihren grauenhaften, gänzlich unphrasenhaften Auftritt. Kraus kommentiert in dem Aufsatz *Das technoromantische Abenteuer*: »Das Mißverhältnis zwischen der Tat und der mitgeschleppten Ideologie: davon allein kommt diese entsetzliche Gasluft, in der wir glorios ersticken.«<sup>35</sup>

33 Karl Kraus, Notizen, in: Die Fackel, XVI. Jahr (1914), H. 400–403, 41–60, hier 46.

34 Ders., Schriften, Bd. 10: Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, 9.

35 Ders., Schriften, Bd. 6: Weltgericht II, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, 89.



1934: *Das dritte Reich der Phrase*

Von »Operettenfiguren« war mit dem Aufkommen des Nationalsozialismus keine Rede mehr. Von Friedrich Dürrenmatt schon 1953 mit dem Prädikat versehen, dieser vierhundertseitigen Prognose der Hitlerzeit sei in den »kommenden Jahren nur noch Quantitatives« beizufügen,<sup>36</sup> erreicht die zwischen Anfang Mai und September 1933 ausgearbeitete *Dritte Walpurgisnacht* im sprachkritischen Werk von Karl Kraus notwendig eine neue Stufe. Auf ihr verkehren sich die Vorzeichen von Sprache und Wirklichkeit nochmals entscheidend. Nicht mehr maskenhafte Phrasen sind es, die die Wahrheit verstellen und durch Demonstration ihrer Phrasenhaftigkeit ihrer verstellenden Funktion überführt werden könnten. Auch nicht mehr kriegstreiberische Phrasen sind es, die – wie in den *Letzten Tagen* gezeigt – das Zerstörerische depotenzieren, indem sie das Tragische operettenhaft verkleiden. Es geschieht anderes, vor sprachkritischem Hintergrund Unerwartetes: Phrasen verwirklichen sich überwältigend als Phrasen, ohne Verstellung; die Phrase maskiert nicht mehr, sie greift nicht nur ein, sondern kommt zu sich selbst; sie verkörpert sich zur Realität. Das (spracherkenntnistheoretische) Unauthentische wird schlicht wahr. Und, vielleicht entscheidender und nur für die wenigsten Zeitgenossen vorstellbar: Der Nationalsozialismus verleiht der Phrase gewaltsame Autorität *und* Authentizität. Darin liegt das revolutionäre Sprachmoment der NS-Ideologie.

Hatte *Die Fackel* 1899 in ihrem ersten Heft, Seite 1, noch mit dem Vorsatz begonnen, »Clubfanatikern und Fraktionsidealistern die Stirn bieten zu wollen«, so ist nunmehr, 1934, von »Übeln« die Rede, »vor denen, was man die Stirn bieten nennt, aufhört eine Metapher zu sein«.<sup>37</sup> Der Begriff, mit dem Karl Kraus diesen Sachverhalt in der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht* zu fassen sucht (»die umfassendste Beschreibung – des Unbeschreiblichen –, die je in einem Halbjahr auf einem Schreibtisch entstanden ist«),<sup>38</sup> ist, wie das *Wörterbuch der Redensarten* zur *Fackel* nachhaltig festgeschrieben hat, ein Begriff des Rechts:

»Für seinen Versuch, *das Ereignis und die bewegende Kraft* des Nationalsozialismus darzustellen, hat Karl Kraus die Formel von der *Revindikation des Phraseninhalts* verwendet. REVINDIKATION ist ein Wort der Rechtssprache. Es bedeutet soviel wie ›Rückforderung‹, ›Geltendmachung‹, ›Wiederzueignung‹. ›Von der Wiedererlangung (Rückbemächtigung) des Verlorenen‹, vom ›Recht der Wiedererlangung‹: ›rem suam

36 Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die dritte Walpurgisnacht*, in: ders., *Theater-Schriften und Reden*, hg. von Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, Zürich 1966, 247–250, hier 249.

37 Kraus, *Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint*, in: *Die Fackel*, XXXVI. Jahr (1934), H. 890–905, 1–315, hier 153.

38 Ebd., 73.

vindicandi« handelt Kants »Privatrecht« [Die *Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1797, § 39]. Karl Kraus zielt auch mit anderen Worten und Wendungen auf denselben Sachverhalt. Er spricht vom *Aufbruch der Phrase zur Tat*, von der *Erneuerung deutschen Lebens*, die *der alten Redensart zu ihrem unseligen Ursprung* geholfen hat, er spricht davon, dass die Nationalsozialisten »die Phrase effektiert« [Dritte *Walpurgisnacht*, 144] haben und dass Metaphern »Wirklichkeit« werden, er gedenkt des *blutlebensfähigsten Erfolges der Redensart, der jemals weltgeschichtlich wurde* und erwähnt den *Gebrauch der Phrase zu tödlichem Zwecke*, er spricht davon, dass die Tat sich *der Phrase entwunden* hat und der Tod *dem Schlagwort entbunden* ist, und er nennt es erstaunlich, dass Leute *noch Redensarten gebrauchen, die sie nicht mehr machen*.<sup>39</sup>

Kraus muss erkennen, dass gerade die sprachkritisch so ergiebige Öffnung der Phrase, die Einführung einer erkenntnisstiftenden Differenz in die Phrase, also die Konfrontation von wörtlicher und übertragener Bedeutung, angesichts der Sprechakte der Nationalsozialisten nicht mehr ausreicht, weil deren Phrasen das Übertragene im Wörtlichen exekutieren:

»Eine *Revindikation des Phraseninhalts* geht nach Kraus durch alle Wendungen, in denen ein ursprünglich blutiger oder brachialer Inhalt sich längst zum Sinn einer geistigen Offensive abgeklärt hat. Die PHRASE ist in ihre Wirklichkeit zurückgenommen. Das Phänomen beobachtet Karl Kraus schon im Zusammenhang mit dem Ersten Weltkrieg: *Manche Redensart erwacht: Bis aufs Blut sekkieren*. Mit dem Kennwort der REVINDIKATION wird es aber erst in Bezug auf den Nationalsozialismus markiert. Beispiele, die Kraus in diesem Zusammenhang anführt, sind: *Salz in offene Wunden streuen, mit einem blauen Auge davonkommen, jemandem kein Haar krümmen, das paßt wie die Faust aufs Auge, Hand anlegen, aus einem Menschen ein Gulasch machen*.<sup>40</sup>

Die *Dritte Walpurgisnacht* kann im Zitat nationalsozialistischer Rede und Zeitungsmeldung also klar aufweisen, dass das Phrasenhafte ungebrochen in die Tat umgesetzt wird. Linguistisch gesprochen zieht das Idiom seine Idiomatizität unbemerkt von sich ab. Der übertragene Sinn, in der Phrase nur mehr abstrakte Spur einer in den Worten aufgehobenen Erfahrung, wird dem Wort nach wiederum realisiert. Dabei konnte der Nationalsozialismus mit der Trägheit kollektiven Sprachbewusstseins rechnen. Nicht daran zu glauben, dass die nationalsozialistischen Schergen auch tun und tun würden, was sie sagen, verweigert das sprachlich Offensichtliche. Trotz aller Information (Kraus las, was er erkannte, in der Zeitung), wird Phrase weiter für Phrase gehalten. Und wenn nicht, konnte der Nationalsozialismus mit dem zynischen Effekt rechnen, dass dort, wo er vollbrachte, was er sagte, er sich immer noch gegen die phrasenhafte Politik seiner Gegner profilierte.

39 Wörterbuch der Redensarten zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift »Die Fackel«, hg. von Werner Welzig, Wien 1999, 1049 (Hervorhebungen im Original unterstrichen).

40 Ebd. (Hervorhebungen im Original unterstrichen, letzter Satz kursiviert).

Ich kehre zum Anfang zurück: Karl Kraus ist als Dekonstruktivist oder »Destruktivist« von Phrasen (Walter Benjamin schreibt in seinem Kraus-Essay 1931 von der »Gerechtigkeit, die destruktiv den konstruktiven Zweideutigkeiten des Rechtes Einhalt gebietet«)<sup>41</sup> nicht nur analytisch in seinen Gegenstand verstrickt.

Als Kraus aus, wie er sagt, »gedanklichen und moralischen Gründen« den schon fertig gesetzten Text der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht* vom Druck zurückzieht und stattdessen das dünnste *Fackel*-Heft 888 im Oktober 1933 mit der Grabrede auf Adolf Loos und dem Gedicht *Man frage nicht* publiziert, ist die Empörung groß.<sup>42</sup> Kraus druckt entsprechende *Nachrufe auf Karl Kraus* im darauffolgenden *Fackel*-Heft 889 vom 23. Juli 1934 ab, ohne Kommentar. Noch Ende Juli 1934 erscheint dann das 315 Seiten umfassende Heft 890–905 unter dem Titel *Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint*, das Teile der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht* enthält.

Die Buchversion der *Dritten Walpurgisnacht* wird 1952 publiziert; die Textfahnen konnten, nachdem Karl Kraus am 12. Juli 1936 gestorben und seine Wohnung 1938 von den Nazis geplündert worden war, in die Schweiz gerettet werden. Sie liegen heute in Jerusalem. Zeugenschaft also auch hier, nachgetragen, nicht einer Urkatastrophe, vielmehr eines Zivilisationsbruchs, auf den Kraus zuletzt mit der »angereicherten« Lesart eines deutschen Klassikers antwortet. Es ist ein Zitat aus Goethes *Faust II*, jenem Text, der die berühmte zweite *Walpurgisnacht* enthält, auf den Kraus im Schluss seiner dritten zurückgreift, eine Formulierung, die wohl steht »für das, was geschah«, und bis zum äußersten »durch dieses Geschehen« geht.

»Wie hat uns das Monstrum gerührt und gewürgt! Erstand es aus den Gasschwaden des Kriegs, um neue, allerstickende heraufzubringen? Der Giftgeist, dem die Gehirne erlagen, droht der Apokalypse zu widerstehn. Soll frommer Sinn in zivilisiertem Mißbrauch der Gottesgaben die Zuchtrute am Himmel erkennen? Ist, worunter die Erde gelangt ist, ein Komet, dem Kreuze gleichend, von dem die Bücher sagen, rechtsgeflügelt bedeute es Niedergang, Vergehen, Tod?

Ein armes Volk hebt beschwörend die Rechte empor zu dem Gesicht, zu der Stirn, zu der Pechsträhne: Wie lange noch! – Nicht so lange, als das Gedenken aller wahren wird, die das Unbeschreibliche, das hier getan war, gelitten haben; jedes zertretenen Herzens, jedes zerbrochenen Willens, jeder geschändeten Ehre, aller Minuten geraubten Glücks der Schöpfung und jedes gekrümmten Haares auf dem Haupte aller, die nichts verschuldet hatten, als geboren zu sein! Und nur so lange, bis die guten Geister einer Menschenwelt aufleben zur Tat der Vergeltung:

41 Benjamin, Karl Kraus, 367.

42 Zu diesem so umstrittenen Gedicht siehe bes. Kurt Krolop, Bertolt Brecht und Karl Kraus, in: ders., *Sprachsatire als Zeitsatire bei Karl Kraus*. 9 Studien, Berlin 1987, 252–303, sowie zuletzt das instruktive Kap. »Annus terribilis: 1934« in Jens Malte Fischer, Karl Kraus. Der Widersprecher. Biografie, Wien 2020, 840–881, bes. 877–879.

Sei das Gespenst, das gegen uns erstanden,  
Sich Kaiser nennt und Herr von unsern Landen,  
Des Heeres Herzog, Lehnsherr unsrer Großen,  
Mit eigner Faust ins Totenreich gestoßen!<sup>43</sup>

Was mit den berühmten Worten »Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein« begonnen, endet – nach der detaillierten, sprachkritischen, 400 Seiten umfassenden Dokumentation der NS-Gräuel – mit der goetheschen Wendung von der »eigene[n] Faust«, die die in der Literatur merkwürdig lebendig gehaltene Tradition des Tyrannenmordes fortschreibt. Das klassische Wort, hier steht es als Aufforderung.

43 Kraus, Schriften, Bd. 12: Dritte Walpurgisnacht, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, 326 f.

Frank Golczewski

## Grenzland-Erfahrungen: Die ukrainische Nationsbildung und die Juden

Nationen sind Konstrukte. Sie entstehen durch die Akzeptanz von angenommenen kulturellen Komplexen (Sprache, Religion), historischen Gemeinsamkeiten, ständischen oder ökonomischen Gruppierungen und nicht zuletzt durch den Willen zusammenzugehören. Neben der Inklusion steht aber auch immer die Ausgrenzung. In der Abgrenzung voneinander gewinnen Menschengruppen ihre Gestalt. Dabei wechseln die Ordnungsprinzipien, nach denen diese Gruppen sich definieren. Waren es im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit primär religiöse Ordnungen, so wurden mit der Französischen Revolution säkular-kulturelle Ordnungselemente zur Regel, die sich im Nationalstaat äußerten. Eine modernistische und – da die Rassenlehre als Wissenschaft betrachtet wurde – wissenschaftliche Ordnung war dann die rassistische, die im Nationalsozialismus gipfelte. So wie historisch immer neue Ordnungen geschaffen wurden, sind auch immer neue Nationen beziehungsweise deren Zusammenschlüsse kreiert oder entdeckt worden und ihnen wurden bis ins 20. Jahrhundert hinein Eigenschaften zugeschrieben. Auf diese Weise entstanden sehr unterschiedliche – inklusive wie auch exklusive – Konstruktionen von Nation. Wie etwa beim russischen Nationalismus, der Ukrainer und Belorussen (und noch einige mehr) zur »russischen Welt« (*russkij mir*) rechnet, oder dem deutschen Nationalsozialismus, der auch die assimilierten deutschen Juden aus der Nation ausschloss, hat dies in der Durchsetzung mehr mit Macht als mit Realität oder der Selbsteinschätzung der Betroffenen zu tun. Auf der historischen Basis (und durch kulturelle Prägungen) entstehen dabei Einstellungen, die von langer Dauer sind. Was im Folgenden betrachtet wird, ist das Beziehungsverhältnis zweier schillernder kulturell-nationaler Gruppen, der Ukrainer und der Juden.

### Zur Problematik der nationalen Definition

Antworten auf die Frage nach der ukrainischen Nation fallen ähnlich ambivalent aus wie diejenigen nach einer jüdischen. Für Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker und Theodor Herzl, für die anfangs Emanzipation und Assimilation

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im Vordergrund standen, kristallisierte sich eine säkulare nationale Qualität des Judentums erst im Laufe der Zeit heraus,<sup>1</sup> Simon Dubnow handelte von dem jüdischen Selbstbewusstsein einer (geistigen) Nation, die aber nicht nach einem eigenen Staat, sondern nach Emanzipation in der Diaspora mit Selbstverwaltung, eigener Sprache und selbstbestimmter Erziehung strebte. Die nationaljüdischen Positionen kontrastierten mit der fortbestehenden jüdischen Assimilation, die nicht nur in West- und Mitteleuropa zu einer Konfessionalisierung und Angleichung des Judentums an die jeweilige nichtjüdische Umgebung führte, sondern auch in Osteuropa mit der Säkularisierung um sich griff, was bis heute manchmal unterschätzt wird.<sup>2</sup>

Die nationale Einordnung der Ostslaven fiel und fällt bis heute ähnlich diffus aus. Dass »Ukraina« ein Wort für »Grenzland« ist, das auch auf andere Gegenden angewendet wurde, und dass für Russen in der Ukraine mit Kiew der Beginn der russischen Geschichte zu suchen ist, kontrastiert mit dem Eigenständigkeitsgefühl mindestens der Westukrainer, dem von Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj begründeten nationalukrainischen historischen Narrativ und der seit etwa neunzig Jahren kodifizierten eigenen Sprache.

Während aus der großrussischen Perspektive des 19. Jahrhunderts die Ukrainer, die als »Kleinrussen« (*Malorossy*) bezeichnet wurden, eine durch polnischen Einfluss kontaminierte Spielart der »eigentlichen« Großrussen waren, die man durch entsprechende Regelungen rerussifizieren wollte, entstanden sowohl in der russländischen als auch in der österreichischen Ukraine nationale Konzepte, die von einer separaten, mit regulären Attributen wie Territorium und Sprache auszustattenden Nationalität ausgingen.

Wie weitgehend das bis heute umstritten ist, geht aus einer Ansprache des russischen Präsidenten Putin vom 19. September 2013, kurz vor dem Ausbruch der Maidan-Unruhen in Kiew, hervor:

»Die Ukraine ist ohne jeden Zweifel ein unabhängiger Staat. So gefiel es der Geschichte, so ist es geschehen. Aber wir werden nicht vergessen, dass die heutige russländische Staatlichkeit Dnjepr-Wurzeln hat, wie wir sagen. Wir haben ein gemeinsames Dnjepr-Taufbecken. Die Kiewer Rus begann als Fundament des künftigen riesigen russländischen Staates. Wir haben eine gemeinsame Tradition, eine gemeinsame Mentalität, eine gemeinsame Geschichte, eine gemeinsame Kultur. Wir haben einander sehr nahe Sprachen. In diesem Sinne, das möchte ich noch einmal wiederholen, sind wir ein Volk.«<sup>3</sup>

1 Siehe Marlies Bilz, *Hovevei Zion in der Ära Leo Pinsker*, Hamburg/Münster 2007, 37–40.

2 Zur Problematik siehe Katrin Steffen, *Jüdische Polonität. Nation und Identität im Spiegel der polnischsprachigen jüdischen Presse 1918–1939*, Göttingen 2004.

3 Siehe *Vystuplenie Vladimira Putina na zasedanii kluba »Valdaj«* [Rede Vladimir Putins bei einem Treffen des Valdai-Klubs], 19. September 2013, <<http://www.rg.ru/2013/09/19/stenogramma-site.html>> (4. Juli 2022). Die in diesem Beitrag verwendeten Übersetzungen aus dem Ukrainischen und dem Russischen stammen vom Autor.

Was Putin nicht versteht: Nationsbildung vollzieht sich nicht zuletzt historisch durch Abgrenzung. Eine der heftigsten Abgrenzungen ging im ukrainisch-russischen Verhältnis vonstatten, aber auch – damit partiell zusammenhängend – in der national-ukrainischen Perzeption der Juden.

In Berichten von Schoahüberlebenden figurieren recht häufig Ukrainer als diejenigen, die die Deutschen am effektivsten unterstützt hätten und heftig jüdenfeindlich gewesen seien. Sie kommen in unterschiedlichen Rollen vor, am direktesten in den sogenannten Schutzmannschaften, einer ukrainischen (aber auch weißrussischen, baltischen, russischen) Hilfspolizei, die unmittelbar nach dem deutschen Überfall auf die Sowjetunion im Sommer 1941 gebildet wurde. Während nach Ansicht Hitlers zunächst – abgesehen von den im Rahmen der Wehrmacht aufgestellten kleinen ukrainischen Bataillonen – eigentlich kein »Slave« Waffen tragen sollte, änderte sich das sofort, als die Deutschen erkannten, dass sie gar nicht imstande sein würden, mit eigenen Kräften die riesigen eroberten Gebiete zu beherrschen und zu verwalten. Die Folge davon war, dass – abgesehen von den Massakern, die etwa von der SS-Division Wiking in Galizien begangen wurden<sup>4</sup> – in vielen Fällen die betroffenen ukrainischen Juden es vor der Erschießung durch die Einsatzgruppen des SD und der SiPo (die in der Regel von Deutschen durchgeführt wurde) relativ selten unmittelbar mit Deutschen zu tun hatten: Die Vorbereitung der Erschießungen und die übrigen Unterdrückungsmaßnahmen »delegierten« die Einsatzgruppen wie die Verwalter der Ghettos und Lager in nicht unbeträchtlichem Maße an ihre Helfer – was, das sei hier betont, nicht die Verantwortung der Deutschen relativiert, die erst das Setting hierfür schufen.

Dennoch hat man durchaus Anlass, den Rahmen zu ermitteln, der es den Deutschen ermöglichte, sich der einheimischen Judenfeindschaft zu bedienen.

### Der polnische Kontext und Chmel'nyč'kyj

In das Gebiet der heutigen Ukraine gelangten Juden primär im Zuge der schrittweisen polnischen Aneignung dieser Territorien: in den Westen (die Woiwodschaft Ruś) ab dem 13. Jahrhundert, in die östlicheren Gebiete durch die Lubliner Union von 1569. Die Einverleibung der bis dahin nur schwach litauisch verwalteten Gebiete zwischen Wolhynien und dem linken Dnjepr-Ufer führte zu deren Verteilung an den polnischen Adel. Dem folgte

4 Siehe Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2015.

die frühneuzeitliche Verrechtlichung, also die Ablösung von im Wesentlichen freien, auf Gleichheit beruhenden Bauernverbänden durch eine hierarchische feudale Ordnung, in der vor allem der Adel Rechte ausüben konnte. Die adlige Landnahme ersetzte das bis dahin praktizierte Nutzungsrecht an Grund und Boden durch ein Eigentumsrecht, dessen (adliger) Inhaber wachsende Abgaben von den Nutzern fordern konnte. Diese Verschlechterung der ökonomischen Lage führte zum verstärkten *uchod*, der Abwanderung in die noch nicht verrechtlichten Gebiete, das »wilde Feld«, in dem die »Freien« (also die Kosaken, denn das bedeutete dieses Wort) der Ausbreitung feudaler Strukturen zu entkommen meinten.

Die neuen polnischen Herren (aber auch ukrainische Adlige, die sich rasch polonisierten) lebten bestenfalls zeitweise auf ihren neuen Gütern. Diese wurden nicht selten von Verwaltern geführt, die die Aufgabe hatten, die Abgaben und Dienste von den Bauern einzutreiben. Für die Juden in Kernpolen wirkte sich eine zu dieser Zeit erfolgende Verschlechterung ihrer Rechtsposition (partielle Ausgliederung aus der gesicherteren Rechtssphäre des Königs) dahingehend aus, dass sie zunehmend in den Osten zogen. In nicht wenigen Fällen waren es dann Juden (sogenannte Privatjuden), die Verwaltungstätigkeiten ausübten, unter der Protektion ihrer daran interessierten Grundherren standen und gleichzeitig auch die Vermarktung der Produkte vornahm, mit denen sich (vor allem in der Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges) große Gewinne erzielen ließen. Insbesondere der aus landwirtschaftlichen Produkten hergestellte Alkohol konnten aber auch vor Ort vertrieben werden. Die Schenken der Grundherren, in denen Schnaps angeboten wurde, sind – wie in Kernpolen – gern an Juden verpachtet worden, die kulturell bedingt weniger zum Alkoholismus neigten. Das Verbot des Schwarzbrennens wurde ebenso als Werk der Juden wahrgenommen wie die Pfändung von Eigentum, wenn sich ein Bauer durch Trunksucht verschuldet hatte.

Als dann 1648 der Kosakenaufstand Bohdan Chmel'nyč'kyjs gegen den polnischen Adel ausbrach, der eine Reihe von anderen Ursachen hatte, die hier nicht angesprochen werden, und der in der ukrainischen Historiografie sowohl der sowjetischen als auch der postsowjetischen Zeit als »nationaler Befreiungskrieg des ukrainischen Volkes« bezeichnet wird,<sup>5</sup> schlossen sich ihm die unzufriedenen Bauern an. Als ihre Gegner sahen sie zwar den polnischen Adel an, aber greifbar waren nur dessen Repräsentanten vor Ort, die Juden, gegen die die religiösen Vorbehalte schon seit langem erlernt worden waren.

5 V. B. Harin/I. A. Kipcar/O. V. Kondartenko, *Istoriya Ukraïny* [Geschichte der Ukraine], Kiew 2012, <[https://pidruchniki.com/18380625/istoriya/istoriya\\_ukrayini](https://pidruchniki.com/18380625/istoriya/istoriya_ukrayini)> (4. Juli 2022). (Das gesamte Buch wird angezeigt, wenn man auf die Kapitelüberschriften klickt.)



Die Judenmassaker dieses Aufstands, der gleichermaßen von sowjetischen wie von nationalukrainischen Historikerinnen und Historikern als ein Ruhmesblatt der ukrainischen Geschichte gesehen wird, schufen eine Basis dafür, dass außerhalb der Ukraine Ukrainer nun stets mit Judenfeindschaft in Zusammenhang gebracht wurden.

Welche Umstände begünstigten dies? Zum einen die spätere romantisierende polnische Geschichtsschreibung, die Polen im Gegensatz zur Ukraine (keineswegs stets zutreffend, angesichts des sozioökonomischen Kontexts aber durchaus als Autostereotyp nachvollziehbar) als Hort der Toleranz akzentuierte. Ähnlich wichtig war aber die Publizität, die die Gewaltakte gewannen. Flüchtlinge berichteten von den Massakern von Niemirów/Nemyriv, Tulčyn und Kremeneč', über Folterungen und Zwangsbekehrungen. In den jüdischen Chroniken und Publikationen der Frühen Neuzeit wurde diese Verfolgung mit denjenigen der biblischen Zeit gleichgesetzt und religiös diskursiv genutzt. Die Figur Chmel'nyc'kyjs wurde dabei zu einem zentralen Feind des Judentums selbst stilisiert.<sup>6</sup> Tatsächlich kamen etwa 50 Prozent der damals in den betroffenen Gebieten lebenden cirka 40 000 Juden um,<sup>7</sup> es kursierten jedoch auch Zahlen im hohen sechsstelligen Bereich, die ihre diskursive (propagandistische) Wirkung entfalteten.

## Die Hajdamaken

Nach dem Aufstand und den nachfolgenden Kriegen konsolidierte sich die Lage in den bei Polen verbliebenen Gebieten der rechtsufrigen Ukraine wieder, sodass der Gegensatz zwischen ukrainischen Bauern und der sich der Juden bedienenden Obrigkeit bestehen blieb. Die ukrainische Nationalgeschichtsschreibung, die im Wege der »invention of tradition«<sup>8</sup> Elemente seit der Kiewer Rus nationalisierte, sah nun neben den Kosaken die sogenannten Hajdamaken als Repräsentanten des ukrainischen Nationalnarrativs.

- 6 Siehe Jaroslaw Pelenski, »The Cossack Insurrections in Jewish-Ukrainian Relations«, in: Peter J. Potichnyj/Howard Aster (Hgg.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, Edmonton 1988 (Tagungsband), 31–42; Joel Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial. The Fate of the Jews in the Wars of the Polish Commonwealth during the Mid-Seventeenth Century as Shown in Contemporary Writings and Historical Research*, Boulder, Col., 1995; Moshe J. Rosman, *The Lord's Jews. Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990.
- 7 Shaul Stampfer, *What Actually Happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?*, in: *Jewish History* 17 (2003), H. 2, 207–227.
- 8 Siehe Eric J. Hobsbawm/Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.

Unter diesem aus dem Türkischen (*haydamak* bedeutet »verfolgen, überfallen«) kommenden Begriff verstand man in der Ukraine die Träger der kleineren bäuerlichen, manchmal unter Kosakenführung stattfindenden Bauernaufstände, die in stärkerem Maße auch die russische Geschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts prägten. In der rechtsufrigen, polnischen Ukraine richteten sich kontinuierliche Überfälle, aber auch regelrechte Erhebungen (1734, 1750, 1754, 1768) gegen Polen, Adelsstädte, im Süden gegen Türken und bessarabische Bojaren – und, wie schon im Chmel’nyč’kyj-Aufstand, gegen die als Repräsentanten der Herrschenden visiblen Juden. So wüteten die Hajdamaken am 20./21. Juni 1768 in Uman mit Tausenden Toten, wobei die Angreifer auch Frauen und Kinder grausam töteten. Die Opferzahlen sind nicht ermittelt, sie schwanken je nach der Interpretation der Historiker zwischen 1 500 und 20 000, und die Morde trafen neben Juden auch unierte Geistliche und nichtjüdische Polen.<sup>9</sup>

Nicht die Tatsache der Morde an sich ist jedoch das Entscheidende, sondern deren Interpretation mit einem nationalisierten Robin-Hood-Motiv, das die Hajdamaken als heldenhafte nationale Kämpfer für die ukrainische Bevölkerung essenzialisiert. Dazu gehört, dass die Polen mithilfe Russlands diesen letzten ukrainischen Aufstand 1768 blutig niedergeschlagen haben. Dies wird etwa von dem (als »Goethe der Ukraine« gefeierten) ukrainischen Nationaldichter Taras Ševčenko (1814–1861) in seinem 1841 veröffentlichten Poem *Hajdamaky* unterstrichen.<sup>10</sup> Dort heißt es am Gedichtende zur Niederlage der Hajdamaken:

»Und die Ukraine ist auf Jahrhunderte,  
auf Jahrhunderte eingeschlafen.  
Seit dieser Zeit gibt es in der Ukraine  
keinen Platz für die Freiheit.«

- 9 I. L. Butič/F. P. Ševčenko, *Hajdamac’kyj ruch na Ukraïni v XVIII st.* Zbirnyk dokumentiv [Die Hajdamaken-Bewegung in der Ukraine im 18. Jahrhundert. Sammlung von Dokumenten], Kiew 1970; Władysław Serczyk, *Hajdamacy* [Die Hajdamaken], Krakau 1972, 21978; ders., *Historia Ukrainy* [Geschichte der Ukraine], 3., verb. und ergänzte Ausgabe, Krakau 2001, 152; Jacek Krupa, *Conflicts in Ukraine at the Beginning of the 18th Century. The Haydamak Movements and Jews*, in: *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 6 (2008), 69–76.
- 10 »A Ukraïna naviky, / Naviky zasнула. / Z toho času v Ukraïni / Nema miscja voli.« Taras Ševčenko, *Hajdamaky*, in: Taras Ševčenko. *Zibrannja tvoriv v šesti tomach* [Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden], 6 Bde., Kiew 2003, hier Bd. 6: *Lysty darči ta vlasnyč’ki napsy dokumenty, skladeni T. Ševčenkomo abo za joho učastju* [Briefe, Geschenke und Dokumente, erstellt von T. Ševčenko oder unter seiner Mitarbeit], 450–512; siehe das Gedicht online unter <<http://litopys.org.ua/shevchenko/shev117p.htm>> (4. Juli 2022).



**Abb. 1:** Unbekannter Künstler, Der Kozak Mamaj besingt die Hajdamaken. National Art Museum of Ukraine, Öl/Leinwand, 19. Jahrhundert. Quelle: Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0 (<<https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en>>).

Nicht umsonst nennt sich auf dieser Grundlage eine der beliebtesten ukrainischen Bands, deren Repertoire von Folklore bis Rock reicht, *Haydamaky*.

Ein der Volkskunst des 19. Jahrhunderts entstammendes, im Nationalen Kunstmuseum in Kiew ausgestellt Gemälde, das häufiger zur Darstellung von Kosaken, Kobzaren (blinde Sänger) und Hajdamaken herangezogen wird, zeigt Hajdamaken, die einen Juden an den Füßen hängen und einen zweiten zu einem provisorischen Galgen führen. Es stellt eine Szene aus dem Dorf Chersonki im Kreis Čyhyryn dar, im Vordergrund spielt der legendäre, romantisierte Kobzar und Kosak Mamaj, dem 2001 auch ein Denkmal auf dem Kiewer Unabhängigkeitsplatz (Majdan nezaležnosti) errichtet wurde. Der in russischen Diensten stehende Arzt Dominique Pierre de la Flise (1787–1861) berichtete, dass ihm der fragliche Baum als »Mamajs Eiche« gezeigt wurde, »an deren Ästen er [Mamaj] Polen und Juden aufhängte, die ihm in die Hände gefallen waren«, und auf dem er selbst später von den Polen aufgehängt worden sei.<sup>11</sup>

11 Siehe Dominique P. de la Flise, Al' bomy [Alben], Bd. 1, Kiew 1996, 167 f., zit. nach O. I. Troščyns'ka, »Kozak Mamaj« v istoriji Čyhyryns'koho kraju [Der Kosak Mamaj in der Geschichte des Gebiets von Čyhyryn], in: Pam'jatki Ukrajin: Istorija ta kul'tura [Erinnerungsstücke der Ukraine: Geschichte und Kultur] (2011), H. 5–6, 56–59, <[http://chigirin-zapovidnyk.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=113:q-q-&catid=71:2012-02-09-08-39-37&Itemid=96](http://chigirin-zapovidnyk.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:q-q-&catid=71:2012-02-09-08-39-37&Itemid=96)> (4. Juli 2022).

Was haben wir bisher? Neben der üblichen religiösen findet sich eine weitere, doppelte Perzeption der Juden in der Ukraine durch die primär bäuerliche Bevölkerung: Sie werden nach der Übernahme des Landes durch Polen als ökonomische Ausbeuter wahrgenommen (Ähnliches gilt prämodern etwa auch für Viehhändler in Westfalen), aber auch als Helfer oder Verbündete von fremden Landräubern, gegen die das zu dieser Zeit noch nicht national, sondern ständisch motivierte Widerstandsrecht in Anspruch genommen wird.

Die »Fremden« sind zu dieser Zeit noch die polnischen Adligen und auf dieser Basis gelangt das judenfeindliche Motiv in den beginnenden Prozess der Ausbildung eines nationalen Bewusstseins. Auch das religiöse Motiv, das ja älter ist, bleibt präsent, aber nicht dominant, es richtet sich auch gegen Katholiken und – seit der Brester Union von 1596 – mit Rom Unierte; so konnte es wieder mit antipolnischen Stereotypen kombiniert werden. Ungeachtet dessen erfolgte durch die Einbindung in den polnischen Staat eine kulturelle Westausrichtung der Ukraine.

## Der russische Kontext

Das kulturelle Selbstverständnis der Ukrainer veränderte sich im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts, indem die staatliche Macht des polnischen Adels durch die Teilungen Polens im 18. Jahrhundert schwand, obwohl die polnischen Grundherren in dem nun russisch gewordenen größeren Teil der Ukraine noch lange eine wirtschaftliche und anfangs auch politische Sonderstellung innehatten.

Bis zum Aufstand von 1830/31 behielten die polnischen Adligen ihre dominante Position. Danach wurden sie weitgehend entmachtet und näherten sich in Gegnerschaft zum nun russischen Staat den Bauern insofern an, als in der romantischen Phase das bäuerliche (ukrainische) Leben in der russländischen Ukraine durch sie idealisiert wurde und in das *chlopomanstvo* mündete, eine Haltung, in der sich polnische Adlige wie Bauern kleideten und das einfache Leben nachzuahmen versuchten.

Während sich zunehmend Ukrainer polonisierten, ukrainisierten sich manche Polen. Der gemeinsame »Kontrahent«<sup>12</sup> war nun Russland, das einerseits den Polen die Staatlichkeit verweigerte und ihren politischen Einfluss reduzierte (indem etwa die Selbstverwaltung der Landstände [*Zemstvo*] in den Gebieten mit polnischem Adel nicht eingeführt wurde), andererseits die

12 Ich benutze hier ausdrücklich nicht das Wort »Feind«.

beginnende nationale Selbstorganisation der als »Kleinrussen« bezeichneten Ukrainer als polnische Intrige auffasste. In zwei Schritten (Valuev-Ukas vom 18. Juli 1863: »[E]s gab keine besondere kleinrussische Sprache, es gibt sie nicht und kann sie nicht geben [...]«<sup>13</sup>; Emser Ukas vom 30. Mai 1876: »Im Kaiserreich den Druck jedweder Originaltexte oder Übersetzungen in diesem Dialekt verbieten [...]«<sup>14</sup>) wurden Publikationen in ukrainischer Sprache untersagt.

In diese Zeit fallen die ersten wissenschaftlichen Analysen der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Lage in der Ukraine. Einer der wichtigsten Akteure war dabei der Historiker und Brauchtumsforscher Mychajlo Dragomanov (1841–1895), der auch als Begründer des ukrainischen Sozialismus gilt. Er wurde 1875 wegen »Ukrainophilie« aus seiner Kiewer Universität entlassen und ging ins Exil nach Genf und Sofia. In Bezug auf die Juden waren die Thesen, die er dort publizierte, ambivalent: Einerseits war er gegen die vorgeblich zum Schutz der Bauern in Russland geltenden Rechtsbeschränkungen für Juden, da sie unwirksam seien, und forderte ihre Abschaffung. Andererseits kritisierte er vor allem assimilierte Juden dafür, dass sie sich nicht gegen Praktiken orthodoxer jüdischer Händler einsetzten, durch die ukrainische Bauern geschädigt würden.<sup>15</sup> Dragomanov hielt die ökonomische Veränderung für wichtiger als die rechtliche Gleichstellung: Die Juden seien in Handelsberufen konzentriert, seien zu zahlreich und sie schlossen sich durch die lange Segregation in ihrer Gemeinschaft monopolistisch ab.<sup>16</sup>

Mögliche Abhilfe sah er in der »Emanzipation der ukrainischen Bauern von der Ausbeutung durch jüdische Händler« (hier scheint der junge Marx durch), der »Emanzipation der jüdischen Massen vom Aberglauben und von der Ausbeutung durch ihre eigenen *Zaddikim* und Reichen« und (danach erst) in der Befreiung der Juden von gesetzlichen Diskriminierungen. Mit seinen ambivalenten Thesen ist Dragomanov bis heute Gegenstand von Diskussionen.

13 »[N]ikakogo osobennogo malorossijskogo jazyka ne bylo, net i byt' ne mozet«; veröffentlicht in Michail Lemke, *Epocha cenzurnych reform 1859–1865 godov* [Die Epoche der Zensurreformen der Jahre 1859–1865], Sankt Petersburg 1904, 302–304, <<https://coollib.com/b/114614/read#t20>> (4. Juli 2022).

14 »Vospredit' v imperii pečatanie, na tom že narečii, kakich by to ne bylo original'nych proizvedenij ili perevodov [...]«, Aleksej I. Miller, »Ukrainskij vopros« v politike vlastej i russkom obščestvennom mnenii. Vtoraja polovina XIX v[eka]. [Die »ukrainische Frage« in der Politik der Behörden und in der russischen öffentlichen Meinung. Zweite Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts], Sankt Petersburg 2000, Anlage 2, <<https://coollib.com/b/114614/read#t20>> (4. Juli 2022).

15 Michail Dragomanov, »Evrei i poljaki v jugo-zapadnom krae« (1875) [Juden und Polen im Südwest-Gebiet], in: ders., *Političeskija sočinenija* [Politische Werke], Moskau 1908, 217–267, hier 224.

16 Ebd., 227.

Als 1881 eine Pogromwelle die Ukraine erfasste, wandte sich Dragomanov einerseits dagegen und machte den russischen Staat und den Ansiedlungsrayon für die von ihm kritisierte regionale Verdichtung jüdischer Bevölkerung verantwortlich. Als die sozialrevolutionäre Geheimgesellschaft Narodnaja Volja (Volkswille), verantwortlich für das die Pogrome auslösende Attentat auf Zar Alexander II., die Gewalt gegen Juden billigte und mit der »Ausbeutung der ukrainischen Massen durch jüdische Kulaken« rechtfertigte, schrieb Dragomanov, dies sei »im Grunde korrekt«, berücksichtige aber nicht, dass »auch arme Leute«, die »die gleiche produktive physische Arbeit ausführen wie christliche Bauern und Handwerker«, Opfer der Unruhen seien.<sup>17</sup> In weiteren Schriften argumentierte er wieder gegen die Assimilation und für die Trennung der »jüdischen Arbeiter« von den »jüdischen Kapitalisten«, wobei den ersteren (wie auch allen anderen Minderheiten) in einer föderal organisierten Ukraine Selbstverwaltung gewährt werden sollte.

War Dragomanov Antisemit? Ukrainische Verfasser wie Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky (1919–1984) streiten das ab.<sup>18</sup> In Dragomanovs Schriften kommt aber das »jüdische Parasitentum« vor und der oben zitierte »Aberglauben« umfasste für ihn die ganze jüdische Religion (was für die christliche nicht gleichermaßen explizit ausgesagt wurde). Seine Lösung für die »Judenfrage« ist eine »soziale und berufliche Umschichtung«, verbunden mit einer Art Autonomie. Jedenfalls war er nur bereit, ein anderes Judentum zu akzeptieren, was im Übrigen in der sozialistischen Bewegung keine Seltenheit war und einige Aspekte der Bundisten vorwegnahm, die es freilich zu Dragomanovs Lebzeiten noch nicht gab. Sein Hauptanliegen galt aber nicht den Juden, sondern den nichtjüdischen Ukrainern. Für deren prekäre Lage machte er nicht zuletzt die Juden verantwortlich, für deren Aktivitäten wiederum jedoch den russischen Staat mit seinem Ansiedlungsrayon, der von der Ausbeutung der Ukrainer durch die Juden profitiere.

Mit dieser Interpretation der soziopolitischen Lage in der russländischen Ukraine lieferte Dragomanov die Stichworte, die wir, wie noch zu zeigen sein wird, bei den ukrainischen integralen Nationalisten wiederfinden.

17 Ders., *Evrejskij vopros na Ukraine* (1882) [Die jüdische Frage in der Ukraine], in: ders., *Sobranie političeskich sočinenij M. P. Dragomanova*. Izdanie redakcii »Osvoboždenija«. [Sammlung politischer Werke M. P. Dragomanovs. Ausgabe des Editorials »Befreiung«], 2 Bde., Paris 1905–1906, hier Bd. 2, Paris 1906, 525–540, hier 531.

18 Ivan L.-Rudnytsky, *Mykhailo Drahomanov and the Problem of Ukrainian-Jewish Relations*, *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 11 (1969), 182–198; auch abgedruckt in ders., *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, Edmonton 1987, 283–297.

## Die Pogrome

Der größte Teil der Pogrome im Russischen Reich ab 1881 fand in der Ukraine statt. Hierzu gibt es inzwischen eine Reihe von Interpretationen: Die lange Zeit gängigste und auch von Dubnow vertretene bezog sich auf eine Auslösung durch den Staat, der angeblich die revolutionäre Energie von sich auf die Juden ablenken wollte. Seit Rogger, Aronson und Klier<sup>19</sup> ist klar, dass der Staat kein Interesse an Unruhen haben konnte und sie auch (wenngleich mit unzureichenden Mitteln) bekämpft hat. Man hat dann etwa Wanderarbeiter (Aronson) als Auslöser der Pogrome ausgemacht. Einen neuen diskussionswürdigen Ansatz hat zuletzt Stefan Wiese<sup>20</sup> geliefert: Die Rolle des Staates (außer als schwacher Staat, der die Pogrome nicht verhindern konnte) verschwindet bei ihm nahezu völlig und an seine Stelle tritt eine Einbettung der Pogrome gegen Juden in eine allgemeine Gewaltgeschichte, die sich auf unterschiedlichen Ebenen gegen jeweils aktuell als negativ empfundene Gruppen richtet – gegen Juden, aber auch etwa gegen Ärzte während der Choleraepidemie oder gegen Perser in Astrachan.

Man könnte daraus den Schluss ziehen, dass diese Ereignisse beliebig auftraten, aber das erklärt das massierte Auftreten in bestimmten Kontexten nicht. Es bedurfte hier offensichtlich mehrerer Faktoren: Der eine war eine als krisenhafte Bedrohung empfundene Lage, der andere ein im Bewusstsein vorhandener Nexus (auch unlogischer Art) zwischen der Krise und ihren vorgeblichen Verursachern. Dies führt zu zwei Folgerungen: Es bedarf tatsächlich nicht des staatlichen Kommandos, sondern die Diagnose der Krise und die Reaktion darauf erfolgten lokal – durchaus von denjenigen ausgehend, die den Pogrom begingen. Es ist aber ein zweiter Faktor erforderlich: Es bedarf eines vorhandenen (vielleicht auch verschütteten) Bewusstseins eines Gegensatzes, der alle Angehörigen einer als negativ begriffenen Gruppe für die subjektiv empfundene Krise verantwortlich macht und sich zu ihrer Abwendung in einer gewaltsamen Mobilisierung gegen sie entlädt.

Wir können davon ausgehen, dass die Vorstellungen von der ökonomischen »Schädlichkeit« der Juden überall in Osteuropa relativ ähnlich verbreitet waren. Die nächste Etappe antijüdischer Ausschreitungen – die galizischen Bauernunruhen, die 1898 kulminierten – zeigte jedoch eine signifikante Differenzierung. Die Unruhen erfassten fast ausschließlich den westlichen, vor allem von Polen bewohnten Teil des österreichischen Kronlandes, während

19 Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, London 1986; Irwin Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters. The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia*, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1990; John Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882*, Cambridge 2011.

20 Stefan Wiese, *Pogrome im Zarenreich. Dynamiken kollektiver Gewalt*, Hamburg 2016.

der Osten mit weniger polnischen, aber dafür weitaus mehr ruthenischen (ukrainischen) Einwohnern weitgehend ruhig blieb. Inzwischen sind einige neue Arbeiten zu dieser Thematik, über die Golczewski<sup>21</sup> und Kai Struve<sup>22</sup> geschrieben haben, erschienen. Tim Buchen (Dresden) hat dabei versucht, den Antisemitismus vom Nationalismus zu trennen,<sup>23</sup> was anderen Befunden widerspricht: Auch bei ihm sind es sogenannte Übersetzer, die die politische Nationalisierung der vor allem polnischen Bauern in Westgalizien in die Wege leiteten. Erst durch die Einführung ihrer politischen Partizipation in Österreich und die Politisierung in den neuen Bauernparteien wurden die Bauern in die »Nation« aufgenommen. Das habe die antijüdische Gewalt ausgelöst, denn politisieren konnte man die Bauern vor allem über ihre Judenfeindschaft. Diesen Prozess stellt eine neuere Arbeit sehr genau dar und bettet ihn in die demokratisierende Politik der Habsburgermonarchie ein.<sup>24</sup> Ob den Bauern eine neue »nationale« Haltung präsent war oder ob sie »praxeologisch«, »empraktisch« (aus Vollzugswissen »wie von allein«) handelten, wie es die aktuelle Gewaltforschung gern annimmt, sei dahingestellt. Aber warum geschah dies nicht im gleichen Umfang auch in Ostgalizien?

Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytskys Antwort auf diese Frage lautet, dass die ukrainischen Politiker damals und noch mehr nach der Wahlrechtsreform 1907 versuchten, sich mit den Juden politisch zu verbünden, um deren (bis dahin durchaus übliche) Zusammenarbeit mit den Polen zu verhindern und so erstmals die Möglichkeit zu haben, die polnische politische Hegemonie zu durchbrechen. In Städten stimmten daraufhin »Ruthenen« für die zionistischen Kandidaten und auf dem Land Juden für Ukrainer. Auf diese Weise wurden zwei zionistische und mehrere ukrainische Abgeordnete in den Reichsrat gewählt.<sup>25</sup> Es gelang also offenbar mit politischem Pragmatismus, alte Vorstellungen zumindest vorübergehend auszusetzen, und nicht zum letzten Mal verhielten sich Ukrainer »judenfreundlicher« als Polen.

In der Endphase des Ersten Weltkriegs kam es in der Ukraine, aber auch im neu entstandenen Polen, das sich zudem mit seinen östlichen wie westlichen Nachbarn in der Auseinandersetzung um seine Grenzen befand, zu

21 Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881–1922. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa*, Wiesbaden 1981, 60–84; ders., *Rural Anti-Semitism in Galicia before World War I*, in: Chimen Abramsky/Maciej Jachimczyk/Antony Polonsky (Hgg.), *The Jews in Poland*, Oxford 1986, 97–105.

22 Kai Struve, *Bauern und Nation in Galizien. Über Zugehörigkeit und soziale Emanzipation im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2005.

23 Tim Buchen, *Antisemitismus in Galizien. Agitation, Gewalt und Politik gegen Juden in der Habsburgermonarchie um 1900*, Berlin 2012, 336.

24 Daniel Unowsky, *The Plunder. The 1898 Anti-Jewish Riots in Habsburg Galicia*, Stanford, Calif., 2018.

25 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 293.



den opferreichsten Pogromen, die Stefan Wiese von den früheren trennt und als Massaker bezeichnet. Seit dem Beginn des Russischen Bürgerkriegs haben sich die militärischen und paramilitärischen Verbände aller beteiligten Parteien gegen Juden gerichteter Gewalt bedient, um sich zu bereichern, zu vergewaltigen oder sich anderweitig abzureagieren.

Trotz voneinander abweichenden Zählungen kann doch als gesichert gelten, dass zwischen 1917 und 1920 allein in der Ukraine viele Hundert Massengewaltakte gegen Juden stattgefunden haben. Die geschätzten Opferzahlen schwanken zwischen 30 000 und 100 000, wobei es realistisch ist, von circa 60 000 Opfern auszugehen. Diese Ereignisse waren weitaus blutiger als alles, was sich im 19. Jahrhundert ereignet hatte.

Indem die Ukraine eines der Hauptschlachtfelder des Bürgerkriegs war – wobei hier die als »ukrainische Revolution« bezeichneten Kämpfe um die ukrainische Unabhängigkeit ebenso hinzugerechnet werden wie die polnische Besetzung des Jahres 1920, an der die Ukrainische Volksrepublik (UNR) mit Symon Petljura auf polnischer Seite teilnahm – entfällt auf sie wegen des hohen jüdischen Einwohneranteils auch ein Großteil der Pogromopfer. Höhepunkt war die Zeit zwischen Frühjahr und Herbst 1919. Die Täter gehörten allen beteiligten Gruppen an: Sowohl die partiell von autonomen Atamanen geführten Truppen der UNR als auch die zarentreuen »weißen« Verbände unter Denikin und Wrangel sowie polnische Soldaten und die auf polnischer Seite agierenden polnisch-weißrussischen Truppen von Stanisław Bułak-Bałachowicz mordeten in den jüdischen Vierteln der großen und kleinen Städte. Pogrome fanden jedoch auch seitens der verschiedenen »grünen« Bauernarmeen statt, zu deren bekanntesten die meist als »Anarchisten« bezeichneten Verbände Nestor Machnos aus Huljajpole gehörten. Auch die Milizen und Soldaten der Bolschewiki verübten Pogrome. Wichtiger als politische Überzeugungen waren wohl neben der allgemeinen Brutalisierung tief verwurzelte bäuerliche Vorstellungen und das falsche Bild der »reichen« und – bei den »Linken« – »bürgerlichen« Juden. Im Frühjahr 1918 gab es diese »linken« Pogrome in Novgorod Severskij und in Seredyna-Buda, 1919 dann in Rossava im Gebiet Kiew und in Uman'.<sup>26</sup>

Während die meist nur kurz existierenden ukrainischen und weißrussischen Staatsgebilde sehr liberale formale Bestimmungen veröffentlichten, in denen von der Gleichberechtigung der Juden, ihrer kulturellen Autonomie, dem Jiddischen als einer der Amtssprachen bis hin zu jüdischen Ministern kaum ein Wunsch offenblieb, sah die Realität anders aus.

26 Matthias Vetter, Antisemiten und Bolschewiki. Zum Verhältnis von Sowjetsystem und Judenfeindschaft 1917–1939, Berlin 1995; Felix Schnell, Räume des Schreckens. Gewalt und Gruppenmilitanz in der Ukraine 1905–1933, Hamburg 2012.

Zwar gab es von nahezu allen beteiligten Parteien auch Befehle und Deklarationen, die Pogrome ausdrücklich verboten, darunter auch von Symon Petljura, dem Machthaber der UNR, und sogar von Anton Denikin, dem Oberkommandierenden der »weißen« Russen. Doch hatten diese Lippenbekenntnisse mit der Wirklichkeit oft wenig gemein. Petljura wurde bis in einen Buchtitel hinein als *pogromščik*<sup>27</sup> bezeichnet, was in Frankreich 1926 sogar als Begründung für den Freispruch seines Mörders anerkannt wurde. Andererseits werden die Pogromverbote immer wieder (auch in einem von Tcherikower und Dubnow herausgegebenen Dokumentenband)<sup>28</sup> angeführt, um (völlig zu Recht) zu belegen, dass Petljura (im Unterschied zu Denikin) kein Antisemit war, dass er aber auf die Freischärler mit ihren »Atamanen« angewiesen war, um seinen Kampf zu führen.

Die ukrainische Einheit, die im Januar 1919 in Berdyčiv ein Pogrom ausgeführt hatte, wurde aufgelöst, ihre Anführer wurden wie diejenigen des Pogroms von Žytomyr erschossen. Aber auch der blutigste Pogrom von Proskuriv (heute Chmel'nyč'kyj) vom 15. Februar 1919 geht auf das Konto der Anhänger Petljuras: Das 3. Hajdamakenregiment (man beachte den Namen), das der UNR unterstand, ermordete unter dem Befehl des Atamans Ivan Semosenko (Samosenko) als Antwort auf einen bolschewistischen Angriff innerhalb weniger Stunden 1 600 Juden und anschließend weitere 400 im nahen Fel'styn (heute Südwestlicher Mikrorayon).

Diese Truppen agierten nicht aus irgendeinem politischen Verständnis heraus, sondern um im entfesselten Zustand leichte Beute zu machen. Dementsprechend gaben sie auch nichts auf irgendwelche Befehle, sondern wechselten im Zweifelsfall die Front, was wiederum dazu führte, dass die politischen Nutznießer sich mit Sanktionen (falls sie dazu überhaupt imstande gewesen wären) zurückhielten und ihre diesbezüglichen Befehle nur sehr zögerlich umsetzten.<sup>29</sup>

Der berüchtigtste Ataman war Nikofor Grigor'jev, dessen Verband in den Gebieten Jelisavethrad (Kirovohrad, Kropyvnyč'kyj), Čerkasy und Cherson im Frühjahr 1919 ca. 6 000 Pogromtote angelastet werden. Grigor'jev war nacheinander mit Petljura, den »Weißen«, den Bolschewiki und mit Machno verbündet, der ihn schließlich wegen einer Meinungsverschiedenheit am 27. Juli 1919 erschoss oder erschießen ließ. Die Banden der Atamane fanden bei diesen Wechseln im Hass auf die Juden eine willkommene Konstante ihrer Aktivitäten. Außerdem mussten sie – anders als Petljura und Denikin –

27 Saul S. Friedman, *Pogromchik. The Assassination of Simon Petlura*, New York 1976.

28 Elias Tcherikower/Simon Dubnow (Hgg.), *Antisemitizm un pogromen in Ukraine, 1917–1918. Tsu der geshikhte fun Ukrainish-Yidishe batsihungen*, Berlin 1923.

29 Siehe dazu Christopher Gilley, *Beyond Petliura. The Ukrainian National Movement and the 1919 Pogroms*, *East European Jewish Affairs* 47 (2017), H. 1, 45–61.

nicht auf die Meinung des Auslands achten. Juden waren nicht nur eine weitgehend wehrlose Bevölkerung. Hier spielten auch ältere Überlieferungen eine Rolle, die notwendigerweise mündlich waren, weil die Täter in den meisten Fällen nicht lesen und schreiben konnten. Hinzu kam bei Gegnern der Bolschewiki die bis heute umlaufende Vorstellung, Juden seien deren Unterstützer gewesen.

Für diese Phase der Auseinandersetzungen besitzt noch eine andere Begebenheit Relevanz: Im bewaffneten Streit zwischen Polen und Ukrainern um den Besitz Lembergs beim Untergang Habsburgs erklärten sich die dortigen Juden für neutral, was die beiden Parteien zunächst auch akzeptierten. Nachdem polnische Truppen dann aber Lemberg am 22. November 1918 entsetzt hatten, begannen die Soldaten mit Unterstützung von Angehörigen der unteren sozialen Schichten der Stadt einen Judenpogrom, der über siebenzig Todesopfer forderte. Hier ging die Gewalt also nicht von den Ukrainern aus, die mit der Neutralität auch in der aufgeheizten Atmosphäre der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit und des scheiternden westukrainischen Staatsbildungsprozesses umgehen konnten. Für von Außen kommende polnische Soldaten dagegen war im Prozess der Staatsgründung Neutralität nicht tolerierbar.<sup>30</sup>

### Im Zeichen des integralen Nationalismus

Nachdem die Ukrainer nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg (sieht man von der Ukrainischen Sowjetrepublik ab) keine Staatlichkeit erreichen konnten, radikalisierte sich ein Teil ihrer Nationalbewegung. Aus der Analyse heraus, dass es (so schienen es die Fehlschläge zu lehren) offenbar noch keine ukrainische Nation gebe, die nur zu befreien sei, sondern lediglich eine »ethnografische Masse«, wurden verschiedene Wege formuliert, wie die ukrainische Nation konstruiert werden könne.<sup>31</sup> Eine aktive Gruppierung war dabei die Ukrainische Militärorganisation (UVO), eine terroristische Vereinigung, die sich gegen Polen (das nun wieder als Feind eingestuft wurde) in den Dienst der deutschen Spionageorganisationen stellte. Während anfangs ukrainische Organisationen auch die Unterstützung der Entente-Mächte zu gewinnen trachteten, änderte sich das, als der sowjetisch-jüdische Mörder Petljuras 1926 von einem französischen Gericht freigesprochen wurde. Damit blieben die

30 Siehe dazu Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881–1922*, 185–205.

31 Julijan Vassyjan, *Do holovnych zasad nacionalizmu* [Zu den Hauptprinzipien des Nationalismus], in: *Rozbudova Naciji 1* (1928), 33–42.

polenfeindlichen Staaten Deutschland und Litauen sowie das faschistische Italien als potenzielle Verbündete übrig.

Keine der radikalen nationalistischen Bewegungen der 1920er Jahre war judenfreundlich, die ukrainischen integralen Nationalisten waren darin keine Ausnahme, allerdings spielten antijüdische Töne (wie 1918 in Lemberg) anfangs keine Rolle. Das änderte sich nun. Auch wenn Petljura aus anderen Gründen (vor allem wegen seines Verzichts auf Galizien zugunsten Polens) kritisiert wurde, wurde der Freispruch seines Mörders als Affront wahrgenommen, der antijüdische Haltungen nicht etwa erst zeugte, aber sie im Unterschied zu der Zeit davor für den Diskurs freigab. In einem Aufsatz formulierte der Hauptideologe des radikalen ukrainischen Nationalismus, Dmytro Doncov, den folgenden Passus:

»Juden sind schuldig, schrecklich schuldig, weil sie es waren, die halfen, die russische Herrschaft in der Ukraine zu festigen, aber die ‚Juden sind nicht an allem schuld‘. Der russische Imperialismus ist an allem schuld. Erst wenn Russland aus der Ukraine verschwinden wird, werden wir auch bei uns die jüdische Frage so in Ordnung bringen können, wie dies im Interesse des ukrainischen Volkes liegen wird.«<sup>32</sup>

Um diese Aussage zu würdigen, muss man sich vor Augen führen, dass nach Doncovs Auffassung das größte Übel für die Ukrainer in der russischen Herrschaft bestand. Wenn die Juden also halfen, diese Herrschaft in der Ukraine zu konsolidieren, dann machten sie sich Doncov zufolge des schlimmsten Vergehens schuldig, das es für ihn gab. In der Rangskala des »Bösen« besetzten nun die Juden den zweiten Platz – nach den Russen. Nur scheinbar war dies jedoch ein besserer Platz als der erste nach dem »Die Juden sind an allem schuld« der deutschen Nationalsozialisten, weil die Aktivitäten der Russen durch sie angeblich erleichtert, vielleicht gar erst ermöglicht wurden. Die Juden wurden so noch deutlicher als bei Dragomanov zu einem Teil des »russischen Problems«.

1929 schlossen sich die radikalen ukrainischen Nationalisten zur Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) zusammen. In ihren zentralen Dokumenten wie dem sog. Dekalog<sup>33</sup> spielte Antisemitismus keine Rolle, darin entsprachen sie dem gleichzeitigen Stadium des italienischen Faschismus. Auch in den ideologischen Publikationen kam eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Judentum in der von Doncov vorformulierten Weise zunächst nur als Teil des »russischen Problems« beziehungsweise funktional im Sinne Dragomanovs vor: Die Juden in der Sowjet-Ukraine seien »in hohem Maße russifiziert und leisteten dabei Hilfe, die russische Kultur in der Ukraine

32 Dmytro Doncov, Symon Petljura, in: *Literaturno-Naukovyj Vistnyk* 5 (1926), H. 7/8, 321–328, hier 327 f.

33 Abgedruckt in Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939*, Paderborn u. a. 2010, 598.

zu verbreiten.«<sup>34</sup> In einem anderen Beitrag heißt es: »Sie leben von der ukrainischen Bevölkerung, geben ihr dafür aber keinen Gegenwert, weder in politischer noch in kultureller noch in sozialer Hinsicht.«<sup>35</sup> Die hier zitierten Aussagen aus der OUN-Zeitschrift *Rozbudova Naciji* stammen jedoch von Personen, die nicht im ersten Glied der OUN standen. Das hat seinen Grund nicht zuletzt darin, dass eine Reihe der prominenteren Nationalistinnen und Nationalisten mit Juden/Jüdinnen verheiratet war beziehungsweise jüdische Verwandte hatte, sodass auch damit begründet werden kann, warum rassistische Positionen nur sporadisch auftraten. Wir finden sie an unerwarteter Stelle, etwa bei dem galizischen Geografen Stepan Rudnyc'kyj, der von der »physisch schwachen«, aber »seltsam dauerhaften« jüdischen »Rasse« schrieb; eine »Mischung« mit ihr zeitige »schlechte physische Folgen.«<sup>36</sup> Aber Rudnyc'kyj gehörte nicht zur OUN, sondern emigrierte 1929 aus Galizien in die Sowjetukraine und wurde 1937 während des »Großen Terrors« erschossen.

Der prominenteste Antisemit im Vorstand der OUN und später in deren Mel'nyk-Fraktion war Volodymyr Martyneč' (1899–1960), der erfolglos versuchte, Doncovs Rolle als Ideologe in der OUN einzunehmen. Dazu verfasste der zu dieser Zeit in Frankreich lebende Nationalist eine eigene »Theorie«, die außer der Forderung nach der Umstellung der Ukrainer zu »Fleischkonsumenten« auch die Behauptung enthielt, Juden seien »keine nationalen, sondern internationale Elemente« und daher ein »völlig unerwünschtes Produkt«, das man – im Unterschied zu Angehörigen anderer Nationen – nicht assimilieren könne.<sup>37</sup>

Martyneč' hat dann 1938 ein eigenständiges antisemitisches Pamphlet veröffentlicht, in dem er nicht nur genuin rassistisch argumentierte, sondern auch eine Ghettoisierung vorwegnahm: Eine Ansiedlung auf dem Land sei abzulehnen, da sie den ukrainischen Interessen widerspräche, die komplette Aussiedlung nicht zu bewerkstelligen, also entfele auch der Zionismus.

34 V. Bohuš (Pseudonym von Makar Kušnir), Rosijs'ko-žydivs'ke panuvannja ta rolja rosijs'koji kul'tury na Radjans'kij Ukrajinі [Die russisch-jüdische Herrschaft und die Rolle der russischen Kultur in der Sowjetukraine], in: *Rozbudova Naciji* 2 (1929), H. 3–4, 85–93, Zitat 85.

35 »Vony žyvut' z ukrajins'koho naseleńnja, ale za ce ne dajut' jomu v zaminu nijakoji rivnovartosty, ni v polityčnim, ni v kul'turnim, ni v suspil'nim vidnošenni.« Siehe Jur Myljanyč, *Žydy, sionizm i Ukrajinā* [Die Juden, der Zionismus und die Ukraine], in: *Rozbudova Naciji* 2 (1929), H. 8–9, 271–276, hier 271.

36 Stepan Rudnyc'kyj, *Do osnov ukrajins'koho nacionalizmu* (1923) [Zu den Grundlagen des ukrainischen Nationalismus], in: ders., *Čomu my chočemo samostijnoji Ukrajinjy* [Warum wir eine selbständige Ukraine wollen], L'viv 1994, 271–348, hier 307.

37 Volodymyr Martyneč', *Za zuby j pazury naciji* [Um die Zähne und Krallen der Nation], Paris 1937, 154–156.

Pogrome kämen ebenfalls nicht in Betracht: »Es bleibt nur eine Lösung: die vollständige Isolierung des Judentums.«<sup>38</sup>

## Im Zweiten Weltkrieg

Im April 1941 formulierte die Bandera-Fraktion der OUN, die sich 1940 abgespalten hatte, auf einem im deutsch besetzten Krakau abgehaltenen Kongress ein neues Programm. Als Punkt 17 der »Politischen Beschlüsse« erscheint hier der Passus bezüglich der Juden:

»Die Juden sind in der UdSSR die ergebenste Stütze des herrschenden bolschewistischen Regimes und die Avantgarde des Moskauer Imperialismus in der Ukraine. Die moskowitzisch-bolschewistische Regierung benutzt die antijüdischen Stimmungen der ukrainischen Massen, um ihre Aufmerksamkeit von dem echten Verursacher des Übels abzulenken und um die Erhebung auf Judenpogrome umzuleiten. Die OUN bekämpft die Juden als Stütze des moskowitzisch-bolschewistischen Regimes, gleichzeitig die Volksmassen bewusst werden lassend, dass Moskau [Russland] der Hauptfeind ist.«<sup>39</sup>

Dieser Passus, der die Judenfeindschaft des ukrainischen integralen Nationalismus begründet, lässt mehrere Folgerungen zu: 1. Die Positionen hatten sich seit Doncovs Statement von 1926 nicht wesentlich geändert, sie sind also nicht in Anlehnung an den deutschen Nationalsozialismus formuliert worden, was manchmal angenommen wurde, sondern beschreiben eine unabhängig davon entstandene Haltung. 2. Zwischen den Bolschewiki und dem »Moskauer Imperialismus« wird nicht differenziert. Da Letzterer älter ist und bereits von Dragomanov so gesehen wurde, entspringt diese Haltung der ukrainischen Perspektive und folgt nur mittelbar der im deutschen Kontext vertretenen These vom »jüdischen Bolschewismus«, an dem hier das Russische stärker kritisiert wird als das Bolschewistische. 3. Juden wurden in der Ukraine als Instrumente Moskaus angesehen und Pogrome scheinbar kritisiert, aber nur deswegen, weil sie dem Willen Moskaus entsprächen. 4. Ungeachtet dessen wurden die Juden bekämpft, wobei einerseits die »antijüdischen Stimmungen« anerkannt wurden und andererseits postuliert wurde, die Juden als »Stütze« (*jak pidporu*) Russlands zu bekämpfen. Mit dem Letzteren entstand hier die Basis dafür, dass der russische Historiker Aleksandr Djukov sein auch auf

38 »Ostaje odynoka rozvjazka – povna izoljacija žydivstva.« Siehe ders., *Žydivs'ka problema v Ukrajinі* [Das jüdische Problem in der Ukraine], o. O. [London] 1938, 21–22.

39 *Postanovy II Velykoho Zboru Orhanizaciji Ukrajin's'kych Nacionalistiv. Kvitin' 1941 roku (1941)* [Die Beschlüsse des II. Großen Kongresses der Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten. April 1941], in: Stanislav Vladyslavovyč Kul'čyc'kyj, *OUN v 1941 roci. Dokumenty* [Die OUN im Jahre 1941. Dokumente], Kiew 2006, 35–50, hier 43.

Englisch publiziertes Buch über »OUN, UPA und die Lösung der ›jüdischen Frage« mit »Der zweitrangige Feind« betitelt hat.<sup>40</sup>

Die geringe Bedeutung eines rassistisch ideologisierten Antisemitismus dient heute als Mittel, ukrainische Judenfeindschaft diskursiv zu minimieren und eine Verbindung der Bandera-OUN mit den Deutschen in Abrede zu stellen. Dies gilt neben anderen kleineren rechtsradikalen Gruppen besonders für die inzwischen marginalisierte, sich in der Nachfolge Banderas verstehende Partei *Svoboda* (Freiheit), die eine der drei Maidan-Parteien, aber auch für die aktuelle ukrainische Geschichtspolitik mitverantwortlich war, die mit dem Gesetz vom 9. April 2015 den »Schutz und die Ehrung des nationalen Gedenkens des Kampfes und der Kämpfer für die Unabhängigkeit der Ukraine im XX. Jahrhundert« verpflichtend gemacht hat.<sup>41</sup> Die zu dem Gesetz gehörende Liste enthält ohne irgendeine Einschränkung die UVO, die OUN und die ukrainische Aufständischenarmee UPA, die 1943/44 in Wolhynien und Galizien Massaker an der polnischen Bevölkerung und an bei ihr versteckten Juden begangen hat.<sup>42</sup>

Kai Struve erfasst in seiner Habilitationsschrift die Massaker im Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine und ordnet sie sowohl den Deutschen als auch OUN-gesteuerten Ukrainern zu. So wie die Differenz zu Russen für nationalistische Ukrainer zum zentralen Thema geworden ist, schlossen sie sich – wieder gestützt auf Doncov, der dies als »*amoral'nist*« (Amoralität) bezeichnete – denjenigen an, die die Russen in ihrem jeweiligen politischen Aggregatzustand bekämpften. Das waren zunächst die Deutschen, dann im Kalten Krieg die Amerikaner.

Als Auslöser der Massaker von 1941 gelten die von den Sowjets vor ihrem Abzug ermordeten Ukrainer im Lemberger Gefängnis – aber Kai Struve hat gezeigt, dass es dessen nicht bedurfte, weil die (vergebliche) Hoffnung auf einen ukrainischen Staat unter den Deutschen schon vor deren Entdeckung als Motivation für Morde reichte.<sup>43</sup> Die Deutschen ließen sich darauf nicht ein: Weder in Lemberg Ende Juni 1941 durch die Bandera-OUN noch in Kiew um die Jahreswende 1941/42 durch die Mel'nyk-OUN ließen sie ukrainische Staatlichkeit zu. Trotzdem gab es keinen Personal-mangel bei

40 Aleksandr Djukov, *Vtorostepennyj vrag. OUN, UPA i rešenie »evrejskogo voprosa«* [Der zweitrangige Feind. OUN, UPA und die Lösung der »jüdischen Frage«], Moskau 2009; Ders. (Alexander Dyukov), *The Minor Enemy. OUN, UPA and the Solution of the »Jewish Question«*, Riga/Vilnius/Tallinn 2010.

41 *Vidomosti Verchovnoji Rady (VVR)* [Informationen der Werchowna Rada], *Pro pravovyj status ta všanuvannja pam'jati borciv za nezaleznist' Ukrainy u XX stolitti* (2015), H. 25, 190, 9. April 2015.

42 Ebd.

43 Siehe Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt. Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2015, bes. 210–214.

den Schutzmannschaften, der Hilfspolizei, schließlich der SS Galizien, ohne die die Deutschen die eroberten Gebiete nur schwer hätten unter Kontrolle halten können.<sup>44</sup>

Dafür gab es zum einen Versorgungsgründe, denn die Hilfspolizei wurde (im Unterschied zur übrigen Bevölkerung) ernährt und war von der Deportation zur Zwangsarbeit befreit. Welche Rolle spielte dabei aber die Judenfeindschaft? An den wolhynisch-galizischen Massakern können wir sehen, dass die UPA-Ukrainer bereit waren, zur »Homogenisierung« des Gebiets ihre polnischen Nachbarn umzubringen. Galt dies auch gegenüber den Juden?

Wir können davon ausgehen, dass rassistische Überlegungen keine Rolle spielten. Aber die anderen Elemente der Judenfeindschaft waren durchaus vorhanden: die religiöse Basis bei der vorwiegend ländlichen ukrainischen Bevölkerung, die Vorstellung von der ökonomischen Ausbeutung, die das »Verschwinden« der Juden ungeachtet der negativen Erfahrungen mit den Deutschen als etwas Positives erscheinen ließ; und bei der politisch denkenden, aufstrebenden Schicht, die der eigentliche Träger des ukrainischen Nationalismus war, die Identifizierung von Juden mit Russen, Polen und/oder Bolschewisten, damit aber jedenfalls ihre Deutung als Gegner der eigenen nationalen Identität und Staatlichkeit.

Damit gab es – wie in anderen Fällen auch – keinen »einheitlichen ukrainischen Antisemitismus«, sondern eine Reihe von unterschiedlichen historischen Perzeptionen, die judenfeindliches Denken und Handeln begünstigten.

An dieser Stelle sei das Putin-Zitat vom Anfang dieses Textes in Erinnerung gerufen: »Die Ukraine ist ohne jeden Zweifel ein unabhängiger Staat. [...] Wir haben eine gemeinsame Tradition, eine gemeinsame Mentalität, eine gemeinsame Geschichte, eine gemeinsame Kultur. [...] In diesem Sinne, das möchte ich noch einmal wiederholen, sind wir ein Volk.«

Diese Einbeziehung der Ukrainer in die russische Identität wurde bis zum Angriff Russlands 2022 von nicht wenigen in Russland wie der Ukraine mitvollzogen, für andere war sie schon vorher eine unmittelbare Bedrohung für die ukrainische Nationsbildung. In unterschiedlichen Phasen der ukrainischen Geschichte imaginierte man Juden in dieser Beziehung in einer negativen Rolle, die jeweils neben der religiösen Differenz in der Identifizierung mit anderen Faktoren bestand. Anfangs ging es um die Repräsentanz von als Unterdrücker wahrgenommenen Eroberern. Vom 19. Jahrhundert an ging es tatsächlich um positiven Nationalismus, die früheren, anders begründeten Phänomene wurden vielfach im Nachhinein in dieser Hinsicht interpretiert. Da die »echten« Russen (wie vorher die Polen) nicht greifbar waren, reagier-

44 Siehe Frank Golczewski, Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine, in: Christoph Dieckmann (Hg.), Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der »Kollaboration« im östlichen Europa 1939–1945, Göttingen 2003, 151–182.



te man sich an deren angeblichen »Vertretern« ab. Dies scheint so eindeutig zu sein – ist es aber nicht. Und zwar in mehrfacher Weise.

Der Metropolit der griechisch-katholischen (unierten ukrainischen) Kirche Andrej Šeptyc'kyj, dessen Kirche die zeitgleich mit den galizischen Massakern erfolgende Ankunft der Deutschen 1941 begrüßt hatte, veröffentlichte am 21. November 1942 einen Hirtenbrief mit dem Titel »Du sollst nicht töten!« (*Ne ubyj!*) und wies darüber hinaus seine Klöster an, Juden zu verstecken.<sup>45</sup> So überlebte der spätere polnische Außenminister Adam Daniel Rotfeld (\*1938) in einem Studitenkloster, den Rabbiner David Kahane (1903–1998) versteckte Šeptyc'kyj eine Zeit lang in seinem Palast und dann in einem Kloster.

Derselbe Metropolit hatte aber am 1. Juli 1941 in einem Hirtenbrief die »siegreiche deutsche Armee« als »Befreierin vom Feind« begrüßt und aufgerufen, die OUN-Regierung, die Jaroslav Stec'ko am 30. Juni 1941 aufgerufen hatte, anzuerkennen. Am 5. Juli 1941 – da wusste er bereits von den Pogromen in ganz Galizien – rief er in einem weiteren Hirtenbrief die unierten Geistlichen auf, zugunsten der »siegreichen deutschen Armee« das *mnogolitstvije* (eigentlich ein traditionelles Geburtstagslied; wörtlich »sie soll viele Jahre leben«) singen zu lassen.<sup>46</sup>

Hierbei ist eine Kontextualisierung hilfreich. So wurde etwa die einmalige und vorbildliche polnische Judenrettungsorganisation Żegota von der bekannten Antisemitin Zofia Kossak-Szatkowska (1889–1968) begründet, die es in ihrem im August 1942 verfassten »Protest« mit ihrer katholischen Religion nicht vereinbaren konnte, Menschen, nur weil sie als Juden geboren wurden, von den Deutschen ermorden zu lassen.<sup>47</sup>

45 Darin heißt es: »Seltsamerweise betrügen sich auch diejenigen, die den politischen Mord nicht für eine Sünde halten, als befreie die Politik den Menschen von der Verpflichtung gegenüber Gottes Gesetz und rechtfertige ein Verbrechen, das der menschlichen Natur widerspricht. So ist es nicht. Der Christ ist verpflichtet, Gottes Gesetz nicht nur im privaten Leben zu beachten, sondern auch im politischen und gesellschaftlichen Leben. Der Mensch, der das unschuldige Blut seines Feindes, des politischen Gegners, vergießt, ist ebenso ein Menschenmörder, wie ein Mensch, der dies aus Gründen des Raubes tut, und er verdient ebenso die Strafe Gottes und den Bann der Kirche«. Zit. nach Andrej Šeptyc'kyj, *Ne ubyj*, 21. November 1942 (online seit 17. April 2015), <<https://zbruc.eu/node/35078>> (4. Juli 2022).

46 Die Hirtenbriefe sind abgedruckt in: Ukrajins'ke Deržavotvorennja. Akt 30 červnja 1941 [Ukrainische Staatsgründung. Der Akt vom 30. Juni 1941], *L'viv/Kiew* 2001, 126 (Dok. 60), 149 (Dok. 79).

47 »Unsere Gefühle gegenüber den Juden haben sich nicht verändert. Wir hören nicht auf, sie weiterhin für politische, wirtschaftliche und ideelle Feinde Polens zu halten. Wir sind uns darüber hinaus bewusst, dass sie uns für ihr Unglück verantwortlich machen. Warum, auf welcher Basis – das bleibt ein Geheimnis der jüdischen Seele, ungeachtet dessen ist dies eine sich dauernd bestätigende Tatsache. Das Bewusstsein dieser Gefühle befreit uns jedoch nicht von der Pflicht, das Verbrechen zu verurteilen. Wir wollen keine Pilati sein.« Siehe Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, *Polacy – Żydzi 1939–1945. Wybór źródeł* [Polen-Juden 1939–1945. Ausgewählte Quellen], Warschau 2001, 213.

Auch eine Quantifizierung ist möglich. Mit Stand 1. Januar 2021 wurden durch Yad Vashem 2 673 Menschen aus der Ukraine als »Gerechte unter den Völkern«, also als Judenretter, anerkannt. Das ist weniger als aus Polen (7 177), den Niederlanden (5 910) oder Frankreich (4 150), aber mehr als aus Deutschland (641).<sup>48</sup> Dabei ist zusätzlich zu berücksichtigen, dass Meldungen aus der Ukraine erst ab 1991 eingehen beziehungsweise verifiziert werden konnten, als viele Retter und Gerettete schon gestorben waren.

Daher ist eben Geschichte selten eindeutig, auch in diesem Falle nicht. Natürlich gab es in Osteuropa überall politisch überzeugte oder durch materielle Leistungen überredete Helfer der deutschen Mörder. Aber es gab auch Helfer der Juden – wie in jedem Volk ist eine einfache Pauschalisierung ahistorisch.

Ich habe einen Beitrag über die Ukraine im Zweiten Weltkrieg *Shades of Grey* genannt.<sup>49</sup> Das betrifft auch die Ukraine heute. Sie ist ein Grenzland und damit national verunsichert, weil sie ihre schillernde Grenzland-Qualität nicht annehmen mag und kulturelle Eindeutigkeit erzwingen will. Es gibt rechtlich nichts an der Situation der Juden in der Ukraine auszusetzen. Ab 2014 gab es mit Volodymyr Hrojsman (geb. 1978) einen jüdischen Parlamentspräsidenten, der 2016 zum Regierungschef gewählt wurde, und seit 2019 mit Volodymyr Selenskyj einen Staatspräsidenten jüdischer Herkunft.

Es gibt aber auch antisemitische Zwischenfälle, rechte Parteien, das Geschichtsgesetz, das Judenfeinde zu ehren gebietet, eine linke Haltung, die die jüdischen Oligarchen als »Ausbeuter« kritisiert, und manchmal raunte einem auch jemand zu, der frühere Staatspräsident Petro Porošenko sei »eigentlich« Jude – was immer das bedeuten mag. Dass es in einer infrage gestellten Staatlichkeit zu regressiven Akten kommt und dafür alte Modelle herangezogen werden, ist nicht so überraschend. Die ukrainische Staatlichkeit ist sowohl diskursiv als auch real gefährdet. Die Frage der Behandlung und Perception von Minderheiten ist dabei keine Nebensache, die hier behandelte Problematik noch nicht abgeschlossen. Insofern übt Geschichte nicht immer eine positive Funktion aus. Aber es gibt Gründe zu hoffen.

48 Yad Vashem (Hg.), Names of Righteous by Country, <<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/statistics.html>> (4. Juli 2022).

49 Frank Golczewski, *Shades of Grey. Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia*, in: Ray Brandon/Wendy Lower (Hgg.), *The Shoah in Ukraine. History, Testimony, Memorialization*, Bloomington, Ind., 2008, 114–155. Der vorliegende Beitrag ist die überarbeitete Fassung der 19. Simon-Dubnow-Vorlesung, die der Verfasser am 15. November 2018 in der Alten Handelsbörse zu Leipzig gehalten hat.

Sarah Ellen Zarrow

## Imagining and Reimagining the Encounter between Max Weinreich and Regina Lilientalowa: Gender, Geography, and the Concept of “Yiddishland”

Warsaw, early 1920s:<sup>1</sup> A newly minted doctor of philosophy, fresh from Marburg, pays a visit to an established scholar, once a luminary in her field but recently fallen on hard times after the death of her father, becoming ill herself, and suffering through the loss of a job. The young man walks through Warsaw, through Nalewki, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in the north of the city. He is familiar with this neighborhood and many of its residents, but the scholar he seeks does not live here. She lives on Koszykowa Street, just south of the city’s main thoroughfares, in a bourgeois, multi-confessional neighborhood. When he finally reaches her, he is surprised: Her location and her occupation do not match up in his mind. How could a Jewish ethnographer, known for her works on folklore and custom, live so far from his other ethnographer friends, those working in Yiddish, people deeply invested in Jewish life and culture, albeit from a mainly secular standpoint?

The young man wanted to talk to the scholar about publishing an article in his new journal, *Yiddish Philology*. She had written an article in Polish on the idea of the “evil eye” in Jewish belief. He believed that it would have a large audience in Yiddish as well. He found her in an unusual manner: by calling up everyone with her last name in the Warsaw phone book.

Entering her apartment did not clear up any of the mysteries for this man. He remarked to himself on her face: just like he imagined an old schoolmarm to look like, with a pince-nez on her nose. Her voice was sharp and choppy. Her face was yellowed and tired. Almost as an afterthought, as he

1 My gratitude goes to Sonia Gollance and David Morrill Schlitt for their comments on drafts of this article. – Here, and throughout the text, I have used the term “Yiddishland” to denote the concept of a linguistically and culturally unified (though not homogenous) Jewry, one not bound by national borders, in Eastern and East-Central Europe. Although this term was codified at the 1937 Yiddish Culture Congress in Paris, it was evidently in use earlier, and the concept, if not the term itself, forms one of the basic principles of organizations like YIVO and its location in Wilno. See, e. g., Kalman Weiser, *The Capital of “Yiddishland”?*, in: Glenn Dynner/François Guesnet (eds.), *Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis. Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Professor Antony Polonsky*, Leiden 2015, 298–322; and Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture. Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation*, Cambridge 2014. My thanks go to Nicholas Underwood for his thoughts on the use of the term before 1937.

was putting his thoughts to paper, he remarked that she seemed ill. (She would in fact die from a botched gallbladder surgery not a year after they met.) Although she struck him as he expected a teacher would, her apartment surprised him. It was full of books in various languages, including works by his beloved Y. L. Peretz in Yiddish. Peretz's portrait even hung on the wall. They could understand each other's preferred language (his Yiddish, hers Polish) and chose to speak their own chosen language. She told him that she had learned Yiddish too late to be comfortable speaking it, surprising him yet again – he had assumed that her family lineage, including a well-known rabbi for a grandfather, would mean that Yiddish was her first language.

The young man was shocked that the scholar had not heard of his journal – after all, it had published three issues already – but she was pleasantly surprised to learn of it. At one point in their conversation, he thought that the publicity apparatus for all his Yiddishist efforts – gymnasias in Yiddish and other endeavors – must be faulty, for she truly had not heard a thing about the projects close to his heart.

They began to discuss nationalism. The scholar saw no issue with Jews being unwilling to fight for a nationalist ideology, for some measure of autonomy for Jews. She asked the young man rhetorically: “If Jews have less desire to fight than others, what’s the problem?”<sup>2</sup> The young man tried to answer her in a manner he felt was logical, but she did not agree with him. He chalked it up to her being a woman, who thought with her emotions and not with her rational mind.

Eventually, the scholar submitted an article to the young man's fledgling journal, but she would not live to see it published.<sup>3</sup>

Surely, this encounter was not remarkable. Max Weinreich, the young man, interacted with dozens of Jewish ethnographers and other academics. Regina Lilientalowa, the seasoned scholar, for her part, had many contacts within Jewish and Catholic Polish intellectual circles. Weinreich is now known as one of the foremost Yiddishist intellectuals and as a founder and guiding light of YIVO, the Jewish Research Institute; he reestablished YIVO in New York City after World War II. Lilientalowa, despite knowledge of her work in some circles of scholars of Jewish ethnography, is barely remembered, especially outside of the Polish-speaking world. Most of her works have not been translated. From Weinreich's description of their meeting, it seems that perhaps only ninety minutes passed between the two figures. And yet, within

2 M[ax] Weinreich, Regina Eiger-Liliental. A por gedenk-verter [Regina Eiger-Liliental. A Few Words of Remembrance], in: Der Tog [The Day], 12 December 1924, 3.

3 My deepest gratitude goes to the late Piotr Grącikowski for pointing me to this piece and for his many observations on Lilientalowa's life and work.

this brief meeting, and Weinreich's one account of it available to us (an account written in memoriam of Lilientalowa), worlds reveal themselves.

The excerpt above, from Weinreich's description of meeting Lilientalowa, published as a kind of obituary in Wilno's *Der Tog* (The Day) after her death, displays glimmers of mutual recognition but also of mutual unintelligibility, and not a little disdain and sexism. However, the encounter is not only valuable as an example of a particular sort of interpersonal relationship. This article adopts a microhistorical approach to this encounter, seeing it not as a microcosm of larger phenomena but as pointing to broader issues that deserve scrutiny. The encounter offers insight into both gendered and geographic relations among Jews in the Second Polish Republic; this confluence of gender and geography explains and illustrates the ways in which Weinreich completely misunderstood the stance and persona of a fellow intellectual. It intervenes in the normative historiography and scholarship about Yiddish-language activism by introducing two lenses of analysis – gender and spatiality – which, taken together, shift our perspective on interwar Polish Jewish cultural activity.

The place of the Yiddish language, and politics surrounding Yiddish, differed so much from city to city in interwar Poland as to ensure that two scholars interested in similar topics and processes talked right past each other, without a common set of understandings.<sup>4</sup> For we have absolutely no sense of Lilientalowa's own understanding of the encounter. The differences between the two scholars in age, gender, perspectives on acculturation, and status pervade their meeting and make this seemingly mundane encounter a useful window into the dynamics of Jewish geography during the interwar period.

Up to now, there has been a standard history that revolves around Wilno (Vilnius) and its mythos and around YIVO as its centerpiece.<sup>5</sup> Male voices dominate the standard historiography. Sources, of course, partially dictate this male-centric focus. Even female voices such as Lucy Dawidowicz's, who participated in YIVO's *aspirantur* program in 1938/39, denigrated her female colleagues in words we ordinarily might not attribute to a woman.

Who were the figures in this encounter, the writer and the written-about? Even with highly educated and prolific subjects, there are aspects of their inner world that we can glean only from others' accounts and from contex-

4 Cecile Kuznitz has noted that in Warsaw, Yiddish was more appealing to committed leftists (due to political influences of leftist parties).

5 See, e.g., Kuznitz, YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture. Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman offered a wider perspective, considering Warsaw-based ethnographers as well, while still focusing on categories essential to Wilno and YIVO. See idem, *Defining the Yiddish Nation. The Jewish Folklorists of Poland, Detroit, Mich., 2003.*

tual information. This article avoids the approach of biography-as-destiny, although nevertheless biography – and biography and gender as part of biography – may tell us quite a lot.

Max Weinreich was born in Kuldiga (Goldingen), then within the Russian Empire (today in Latvia). He attended a “half-modernized” cheder and then Russian- and German-language gymnasia. His “family preferred speaking German to Yiddish,”<sup>6</sup> a choice that Weinreich explicitly rejected in his adult life (after pursuing doctoral studies in Germany). As a youth in a predominantly non-Jewish environment, he became interested in Jewish subjects.<sup>7</sup> In 1912, he went to Saint Petersburg to attend university and later went to Marburg for a doctorate in linguistics, which he received in 1923. He moved to Wilno from Marburg specifically to participate in the Yiddish cultural scene taking place there. In 1924, when he wrote his “appreciation” for Lilientalowa, plans were in the works for a center of Yiddish scholarship in Wilno. Weinreich himself advocated the establishment of YIVO in Berlin, but he was also planning a “union of Yiddish philologists” in Wilno with Zalmen Reyzen, which would focus on linguistic issues and publish a journal.<sup>8</sup> Weinreich’s sentimental feeling for Wilno ran quite deep. He wrote that “every wall in old Vilna, every stone in the synagogue complex [*shulhoyf*], on Yidishe Street and on Glezer Street, tells of generations of Jews who lived there,” and he had intimate familiarity with the city.<sup>9</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz also noted that Weinreich’s apartment, on a hill, had a birds-eye view of the entire Wilno cityscape.<sup>10</sup> Part of the appeal of Wilno was the idea that the city was simultaneously old and new.<sup>11</sup> He saw Yiddish as a link between the ages, and as a potential force of modernization, a way to make Jews a modern nation.

Over time, Weinreich would adopt the philosophy that Jewish assimilationism presented a bigger danger than interwar Polish state policies – or rather that state policies which induced or encouraged assimilation were the bigger

6 Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 33.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Max Weinreich/Zalman Reisen, *Tsu ale yidishe filologn* [To All Jewish Philologists], in: *Vilner Tog* [Wilno Day], 13 May 1923, 3, cit. in Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 44.

9 Max Weinreich, *Der yidisher visnshaftlekher institut (yivo)* [The Jewish Research Institute (YIVO)], in: Ephim H. Jeshurin (ed.), *Vilne. A zamlbukh gevidmet der shtot Vilne* [Vilne. A Collection Dedicated to the City of Vilne], New York 1935, 323, cit. in Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 113.

10 Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *From that Place and Time. A Memoir, 1938–1947*, New Brunswick, N. J., 2008, 116.

11 Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 134.

threat.<sup>12</sup> His “essentialist vision of the nation”<sup>13</sup> was the dominant mode of thinking at the time; Weinreich “used the category ‘assimilation’ without giving it much thought, and often as a value-loaded category, in which he described social processes he regarded in a negative light.”<sup>14</sup> No doubt, as a young man enthusiastic about the possibilities for Yiddish-language cultural activity in Wilno, he was already thinking along these lines, though his thoughts may not have been fully developed. Of course, as a young and idealistic scholar, they may equally likely have been over-developed when he met Lilientalowa, whom he certainly would have viewed as an assimilationist.

Regina Lilientalowa was born Regina (Gitl) Eiger in 1875 in Zawichost, on the border to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the first of seven children of Maurycy (Moyshe) and Balbina (Blima) Eiger. Her grandfather was Akiva Eiger (1761–1837), a preeminent rabbi from Posen (Poznań) who was known across Europe and who took part in conversations on the rights of Jews in Congress Poland held in 1807. Yankev Shatzky noted that the Eigers were a traditional family, one that also kept maskilic (enlightenment) literature in the house. Other documents point to acculturationist tendencies at home.<sup>15</sup> Weinreich may have misunderstood Orthodoxy in Poland, assuming that the Orthodox in the Prussian partition of Poland, even those with acculturationist tendencies, would have encouraged their children primarily to use Yiddish rather than the local vernacular.

Regina’s siblings were Kive (Akiva), Herszek (Hershl), Khane, Maks, Eleonore, Stanisław, Adelina, and Judyta; Piotr Grącikowski has noted that the first three children were given unmistakably Ashkenazi names, whereas the last four had more universal names.<sup>16</sup> She moved as a young girl to Sandomierz, where she attended gymnasium.<sup>17</sup> In 1896, she married the Varsovian clerk Natan Liliental in Szczepieszyn and the couple moved to Warsaw.<sup>18</sup>

12 Kamil Kijek, Max Weinreich, *Assimilation and the Social Politics of Jewish Nation-Building*, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 41 (2011), no. 1–2, 25–55.

13 *Ibid.*, 25.

14 *Ibid.*, 28.

15 Yankev Shatzky, *Der toyt fun a yidene a “talmid khokhem,” Regina Liliental, rav Akiva Eigers an eynikl un a shrayberin vegn khokhmes yisroel* [The Death of a Female Jewish “Talmud Scholar,” Regina Lilientalowa, Rabbi Akiva Eiger’s Granddaughter and a Writer about Jewish Wisdom], in: *Der Tog* (New York), 3 January 1925, 7, cit. in Piotr Grącikowski, *Regina Lilientalowa. Uczona, Żydówka, kobieta* [Regina Lilientalowa. Scholar, Jew, Woman], in: *Archiwum Etnograficzne* [Ethnographical Archive] 57 (2014), 107–130, here 107, fn. 1.

16 Grącikowski, *Regina Lilientalowa. Uczona, Żydówka, kobieta*, 109.

17 Details about young Regina Eiger’s earliest years are impossible to verify. I would say the issue is getting firm rather than specific details – I found many specific dates for birth, marriage, moving, but none seemed definitely correct.

18 Grącikowski, *Regina Lilientalowa. Uczona, Żydówka, kobieta*, 111.

There, the couple had various addresses in the center of the city. In 1900, her parents also moved to Warsaw and, after the death of her mother, Regina's father lived with her and Natan. Her father died in 1919. The pair continued to live in Warsaw, inter alia in Zielna Street, in a more heavily Jewish area, before moving to Koszykowa Street.

Lilientalowa's ethnographic career began in Warsaw, with courses at the "Flying University," an underground institution dedicated to positivist scholarship and fostering Polish patriotism under Russian rule. Lilientalowa had an interest in children's stories and in her own hometown from early on; her interest in ethnography blossomed after taking courses with Ludwik Krzywicki, who encouraged her to research Jewish folklore. He may also have directed her to the editorship of *Wista*, a general interest ethnographic monthly, for which she later wrote a column on Jewish ethnography.<sup>19</sup>

By the time of the Great War, Lilientalowa had developed a notation system to record the locations of sayings she collected, had a regular column in a Polish monthly and a teaching job, and was a regular publishing presence in Warsaw's intellectual scene – as well as a physical presence, as she appeared (without her husband, it seems) at various events around the city.<sup>20</sup>

Lilientalowa also established herself as a teacher in Piaseczno and perhaps other schools as well. Weinreich's remarks about her teacherly appearance had some basis in what he knew of her. In actuality, Lilientalowa had difficulties as a teacher, difficulties which reflect her ethos of rationalism, anti-superstition, and the value she placed on understanding Jews and Judaism in a scholarly way. She remarked to Weinreich that the "ministry" – most certainly meaning the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego) – did not approve of her teaching Jewish history, wanting to subsume this topic within religion education.<sup>21</sup> She seems to have quit her job or been fired over her insistence on teaching Jewish history as a subject in its own right; at the time of her death, she was writing a Jewish

19 Ibid., 109.

20 Ibid., 114.

21 In other Jewish schools, such as the girls' vocational schools in Lesser Poland run by Cecylja Kłaftenowa, Jewish history was subsumed under the rubric "Judaism." See, e. g., Mirosław Łapot, Cecylia Kłaften (1881–194?). Pionierka żydowskiego szkolnictwa zawodowego we Lwowie i w Małopolsce w okresie międzywojennym [Cecylia Kłaften (1881–194?). Pioneer of Jewish Vocational Schooling in Lwów and in Lesser Poland in the Interwar Period], in: *Polsko-Ukraiński Rocznik [Polish-Ukrainian Yearbook]* 13 (2011), 357–367, here 364.



history text to be used in schools.<sup>22</sup> For Lilientalowa, teaching history was a matter of national pride. Weinreich reported that she told her school director: “If you do not have the strength to talk about the history of your people at this time, when you do teach Polish history, then I do not care to hide under a mask.”<sup>23</sup>

Lilientalowa had also developed a strong activist orientation in her work, troubled to see the customs of the past fully present in her own time. She excoriated parents for carrying on these customs and decried certain elements of Jewish tradition and ritual (like circumcision).<sup>24</sup> In Lilientalowa’s view, Judaism’s attitude towards women was marked by misogyny. She was particularly interested in women’s role within Judaism and laws particular to women, such as menstrual taboos, that she viewed as sexist. Although she set herself up in an adversarial position to those who saw themselves as traditional, she evidently had the respect of those who respected (and perhaps idealized) tradition as well, including Peretz, despite the latter’s scathing criticism of Lilientalowa’s *Izraelita* cohort.<sup>25</sup> She was involved in feminist conversations published in *Ogniwo* (Link), a general-interest progressive weekly.<sup>26</sup>

Lilientalowa’s work on women did not come up in her conversation with Weinreich, at least not according to his report. He did mention her work on the “evil eye” and touched on her teaching career, but was far more interested in her as a figure, an exemplar of “assimilation” as he saw it, than as a scholar.<sup>27</sup> The characteristics that Weinreich attributed to her were linked to

22 Public Library of the Capital City of Warsaw, Old Prints and Manuscripts Division, Spuścizna Reginy Lilientalowej [Bequest of Regina Lilientalowa], 2375 A.7.2, Rzut oka na przeszłość Żydów w Polsce, maszynopis [A Look at the Past of Jews in Poland], 1 (typescript). Thanks to Piotr Grącikowski for this citation, which is also mentioned in Giza Frąnkłowa, Błp. [= Błogosławionej pamięci] Regina Lilientalowa [Regina Lilientalowa of Blessed Memory], in: Lud [People] 26 (1927), 119–121, here 121.

23 Weinreich, Regina Eiger-Liliental, 3.

24 Regina Lilientalowa, Precz z barbarzyństwem! (Rzecz o obrzezaniu) [Down with Barbarism! (On Circumcision)], Warsaw 1908.

25 Michael C. Steinlauf, Hope and Fear. Y. L. Peretz and the Dialectics of Diaspora Nationalism, 1905–1912, in: Dynner/Guesnet (eds.), Warsaw, 227–251, here 234.

26 Grącikowski, Regina Lilientalowa. Uczona, Żydówka, kobieta, 121.

27 On representations of women as assimilatory forces in Jewish history, see Paula E. Hyman, Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History. The Roles and Representations of Women, Seattle, Wash., 1995.

gender (schoolmarmish, ugly, emotional, confusing), rather than intellect.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps her frequent focus on women in her work intensified Weinreich's feeling that she was a woman first and foremost, not his intellectual peer.

### The Competing Cities of the Second Polish Republic

Since 1772, Poland had been successively partitioned between three neighboring states: Tsarist Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire. The three partitions were governed according to different laws. Jews within these empires occupied different social and legal spaces, as well as different cultural spaces.

Within the Russian partition, Jews in the Pale of Settlement (the area to which Jews were by and large restricted to live from the time of Catherine the Great's decree of 1791) were subjects, not citizens. Although cities such as Vilna (Wilno) emerged as centers of rabbinic culture and learning, the use of Jewish languages in schooling and printing was severely censored. Legal restrictions on Jews had largely been abolished by the 1860s across Europe, with the exception of the status of Jews in the Pale of Settlement.<sup>29</sup> Before the Great War, Vilna had been something of a cultural backwater, with a strong sense of Jewish traditionalism and intellectual engagement but far less of a European-oriented cultural scene. It was fought over and considered essential to the putative Second Polish Republic, especially by Józef Piłsudski, its native son and "liberator."

In 1922, with the incorporation of Wilno into Poland after a series of military occupations, Warsaw and Wilno found themselves as two cities within one and the same country. Although Polish factions fought with the Lithuanian state for Wilno as a "natural," "organic" part of reborn Poland, Wilno, and Warsaw, the capital, were heirs to different cultural and political traditions

28 My thanks to the anonymous reviewer who pointed out that there may be more to Weinreich's comments than physical description and who noted that Weinreich used a female pseudonym in the *Forverts*. In fact, according to Ayelet Brinn, Weinreich's use of the name Sore Brener served, at least in part, to "separate his journalism from his more scholarly output," reinforcing rather than undermining traditional gender formulations and hierarchies. Ayelet Brinn, personal correspondence with the author, July 2019. See idem, *Miss Amerike. The Yiddish Press's Encounter with the United States, 1885–1924* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2019).

29 Theodore R. Weeks, *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1861–1914. Changes and Continuities*, in: Polin. *Studies in Polish Jewry* 27 (2015): Glenn Dynner/Antony Polonsky/Marcin Wodziński (eds.), *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815–1918*, Oxford 2015, 305–320, here 305 and 307.

and, perhaps most importantly for the present investigation, different intellectual currents, especially among Jews.

Warsaw emerged as the capital of the Second Polish Republic. Although technically within the Russian partition of Poland, it was linguistically and culturally, as well as demographically, quite different from Wilno, which fell within the same partition. With its expansion beyond the former fortress walls after the Great War, it was also part of a Piłsudskian plan for a “Greater Warsaw” (*Wielka Warszawa*, created in 1916).

The German occupational administration of Vilna between 1915 and 1918 encouraged the use of Yiddish (and other minority languages) as a bulwark against Russian.<sup>30</sup> Within Warsaw, the Yiddish press expanded, as did the Polish-language Jewish press. Similarly to the situation in Vilna, the Great War thus brought the official recognition of Yiddish language rights.<sup>31</sup> Jewish cultural organizations did not have the same centrality in Warsaw that they did in other cities such as Wilno. Jews in Warsaw enjoyed a position quite different from those in Wilno, where there was no certain majority. Jews in Warsaw were unquestionably a minority, albeit a large one. After the 1905/06 reforms, in which bans on publications and public assembly were overlooked or abolished, a Jewish public sphere developed, including the “rapid growth” of the Yiddish press after 1905.<sup>32</sup> This development further spurred the strengthening of the Jewish public sphere and a “politicization of ethnicity” in which the very fact of being Jewish became a marker around which political parties and positions could form.<sup>33</sup>

30 For a discussion of Yiddish language rights in Vilna under German administration, see Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation*, esp. chap. 4.

31 Marcos Silber, *Yiddish Language Rights in Congress Poland during the First World War. The Social Implications of Linguistic Recognition*, in: Polin. *Studies in Polish Jewry* 27 (2015), 335–365, here 335.

32 Chone Shmeruk has also noted the “rapid growth” of the Yiddish press after 1905, especially visible in the wide-circulation Yiddish dailies *Haynt* [Today] and *Der Moment* [The Moment]. Chone Shmeruk, *Aspects of the History of Warsaw as a Yiddish Literary Centre*, in: Polin. *Studies in Polish Jewry* 3 (1988), 140–155, here 150.

33 Scott Ury writes, “In time, this reconstructed Jewish public sphere would serve as the foundation for both a new type of community and a new style of politics among Jews in the city. [...] This dependence on the Jewish vernacular contributed directly to the solidification of a socio-political community based on an ethno-linguistic plane and not, for example, on a class or regional axis.” This “politicization of ethnicity,” he argues, was a result of the need for politically oriented bodies and public support for participatory politics after the revolution. See idem, *Barricades and Banners. The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry*, Stanford, Calif., 2012, 141 f. and 214.

## A Tale of Two Ethnographic Approaches

By 1905, one geopolitical issue had made itself felt in the sphere of ethnography: the so-called “Litvak scare,” based on fears of a potentially Russifying fifth column of Jewish migration from provinces further east after the 1905 Revolution.<sup>34</sup> Tensions between “Polish” (Varsovian) and “Russian” Litvak Jews ran high; the “Russian” Jews, allowed to travel freely into Congress Poland after 1868, were under suspicion of bringing Zionism and socialism, both seen as detrimental to the shaky rapprochement between Jews and Catholic Poles.<sup>35</sup>

Due to high levels of in-migration, Scott Ury has referred to post-1905 Warsaw as a “city of strangers.”<sup>36</sup> As early as 1897, 50 percent of Warsaw’s Jewish residents were born outside of the city, making the need to fit in all the stronger.<sup>37</sup> Theodore R. Weeks has noted a “climate of hostility” on the Litvak issue.<sup>38</sup> Not only did Litvaks purportedly bring Russification, they also brought Yiddish and the Yiddish press. Litvaks were rumored to lack love for the idea of the Polish nation, which amounted to high treason in Warsaw.<sup>39</sup>

Many Catholic Poles did not look favorably on the development of a visibly Jewish culture in Yiddish<sup>40</sup> and the new migrants did indeed exert a strong influence on the expansion of the Yiddish press in Warsaw; the turn to the “local vernacular” (Yiddish) was key in the development of a Jewish Polish public sphere. The period after the 1905 Revolution also marked the opening of numerous Yiddish theaters in Warsaw, strengthening the Yid-

34 The following material is adapted from Sarah Ellen Zarrow, *Collecting Themselves. Jewish Documentation and Display in Interwar Poland* (unpublished PhD thesis, New York University, 2015).

35 See Magdalena Opalski/Israel Bartal, *Poles and Jews. A Failed Brotherhood*, Hanover, N. H., 1992. The “threat” of the Litvaks may well have been greatly exaggerated: Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow has remarked that Litvaks began to see themselves as Polish, rather than Russian, during the German occupation of Warsaw during World War I, as it was through Polishness that belonging in the Jewish community could be assured. See Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, “Who Has Not Wanted to Be an Editor?” *The Yiddish Press in the Kingdom of Poland, 1905–1914*, in: *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 27 (2015), 273–304.

36 Ury, *Barricades and Banners*, 50.

37 *Ibid.*, 50 f. In 1921, Jews in Warsaw numbered 310,000 and made up about 33 percent of the population. In 1931, there were 352,000 Jews in Warsaw, that is 29 percent of the city’s total population.

38 Weeks, *Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1861–1914*, 316.

39 Scott Ury, *In Kotik’s Corner. Urban Culture, Bourgeois Politics and the Struggle for Jewish Civility in Turn of the Century Eastern Europe*, in: *Dynner/Guesnet* (eds.), *Warsaw, 207–226*, here 211.

40 See Piotr Wróbel, *Jewish Warsaw before the First World War*, in: *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 3 (2004): Antony Polonsky (ed.), *The Jews of Warsaw*, Oxford 2004, 156–187.

dish-language cultural sphere.<sup>41</sup> However, not all Jews welcomed this turn: Gennady Estraiikh has pointed out that various insults compared the Litvaks to *goyim* – gentiles – in a negative fashion.<sup>42</sup>

In the early 1920s, Polish cities (including Lwów as well as Warsaw and Wilno) were vying for status within the new national order. Warsaw’s ethnographers had long looked at territories outside the capital as “the provinces,” a somewhat undifferentiated mass where the ethnographic subject was located. Warsaw Jewish ethnographers seem to have been particularly invested in the idea of “the provinces” as completely different from Warsaw, where, according to many, no trace of “superstition” remained (with the possible exception of Nalewki, the “Jewish neighborhood”).

Scholarly activity in Wilno (Vilna) before the war was oriented towards Saint Petersburg; Weinreich himself had attended university there. Warsaw’s intellectuals, by contrast, gravitated towards Polish Positivism, and the circles around Aleksandr Świętochowski in particular. Polish ethnographic study was suppressed under Russian rule as a manifestation of Polish national sentiment evidenced by the refusal of the authorities to grant an ethnographic museum to the city, relegating ethnographic collections (including items donated by Regina Lilientalowa herself) to the Museum of Industry and Agriculture.

Jewish ethnography in Warsaw was concerned with somewhat different issues than that in Wilno, dating from before the “Litvak scare” but certainly later influenced by it, and Lilientalowa’s work reflects those preoccupations. The tension Warsaw Jewish ethnographers faced – namely the desire to separate the researcher-self from the subject, while at the same time acknowledging proximity to other Jews “in the provinces” – sprang partially from debates over whether or not Jews were a Polonizable minority, an issue related intimately to the “Litvak question.” If Varsovian Jews were indeed Polonizable, even as they shared some features with their town-dwelling brethren, Litvak Jews, in Lilientalowa’s view, were not. At the same time, did not many Varsovian Jews only recently migrate to Warsaw, as Litvak Jews were now doing? This dilemma led some to draw a rather clear line between the “newcomers” and their own communities.

The fear of being mistaken for a Litvak, tainted by their presence, was undoubtedly due in part to non-Jewish Poles’ similarly negative attitudes towards Litvaks. Ludwik Krzywicki, Regina Lilientalowa’s mentor, had also

41 Whether this flourishing had any impact on a Yiddish-based “nationalism” in the sense of Gottesman’s argument about Yiddish-language schooling in Wilno during the World War I-era German occupation is questionable.

42 Gennady Estraiikh, *The Kultur-Lige in Warsaw. A Stopover in the Yiddishists’ Journey between Kiev and Paris*, in: Dynner/Guesnet (eds.), Warsaw, 323–346, here 331.

believed that Litvaks, though they might become good Polish citizens, were (perhaps unconsciously) “spreading the Russian spirit, language, and culture throughout Poland.”<sup>43</sup> Writer Alfred Döblin, too, had noted the fear of Russian influence in his chronicles and remarked that at least within Wilno, only Poles who hailed from other cities such as Warsaw hated the Russians; the rest of the population did not.<sup>44</sup>

A discomfort with lumping Jews from Warsaw in with provincial Jews is very much evident in Lilientalowa’s work. Even though Wilno and Warsaw were technically within the same imperial structure, Lilientalowa, at least, considered them distinct enough in character to warrant different treatment. It must be remembered that as a new Varsovian herself, Lilientalowa would have had a vested interest in distancing herself from Litvaks – both through her language use and her general attitudes towards non-Varsovian Jews. In fact, folklorist and later politician Noah Pryłucki blamed integrated Jews for spurring the antipathy towards Litvaks through the former’s rejection of the latter. He wrote,

“[The assimilationists] did not welcome the unfortunate outcasts from Moscow and other cities with brotherly hospitality, but with bile and slander. Sensing in them a healthy element, to whom the idea of assimilation was alien, they would have given anything in the world, they would have abandoned their wives, diamonds and all, to prevent Russian Jews from entering Poland. From that time [when the Litvaks arrived], not a week goes by that they do not remind the Poles: ‘We are who we were: your faithful slaves [...], we have nothing to do with this newly arrived rabble. They are strangers to us. We are Polish patriots; they are nationalists and Russifiers.’”<sup>45</sup>

In light of the debate around the “Litvak scare” (which, it should be noted, had not reached its peak in 1902, another possible reason why Lilientalowa did not come out explicitly against the Litvaks as an unassimilable force)<sup>46</sup>

43 Ludwik Krzywicki, Shtimen fun poylishe folks-forshteyer vegn dem tsushtand fun der yidn-frage in Poyln, II. Prof. Ludwik Krzywicki [Voices of Polish People’s Representatives on the State of the Jewish Question in Poland, II. Professor Ludwik Krzywicki], in: Haynt, 5/18 October 1909, 1, cit. in Nalewajko-Kulikow, “Who Has Not Wanted to Be an Editor?,” 292, fn. 93.

44 Alfred Döblin, *Ausgewählte Werke in Einzelbänden. Teil: Reise in Polen, Olten/Freiburg i. Br.* 1968, 89.

45 Noyekh (Noah) Pryłucki, Tsi zenen di litvakes “rusifikatorn”? [Are the Litvaks “Russifiers”?], in: idem, *In Poyln. Kimat a publitsistish togbukh (1905–1911)* [In Poland. Almost a Columnist’s Diary], Warsaw 1921, 156–172, cit. in Nalewajko-Kulikow, “Who Has Not Wanted to Be an Editor?,” 290. Pryłucki seems to use the term “assimilation” to mean what we consider integration in this article, following Wodziński.

46 See François Guesnet, *Migration et stéréotype. Le cas des juifs russes au Royaume de Pologne à la fin du XIXe siècle* [Migration and Stereotype. The Case of Russian Jews in the Kingdom of Poland at the End of the 19th Century], in: *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 41 (1990), no. 4, 505–518.

and perceptions of difference between the two communities, it is interesting to consider again Weinreich's words about Lilientalowa.

Warsaw's distinct brand of Jewish ethnographic practice demonstrates the tenacity of the post-1815 idea of Polish Jewry that formed around the capital. The idea of Polish Catholic/Jewish "brotherhood," though it did not last forever and did not encompass all swaths of Jewish society, nevertheless held strong through the Great War and into the interwar years.<sup>47</sup> Varsovian Jewish ethnographic work, published in Polish and bent on proving Jewish belonging within Poland (and concomitant divisions within what might otherwise be thought of as a larger Polish Jewish public) served as a counter-trend to documentary and display practices in Wilno.<sup>48</sup> The political implications of Yiddish in Warsaw, like the implications of ethnography, also differed from those of Wilno. Scholars argued that both using and promoting Yiddish in Warsaw was an active political choice, one that made a statement about its user's or proponent's politics, whereas in Wilno, use of Yiddish was simply a fact of life.<sup>49</sup> Kalman Weiser has astutely pointed out that neither city was the more "Yiddish"; however, Wilno was the most Yiddishist. He has posited a "cognitive map" of the cities that did not necessarily track neatly on to demographic reality.<sup>50</sup> While Warsaw was "indisputably the 'metropolis' of the Yiddish press, literature, and theater by World War I,"<sup>51</sup> even the declining use of Yiddish in Wilno in the interwar period did not tarnish its image as the capital of Yiddishland.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, as Weiser has noted: "The intensive activity of Vilna's secular Yiddish sector was the yardstick by which all else was measured."<sup>53</sup> Yet, as much as many Yiddish writers disdained Wilno, Weinreich and others tried to keep Warsaw writers away from YIVO.<sup>54</sup> Not only did YIVO's leaders hold Yiddish aloft as the language in which scholarship by, for, and about Jews should take place, they also looked unkindly on Jewish scholarship conducted in Polish, such as the work of Professors Mojżesz

47 See Bartal/Opalski, *Poles and Jews*.

48 Zarrow, *Collecting Themselves*, 162.

49 Weiser, *The Capital of "Yiddishland"?*, 321.

50 *Ibid.*, 305.

51 *Ibid.*, 301.

52 *Ibid.*, 316 f.

53 *Ibid.*, 317.

54 *Ibid.*, 318 f.

Schorr and Majer Bałaban of Warsaw University.<sup>55</sup> Various publications criticized Warsaw for not keeping Yiddish alive in the city,<sup>56</sup> despite the actual high use of Yiddish in Warsaw, which Weiser has demonstrated. “In retrospect,” he writes, “Yiddishists in Warsaw and Vilna jointly and consciously created a Yiddishist myth about Vilna – one which built upon the pre-existing mystique surrounding the ‘Jerusalem of Lithuania’ and the prestige of its Lithuanian dialect.”<sup>57</sup>

To this “cognitive map,” which is a useful way of considering stereotypes, rivalries, and concepts in the two cities, one can add gender. There is precedent for this endeavor in the work of Natalie Zemon Davis, who has made ample use of the conditional mood in her work – *what would have, could have happened?*

### The Gendered Implications of Weinreich’s Reminiscences of Lilientalowa

How can we use Weinreich’s account of the meeting ethically, when we have only one side of a story? How do we tell the woman’s side of a male/female encounter when the majority of scholarly literature on Jewish intellectuals has been devoted to men?

Chava Weissler, in her work on *tkhines* (women’s devotions in Yiddish), offers three ways in which the study of women’s piety and religion can broadly shift our understanding of “religion” or “Judaism”:

- the “additive” approach: we get a fuller picture of the time and place when we notice the women in it. Looking at women adds to our understanding of historical events.
- the “social historical” approach: studying women’s lives tells us something important about Jewish social life, beyond the confines of the study of women’s piety and religion per se.

55 See Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 106 f. One of YIVO’s founders, the sociolinguist Max Weinreich, decried what he termed Schorr’s “assimilationist ideology” and would not send the YIVO’s newsletter, *Yedies fun YIVO*, to Bałaban, claiming that “he has done nothing for the Institute; moreover – he even organized a Judaic institute that is a bit of a competition for us.” The reference is to the Institute for Jewish Studies (Instytut Nauk Judaistycznych) founded in Warsaw in 1928, of which Bałaban was a faculty member.

56 Weiser, *The Capital of “Yiddishland”?*, 313 f.

57 *Ibid.*, 321.



- the “transformative” approach: looking at women’s lives fundamentally transforms our idea of “religion” or “Judaism.”<sup>58</sup>

This framework is useful for the present study as well. Examining the role of women (or one woman) and gender reveals much more than a “fuller picture” of interwar Jewish cultural commitments, and even of interwar Jewish life in general. This article uses the “transformative approach” here, considering what taking gender seriously might do for our ideas about cherished assumptions of interwar Jewish ethnography, language, and geographies.

Fundamentally, this article’s thesis is historiographical, not about an event. It would be irresponsible to extrapolate an event-based or persona-based thesis out of this small encounter. Weinreich’s account still provides us with a rich example not of a broader phenomenon (for which we have far too little data thus far) but of why gender and geographic lenses are so important to the study of not just interwar Polish Jewry, but of interwar Yiddish culture more broadly,<sup>59</sup> the geography of which does not map neatly onto Wilno- and former Pale of Settlement-based men (and some women).

How can we use Weinreich’s remarks on Lilientalowa’s death – a strange obituary, to be sure, that spends more words insulting its subject than praising her? Perhaps due to her untimely death, perhaps to other factors, we only have Weinreich’s take on the encounter, not Lilientalowa’s. That his account reeks of misogyny is not remarkable; surely he was a “man of his time.” But if our interest relates to her life as much as his, her world as much as his, Polish-oriented Jewish teachers and cultural workers in Warsaw as much as Yiddish-oriented ones in Wilno, how can we only use the words of one representative?

Microhistories have often focused on uncovering the thoughts and ideas of those who could not leave their own records, as in Zemon Davis’s classic *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983). Although Regina Lilientalowa was far from an illiterate peasant, like Bertrande de Rols, the wife of Martin Guerre, we also do not have a record of her own thoughts on what transpired between herself and Max Weinreich, nor of her thoughts on his summary of her life. His account, presented as an objective report in *Der Tog* (edited at the time by Zalmen Reyzen, who also co-edited *Yidishe filologye*), is full of emotion and human bias and reveals a good deal more about Weinreich than it informs the reader about Lilientalowa. I originally approached the article, graciously

58 Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs. Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women*, Boston, Mass., 1998, 37–44.

59 Many scholars have taken geographic perspectives on the study of interwar Polish Jewry. One of the very few, if not the only, to consider explicitly the relationship of language to geography is Kalman Weiser. See *idem*, *Capital of “Yiddishland”?*, *passim*.

pointed out to me by historian Piotr Grącikowski, as a way to determine at which school Lilientalowa taught in Warsaw. What I found moreover was a subtle account of gender and geography, but a one-sided one.

### Assimilation(ism), Gender, and Geography

Evidently, one of Weinreich's issues with Lilientalowa was that he viewed her as an advocate for assimilation. Her willingness to use Polish and her orientation towards general, rather than exclusively Jewish, publications and institutions were proof enough of that for the budding nationalist. Later in his career, Weinreich saw assimilation as a bigger danger to Jewish life than state policies; he may have seen Lilientalowa as an agent of this dangerous assimilation. As Kamil Kijek has noted, on Weinreich's trip to the United States he "used the category 'assimilation' without giving it much thought, and often as a value-loaded category, in which he described social processes he regarded in a negative light."<sup>60</sup>

Weinreich's encounter with this "agent of assimilation" gives one view – his – of what assimilation meant both literally and as a value. However, it is entirely unclear whether Lilientalowa would have considered herself an assimilationist, one who advocated for assimilation, or indeed whether she and Weinreich would have had a shared understanding of what assimilation meant. In the progressive weekly *Ogniwo* (Link), published in Warsaw, Lilientalowa opined that, "knowledge of assimilated Jews is not knowledge of the Jewish people" and that

"this handful [of assimilated Jews], detached from the trunk, denationalized, has long ago torn a bond with its people [...]. It represents only a certain faction of Jewry, a small group of the privileged class, just as the Lithuanian and Russian nobility are not representatives of Lithuanians and Russians."<sup>61</sup>

Linking the Polishness of the "assimilated" to the specific conditions of the 1850s and 1860s, Lilientalowa proclaimed that those days were over. She criticized harshly the idea that a Jew needed to "renounce his 'I'" in favor of strictly Polish culture.<sup>62</sup>

60 Kijek, Max Weinreich, *Assimilation and the Social Politics of Jewish Nation-Building*, 28.

61 R[egina] Eiger-Lilientalowa, *Już czas ... (Głos w kwestji żydowskiej)* [It is Time ... (Opinion on the Jewish Question)], in: *Ogniwo. Tygodnik naukowy, społeczny, literacki i polityczny* [Link. Scientific, Social, Literary and Political Weekly], 18 June/1 July 1905, 595.

62 *Idem*, *Już czas ... (Głos w kwestji żydowskiej)*, in: *ibid.*, 25 June/8 July 1905, 617.

Marcin Wodziński has argued that what he has chosen to call “integrationism” rather than “assimilationism,” regardless of the sources’ original wording, “was an attempt to construct a new, modern group identity.” Rather than disavowing Judaism, “Jewishness formed the central element of this identity.”<sup>63</sup> It is this category of “integrationist” to which Lilientalowa rightly belonged, given her scholarly interests, commitment to bettering Jewish education, and her own writing on the assimilationist movement. Beginning around the turn of the century in the Congress Kingdom, integrationists stressed the ideological, not merely utilitarian, nature of their program.<sup>64</sup> The ultimate goal was an open conversation between Jews and Christians, which would necessarily take place in Polish.<sup>65</sup>

Just as assimilation and acculturation were not even processes across all Polish territory, the idea of assimilation had different value associations in different regions. Kenneth Moss has noted that within Warsaw,

“not only did individual assimilationist families imbue a new generation of young Jewish Poles with a (liberal) version of Polish nationalism, but an entire community with its own *habitus* and communal values of ‘Polishness,’ ‘good manners,’ and ‘civilized behavior’ provided a supportive framework in which its offspring and (perhaps) newcomers to Polish culture could affirm these values even in the face of rising extrusionist anti-Semitism and pointed doubt about the possibility of Jewish-Polish fusion.”<sup>66</sup>

That is to say, assimilation was in fact a very *Jewish* process. An array of Jewish institutions supported assimilation into a “metropolitan” culture where Jewishness was not the primary marker.<sup>67</sup> And of course, assimilating did not mean, or did not only mean, casting aside “traditional” communal norms; individual aspirations in the capital were important as well, and certainly Lilientalowa had aspirations beyond performing a particular type of Jewish identity.<sup>68</sup>

In Wilno, by contrast, a different attitude towards “assimilation” and “assimilationists” prevailed. Lucy Dawidowicz, remarking in her memoirs, ob-

63 Marcin Wodziński, *Language, Ideology and the Beginnings of the Integrationist Movement in the Kingdom of Poland in the 1860s*, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 34 (2006), no. 2, 21–40, here 35.

64 *Ibid.*, 25.

65 *Ibid.*, 27.

66 Kenneth B. Moss, *Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw*, in: Dynner/Guesnet (eds.), *Warsaw*, 390–434, here 406; cit. in Celia Stopnick Heller, *Poles of Jewish Background. The Case of Assimilation without Integration in Interwar Poland*, in: Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Shtudyesh vegn yidn in Poyln, 1919–1939. Di tsvishnshpil fun sotsyale, ekonomishe un politishe faktorn inem kamf fun a minoritet far ir kiem* [Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919–1939. The Interplay of Social, Economic, and Political Factors in the Struggle of a Minority for Its Existence], New York 1974, 266–270.

67 Moss, *Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw*, 407.

68 *Ibid.*, 408.

served that these words were “a Yiddishist’s pejorative words, darkly intimating that to speak Polish instead of Yiddish was a public act of betrayal, an abandonment of one’s people.”<sup>69</sup> The fact that she never met Polish-speaking Jews “didn’t bother me, or I had somehow come to believe that they weren’t my kind of people and didn’t live in my kind of world.”<sup>70</sup>

Ultimately, whether we ought to characterize Lilientalowa as an assimilationist is beside the point. Assimilation, to Lilientalowa, meant “individualism and individual freedom,” and by that definition, she espoused assimilation as a value.<sup>71</sup> The clash of values between Wilno and Warsaw is evident here even in the definition of the terms of debate, underscoring the ways in which geography influenced perceptions of the familiar “other” in interwar Poland.

Lilientalowa had regular and productive interactions with Jewish and non-Jewish Poles interested in Jewish ethnography. Although Grącikowski has noted that it is difficult to determine precisely her relationship with other Jews, her “most fruitful” contact with a Jewish scholar was with Shmuel Leyman, a folklorist within the circle of Noah Pryłucki. She was also involved in conversations with Polish feminists, especially around school reforms; Lilientalowa wanted to reform the system wholesale.<sup>72</sup> Many of her ideas about freedom and emancipation for youth may have stemmed partially from the Flying University; or rather, the Flying University was also concerned with these ideals. She educated her son herself, “realizing reformist pedagogical postulates in her own life.”<sup>73</sup>

Weinreich, fresh from Marburg and headed back to Wilno, the capital of Yiddishism, may well not have realized how many Jews read the Polish-language press – Orthodox Jews as well as “assimilated.”<sup>74</sup> Weinreich advanced a national vision as part of the Yugfor (short for *Yugnt-forsh*, “youth research”) project of YIVO that was not entirely “humanitarian” or “universalistic.”<sup>75</sup> Kamil Kijek has explained the orientation of “Yiddishist elites” as one that scorned “the mindless cultivation of such values as ‘pluralism’ or

69 Dawidowicz, *From that Place and Time*, 107.

70 *Ibid.*

71 Piotr Grącikowski, Regina Lilientalowa. Sylwetka warszawskiej folklorystki w świetle ocalałej spuścizny [Regina Lilientalowa. Sketch of a Warsaw Folklorist in the Light of the Surviving Heritage], in: Alina Komornicka/Marta Parnowska (eds.), *Darczyńcy i ich kolekcje w zbiorach Biblioteki na Koszykowej* [Donors and Their Collections in the Holdings of the Library on Koszykowa Street], Warsaw 2008, 59–82, here 74.

72 Grącikowski, Regina Lilientalowa. *Uczona, Żydówka, kobieta*, 123.

73 *Ibid.*, 124.

74 Kijek, Max Weinreich, *Assimilation and the Social Politics of Jewish Nation-Building*, 39.

75 *Ibid.*, 41.

‘multiculturalism’” as forces that “could dismantle the national integrity and subjectivity of the Jewish community.”<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, we might also think of Lilientalowa as expressing her own brand of nationalism, even *doikayt*, albeit one quite removed from that of the Bund, Folkists, and diaspora nationalists. Lilientalowa, by Weinreich’s account, certainly believed in “national characteristics” of the Jews; she defended what she viewed as a tendency to shy away from fighting, for example. She also confronted Polish/Jewish relations. By his account, she told him,

“I do not want to whitewash Jewish/Polish relations, but regarding that, one should not make it bleaker than it is. They have not begun to know us, that’s the scariest thing. But we also hardly know them at all, although we understand their language and read their books. We can come to an understanding with Polish scholars [...]”<sup>77</sup>

That is to say, Lilientalowa believed in a possible future of mutual understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish Poles, or between Jews and Poles, as she saw it.<sup>78</sup> Although she spoke to Weinreich in Polish, she possessed phenomenal language capabilities; her use of Polish reflects rather her commitment to the Polish academy.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Lilientalowa’s use of Polish and Yiddish proverbs demonstrates the similarity of the Polish- and Yiddish-speaking Polish imaginative worlds.<sup>80</sup>

Let us reframe the encounter between the forty-something-year-old Regina Lilientalowa and the late-twenty-something-year-old Max Weinreich. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has remarked that microhistories “tell us too much and not enough, teasing us with glimpses of intimate life, repelling us with a reticence we cannot decode. Yet, read in the broader context of [sources] [...] they can be extraordinarily revealing.”<sup>81</sup>

This article reads, or rereads, the story of their meeting in light of what we know about Wilno and Warsaw vis-à-vis Yiddish and Jewish political and cultural life. It does not attempt to recreate a possible reaction to Weinreich from Lilientalowa’s point of view. To do so might unnecessarily and use-

76 Ibid.

77 Weinreich, Regina Eiger-Liliental, 3.

78 This idea forms another component of the “integrationist” ideology laid out by Marcin Wodziński. See idem, *Language, Ideology and the Beginnings of the Integrationist Movement in the Kingdom of Poland in the 1860s*, 27.

79 Grącikowski, Regina Lilientalowa. *Sylwetka warszawskiej folklorystki w świetle ocalałej spuścizny*, 65. Grącikowski also includes a long list of scholarly academies where Lilientalowa’s work was accepted.

80 For some examples, see *ibid.*, 66, as well as Regina Lilientalowa, *Dziecko żydowskie* [The Jewish Child], ed. and with a foreword by Kamila Dąbrowska, Warsaw 2007, 89–93.

81 Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale. The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812*, New York 1991, 25.

lessly invoke a kind of “battle of the sexes,” with factions forming around different interpretations of the past and battle lines drawn around the two figures. Francesca Trivellato reminds us, invoking a conversation she had with Jacques Revel, that “to be a historian [means] neither to remember names and dates nor to recreate the colors, smells, and sounds of past daily life [...]. I could use my questions about the present [...] to interrogate the past, without distorting it more than any other historian might.”<sup>82</sup>

This is the goal for the present article as well: to distort the past no more than any other historian might. We must look at this encounter with eyes that have seen (and are perhaps accustomed to seeing) a particular set of ways in which male scholars might treat female scholars. Are we blinded by those experiences? Likely not, or at least no more than any other historian, or a historian used to passing over those instances. Trivellato has also noted that microhistory in the United States tends to concern itself with “agency and narrative history.”<sup>83</sup> On the first term, she writes,

“Agency is more than a catch-all word. In our discipline it stands for an emphasis on the individual’s ability to resist and shape the larger forces of history and is, almost inevitably, intertwined with a narrative writing style. A narrative style – as opposed to a social scientific type of analysis – is prized not only for its accessibility to a larger audience but also for its suitability to recover the subjectivity, and even the interiority, of individual protagonists – whether it be the Founding Fathers or the marginal figures (peasants, wet-nurses, captives) whom microhistorians have sought to rescue from oblivion.”<sup>84</sup>

Amy Stanley, reflecting on her historical reading and writing practice “in the Age of #MeToo,” has remarked on the difficulties of trusting historical subjects’ statements, particularly women’s. In this case, we do not even have one of the subject’s statements or thoughts in any form. It is not that Lilientalowa has somehow been erased from the historical record – far from it. She was known both in her day and the present day, having achieved a kind of fame unknown to most women in her time. But after her surgery, she died young, at a time when her fortunes had already taken a downturn. Who knows whether they might have recovered, and who knows what her fate would have been had she lived to 1939. Her son, Antoni, was murdered in Katyń, and her daughter, Stanisława, survived with falsified papers on the “Aryan” side of Warsaw. Weinreich, at times, could not see Lilientalowa as anything other than a woman. All of her achievements were remarkable (because she was a woman), but she also thought on the basis of her emotions and not her intellect (because she was a woman) and, more than anything

82 Francesca Trivellato, *Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory*, in: *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33 (2015), no. 1, 122–134, here 124.

83 *Ibid.*, 127.

84 *Ibid.*

else, he remarked on her physical appearance, painting her as ugly and also appropriate-looking for his vision of a schoolteacher and brainy woman.

Understanding the different ideologies exhibited by Lilientalowa (through Weinreich's account of her) and Weinreich himself as stemming, at least in part, from different geographically-dependent mentalities enables us to read Weinreich's obituary in a more critical interpretive light.

If this is "assimilationism," then it is an assimilationism that believes in national differences and in the understanding of national differences between nations – not assimilationism as we commonly imagine it, and not as Weinreich seems to have imagined it. Although Weinreich could not believe that Lilientalowa's first language was not Yiddish (which we cannot accurately determine the truth of), Weinreich was also not speaking his own mother tongue during their encounter. He grew up in a Russian-speaking home according to one source, German according to another.<sup>85</sup> He spoke Yiddish out of conviction and love, but his use of Yiddish could also be considered a denial of origins and a certain vein of Jewish tradition.

Weinreich saw Lilientalowa through Wilno-colored glasses, as well as gendered ones. We can look at the obituary that folklorist and *Folkist* leader Noah Pryłucki penned in order to understand how a fellow Varsovian, albeit one with different politics to Lilientalowa, reacted to her and to her work.

Pryłucki first met Lilientalowa at a gathering in 1904, in Y. L. Peretz's Warsaw home. She apparently aggravated Pryłucki with her assertion that folkish nationalist education, a cause Pryłucki advocated, was the wrong path to take. As Pryłucki remembered it, that sort of meeting was never held again. He wrote, "I later wondered why she was not seen any more at public social work [events], but she was so wrapped up in the kind of ideas that were already out of place on the Jewish street, and she had no one to talk to [...]."<sup>86</sup>

Lilientalowa "surprised" Pryłucki, he related, by showing up at his office, when he imagined that she was too assimilated to associate with him. She sought him out in order to respond to criticism that Majer Bałaban had leveled against her book on Jewish holiday customs, *Święta Żydowskie*. In this way, he had an opportunity to observe how she worked and he was impressed with her dogged pursuit of the truth and with more material. Pryłucki noted that she wrote like a "learned European: short and condensed [...], with love-

85 Kuznitz has noted that the Weinreichs preferred to speak German over Yiddish. Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, 33. An anonymous source who attended school with Weinreich mentioned in a private conversation with the author that he believed Max Weinreich's first language to be Russian.

86 Noyekh (Noah) Pryłucki, Regina Liliental, in: *Der Moment* 287, 14 December 1924 (morning edition), 4–6, here 4.

ly, correct, clear, direct and dispassionate language,” and that her works were “masterful.” He also gendered this clear and elegant writing: Lilientalowa, in Pryłucki’s view, “wrote like a man.”<sup>87</sup>

Throughout the obituary, Pryłucki wrote as though he had discovered Lilientalowa for the Yiddish-speaking reader. Perhaps he had, as indicated in his third sentence: “And I will tell you a secret: I spoke with various Jewish journalists and they first heard her name from my mouth.”<sup>88</sup> When he mentioned that she not only collected folklore but also materials for the museum, he added: “Who of you [the readers] knows that this collection exists?”<sup>89</sup>

Pryłucki, like Weinreich, believed that Lilientalowa should direct her work to the Yiddish-reading and Yiddish-oriented audience. This would serve his own aims, but he also claimed that Lilientalowa might solve some of her financial problems by reaching this new audience. It is quite clear that he knew Lilientalowa reasonably well and respected her work. He understood her world far better than did Weinreich, even as his language paralleled some of Weinreich’s slights of Lilientalowa’s physical appearance – for example mentioning her “world-weary lips.” Yet, Pryłucki recognized how Lilientalowa had died in her creative prime, not as an old schoolmarm but as a deeply invested and creative scholar.

He closed his obituary with an imagined eulogy:

“Oh credit to the Jewish people! Our broken and crippled Jewish life may have taken from you our language and culture, but the national instinct within you has not been weakened. It is expressed through your love for the details of Jewish folk life and for the deepest reaches of the Jewish folk-spirit and its treasures – and through your creative work, which has national significance.

Not looking to the outside, you have remained ‘one of ours.’ Your work, written in a foreign tongue, nevertheless properly belongs to the treasury of new Jewish culture and Jewish scholarship. Your name, too little known within the Jewish body politic during your own time, will be written with golden letters in the history of Jewish culture and will forever be mentioned by the new Jewish generation with attention and love.”<sup>90</sup>

Pryłucki’s concerns about Lilientalowa’s work echoed, in the end, those of Weinreich. However, Pryłucki seems to have had a far better understanding of Lilientalowa’s worldview; he did not meet her statements about Yiddish and her ability to speak it, for example, with incredulity, although he himself believed that she wrote in a “foreign tongue.” Rather than write about Lilientalowa as an exotic curiosity, Pryłucki raised a note of genuine sadness at her untimely death.

87 Ibid., 6.

88 Ibid., 4.

89 Ibid., 6.

90 Ibid. Credit for this translation goes to David Morrill Schlitt.



Pryłucki's greater amount of sustained contact with Lilientalowa and his ability to appreciate, over time, her work and her concerns are one reason that he seems to have grasped the essence of her work and her outlook, but geographic factors also played a role in his understanding beyond Pryłucki's and Lilientalowa's physical proximity. Simply put, someone from Warsaw could imagine someone like Lilientalowa existing, whereas to a Wilno resident, she was an anomaly.

The contrast between Pryłucki's and Weinreich's obituary of Lilientalowa becomes even more stark with the addition of a third obituary. Giza Fränklowa, an ethnographer from Lwów with a particular interest in Jewish papercutting traditions (typically, a woman's craft), reflected on Lilientalowa's work and life (in that order) in the ethnographic monthly *Lud* (People), published in Lwów by the Polish Folklore Society. Hailing from Galicia, Fränklowa may have well had a far better sense of the linguistic and acculturationist landscape of Warsaw than someone from Wilno. Like Lilientalowa, Fränklowa also worked in the Polish language as a matter of course, not out of ideological commitment; although language politics were hotter in Warsaw than in Lwów, the idea of the Jewish intelligentsia using Polish rather than Yiddish spans the two former partitions of Galicia and the Congress Kingdom.

Fränklowa began by tracing Lilientalowa's early years: her birth in Zawichost and early education in Sandomierz. Fränklowa emphasized Lilientalowa's nature as someone who worked independently to further her education, writing that "[a]lready from her earliest youth, she worked hard on herself."<sup>91</sup> Her marriage was subsumed into her work life in Fränklowa's account: "[S]he married and moved to Warsaw, where she had the opportunity to contribute to scholarly research."<sup>92</sup>

Tellingly, the majority of the obituary text reads as a list of Lilientalowa's publications, from her earliest columns to her later manuscripts. Fränklowa also obtained from Lilientalowa's family unfinished manuscripts, including work on the history of Jews in Poland, a "'Lecture on dreams, as a reflection of history' (read at the meeting of the Polish Ethnographic Society in Warsaw)," and work on menstruation practices in Jewish tradition.

Far more than either Weinreich or Pryłucki, Fränklowa also reflected on the causes of Lilientalowa's death. She noted the "difficult material circumstances" and Lilientalowa's need to "work hard for a living [*za chleba*, for bread]" as factors that "undermined Lilientalowa's health."<sup>93</sup> With a degree of understanding belied by its brevity, Fränklowa ended her obituary with

91 Fränklowa, Błp. Regina Lilientalowa, 119.

92 Ibid., 121.

93 Ibid.

the observation that “It is not at all strange that in these circumstances her disease developed quickly, which at yet an early age (47 years) put an end to her life.”

Was Fränklowa’s treatment of Lilientalowa a reflection of gender, geography, or something else? She did not provide the richer description of meeting Lilientalowa that Weinreich and Pryłucki both included in their reflections. And yet the paucity of information underscores the way in which Fränklowa valued Lilientalowa: as a scholar, cut down too soon by poor material conditions, about which Fränklowa seems to have known a few things. In not spending time considering Lilientalowa’s personal life, she also did not dwell on her physical appearance, in stark contrast to the male writers.

The encounter, perhaps only an hour or two long, and its narration in the pages of Wilno’s *Der Tog*, reveals far more about Max Weinreich than about its ostensible subject, Regina Lilientalowa. In Weinreich’s account, the mental geography of Poland’s interwar Jewish communities plays out. Gender and geography, as well as concepts of assimilation and integration, mapped onto each other and onto the nascent Second Polish Republic. In the early years of independent Poland, no one program for Jewish life, nor for Poland’s attitude towards minorities, had solidified or gained ascendancy. There was not one Polish Jewry that coalesced naturally; it was a fraught process.

Looking back, we only have the words of Weinreich, who outlived Lilientalowa and who led one of the very few Polish Jewish institutions to survive the war, albeit in a different form. This encounter can be thought of as scalable, not in the sense that similar encounters occurred but rather that it stands as an example of how geographically based cultural assumptions played out, and how some of the stratification of professional rank and regional affiliation could become muddied with the addition of gender. A microhistorical study can uncover the influences on people who could not have pointed to those influences themselves, à la Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* (1976).<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, it is a history of ideas in an intimate space – and on the imagined space of the newly reformed country.

94 My thanks go to Sonia Gollance for this wording.

Yael Levi

## “America – A New World for Jewish Children”: A Recently Discovered Letter by Sholem Aleichem

“The correspondence of writers, particularly eminent writers, holds a highly significant and honored place in world literature. The writer’s letters, intended for contemporaries, disclose his relationships with his correspondents and also serve as a window into his spiritual, inner world. [...] Likewise, those pages evoke the times, the period with its events and its contradictions, and reflect the correspondents’ own responses to them.”<sup>1</sup>

### A New Finding

In the Herman Bernstein collection at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, in a folder bearing the title “undated and unidentified,” there is an unknown and unpublished letter of the famous Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem (Shalom Rabinowitz, 1859–1916).<sup>2</sup> This undated letter was unidentified until 2017, 101 years after the great writer’s death. The letter, written by Sholem Aleichem to the author and editor Herman Bernstein, is presented here, translated from the Yiddish, and discussed in its context.

The letter arguably depicts an event which was held shortly after Sholem Aleichem first arrived in New York on 20 October 1906, which may have been his first acquaintance with Jewish immigrant children on American soil. This description is significant because it demonstrates Sholem Aleichem’s approach to the phenomenon of Jewish American children, a subject which he literarily developed during his last decade and which came into complete execution in his last written piece *Motl, the Cantor’s Son*. The letter shows

- 1 Abraham Lis, *Briv fun Sholem-Aleykhem 1879–1916* [Letters of Sholem Aleichem 1879–1916], Tel Aviv 1995, 709–716, here 716.
- 2 The letter was discovered at the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York in fall 2017, while I was conducting my research through the Rose and Isidore Drench Memorial Fellowship and the Dora and Mayer Tendler Endowed Fellowship in Jewish Studies. I would like to thank the YIVO Institute for its generous support; I would also like to thank the librarians of the Lillian Goldman Reading Room at the Center for Jewish History for their help and patience during my research. – Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are by the author.

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the genuine excitement Sholem Aleichem felt toward the Americanization of Jewish children. A close reading of the letter can shed new light on the Yiddish writer's impressions of American Jewish immigrants and, in particular, of American Jewish children. This excitement and fascination would turn out to be one of his main literary subjects in the following years.

Sholem Aleichem wrote thousands of letters during his life, most of them in Russian or in Yiddish, some in Hebrew, and a few in German. Several hundreds of his letters were published in various collections after his death. The most important and inclusive collections are the series of letters which were published in the New York Yiddish daily *Der Tog* (The Day) and the Warsaw Yiddish daily *Haynt* (Today) simultaneously between 1923 and 1924; *Dos Sholem-Aleykhem-bukh* (The Sholem Aleichem Book), edited by Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz and published in New York in 1926; the collection *Sholem Aleykhem. Oysgeveylte briv (1883–1916)* (Sholem Aleichem. Selected Letters [1883–1916]), edited by I. Mitlman and Khatski Nadel, published in Moscow in 1941; and the collection *Briv fun Sholem Aleykhem, 1879–1916* (Letters of Shalom Aleichem, 1879–1916), edited by Abraham Lis and published by the cultural center Beth Sholem Aleichem in Tel Aviv in 1995.<sup>3</sup>

The largest collection of original letters is kept to this day at Beth Sholem Aleichem. The National Library of Israel in Jerusalem holds copies of these letters, as well as some originals. The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York holds original letters of Sholem Aleichem in different collections. Finally, just recently, a collection of some 170,000 documents was found in an old church in Lithuania, among them letters written by Sholem Aleichem.<sup>4</sup> The document discussed here is not listed in these collections and archives.

The letter, autographed by Shalom Aleichem, was written to Herman Bernstein (1876–1935) – a Russian-born Jew known as a Yiddish and English journalist, author, translator, and later diplomat. Bernstein was born in Vladislavovas (nowadays Kudirkos Naumiestis, Lithuania), then a part of the Russian Empire, and settled in America in 1893. He lived first in Chicago

- 3 A collection of letters from Sholem Aleichem to various family members was published in the Soviet Yiddish journal *Sovetish heymland*. See Chaim Beider, Kimat a mishpokhe khronik. Vegn Sholem Aleykhems etlekhe peklekh nit-publikirt briv [Nearly a Family Chronicle. On Several Packs of Sholem Aleichem's Unpublished Letters], in: *Sovetish heymland* 5 (1991), 3–52. For a survey on Sholem Aleichem's letter collections, see Shmuel Verses, Sholem Aleykhem in shpigl fun zayne briv [Sholem Aleichem Reflected in His Letters], in: *Di goldene keyt* [The Golden Chain] 141 (1995), 11–30, and the included bibliography. A bibliography of Sholem Aleichem's correspondence can be found in Uriel Weinreich, *The Field of Yiddish*. Studies in Language, Folklore, and Literature, New York 1954, 278–299, esp. 280 f.
- 4 YIVO Announces Discovery of 170 000 Lost Jewish Documents Thought to Have Been Destroyed during the Holocaust, 24 October 2017, <<https://vilnacollections.yivo.org/Discovery-Press-Release>> (9 July 2022).

and, in 1897, settled in New York. In 1914 Bernstein was one of the founders of the Yiddish daily *Der Tog*, where he served as editor. Sholem Aleichem published short stories twice a week in this daily, between January 1915 and December 1915.

### Transcript and Translation

The letter is written in Yiddish in what appears to be Sholem Aleichem’s own handwriting. It may have been handed to the recipient (rather than sent via mail). The letter is four pages long, and each page is numbered in the upper right corner. The Yiddish transcript is given below, followed by an English translation:

[1]

איך בעט מר' בערנשטיין צו זאגען:  
 דארטן וואו מיר האבען גערעדט איבער [☆]<sup>5</sup> אידישע קינדער, ווי אזוי שנעל ווערען  
 אמעריקאנער פאטריאטען, וואלט איך וועגען זיך אפשטעלן אויף פאלגענדיק פאקט:  
 איך בין געווען אין עדוקיישאנעל אליינס און האב אנגעראשט די גאנץ קליינע יודישע  
 קינדער, וועלכע זיינען אנגעקומען קיין אמעריקא ערשט מיט 3-4 און 2 מאנאטע,  
 און אויף דער פראגע: צי זיינען זיי צופריעדען מיטן נייעם לאנד און פאר וואס האבען  
 זיי נישט ליעב רוססלאנד? – האבען זיי מיט שטאלץ<sup>6</sup> מיט ביטערניש געענטפערט:  
 רוססלאנד פעראכטען מיר דערפאר וואס זי האט זיך אזוי מאוס באגאנגען מיט אונזערע

[2]

טאטעס און מאמעס און שוועסטער, און אמעריקע גלייכען מיר דערפאר וואס דא זיינען  
 מיר גלייך מיט אלעמען. די לעצטע ווערטער זיינען געזאגט געווארען נישט ווי איין  
 אויסגעלערענטע לעססאן, זאנדערע מיט בעדענגערע עקספרעססאן, מיט פייער און  
 שטאלץ. ---  
 א! די מינוטען וועלכע איך האב פערבראכט אין עדיוקיישאנעל אליינס וועל איך ניט  
 פערגעסען. עס האט מיר געמאכט א גרויסע פריידע ווען איך האב ביים

[3]

אבשייד נעמען זיך געווענדט צו די קליינ איינע קליינע ברידערלעך און שוועסטערלעך  
 מיט א קורצע רעדע און האב זיי געזאגט: איהר קענט מיך געוויס ניט ווער איך בין. איך  
 בין אן עמיגראנט, אן ארויסגעשמיסענער, איבעריגער, ווי איהר אלע, אבער אז איהר  
 וועט קומען אהיים וועט איהר דערצעהלען אייערע עלטערען, אז דא איז געווען ביי אייך  
 א מאדנער נפש פון רוססלאנד מיט דעם מאדנער נאמען "שלום עליכם" ...

- 5 This sign, the Star of David, is drawn in the second line on the right margin, near the first word in that line (*idische*/Jewish).
- 6 The word is erased with a horizontal line. Erased words will be marked this way in the following transcript and its translation.

[4]

האבען די קליינע נפש'לעך ניט געלאזט מיך פארטזעצען, א רעש'דיגער אפלוזי האט  
 באדעקט מיינע ווערטער.  
 און איך בין גענומען איבערראשט  
 יא, ליבער פריינד, איך וועל פאר דעם אפלוזי אומגעגעבען 40 גרעסערע אפלוזען פון  
 גרויסע מענטשען ...  
<sup>7</sup>Теперь продолжайте  
<sup>8</sup>[autograph] שלום עליכם

[1]

I wish to tell Mr. Bernstein:

There, where we have talked about [✡] Jewish children, how quickly they become American patriots, I wanted to add to that the following fact: I have been to the Educational Alliance and ran into quite young Jewish children, who came to America for the first time three-four and two months ago, and to my question: are they satisfied with the new land and why did they not love Russia? They answered ~~with pride~~ bitterly: we despise Russia because there our

[2]

fathers ~~and~~ mothers and sisters were treated so badly, and we love America because here we are equal to everyone else. These last words were said not as an educational lesson, but rather in an expressive tone, with fire and pride. --- Ha! Those moments which I spent in the Educational Alliance I will never forget. It made me very happy when

[3]

upon leaving I turned towards ~~young~~ those young brothers and sisters with a short lecture and told them: you know me and do not know who I am. I am an immigrant, an outcomer, an "other," just like you are, but when you come back home you will tell your parents that here was a weird soul from Russia with the weird name "Sholem Aleichem" ...

[4]

The young souls did not let me finish, a loud applause covered my words.  
~~And I have begun to be shocked~~  
 Yes, my dear friend, for that applause I would give away 40 louder applauses from great people ...  
 And now – move on! [Russian]  
 Sholem Aleichem [autograph]

7 Transcript: Teper' prodol'zajte. I would like to thank Michael Felsenbaum for the transcript and the translation of this sentence from the Russian original.

8 YIVO Archives, Herman Bernstein Collection, RG 713, Box 46, Folder 862.

The identification of the letter as written by Sholem Aleichem can be derived from three details: 1. the characteristic hand writing, which can be found in various letters he wrote, kept in the archives mentioned above; 2. the “official” autograph of Sholem Aleichem at the bottom of the letter, typical of almost every letter he wrote; 3. the self-identification in the body of the letter as “a weird soul from Russia with the weird name ‘Sholem Aleichem.’”

This letter is not the only one Sholem Aleichem wrote to Bernstein; the Herman Bernstein Collection at YIVO contains several identified letters from Sholem Aleichem to Bernstein, dated between 1914 and 1916. One of the letters, for example, bearing Sholem Aleichem’s seal and dated 30 December 1914, is written in Yiddish; another one, dated 6 March 1915, is written in Russian on Sholem Aleichem’s letterhead (“Sholom-Aleichem, Solomon Rabinowitz”). There is also a condolence letter from Bernstein to Olga Rabinowitz, Sholem Aleichem’s widow, written in English and dated 13 May 1916 (the day of the writer’s death).

### Dating the Letter

Although the letter is undated, some details may indicate its time and circumstances of composition. Sholem Aleichem lived in America between October 1906 and June 1907, and again between December 1914 and May 1916, when he died in New York. On his first arrival at the shores of New York, he came with his wife Olga and his son Numa on the ship *St. Louis*, escaping the antisemitic riots in Kiev he and his family had witnessed, and hoping for success in the Yiddish theater and press in the United States. These attempts failed, and Sholem Aleichem returned to Europe in 1907 disappointed.

His second stay in America, between December 1914 and May 1916, was a much more realistic one. This time he came with his wife Olga and three of his six children – Ernestina and her husband, the writer and translator Y. D. Berkowitz, Marusi, and Numa – after the outbreak of World War I, leaving behind his married daughter Liali, his younger daughter Emma, and his ill son Michael (Misha). The event mentioned in the letter could have therefore occurred in one of these two periods.

When Berkowitz described Sholem Aleichem’s first visit to America in 1906/07 in his memoir, he wrote,

“One of the agile newspapers in New York, ‘The American,’<sup>9</sup> invited him to tour the Lower East Side Jewish neighborhood accompanied by a reporter and a photographer. Sholem Aleichem didn’t refuse, visited the large Jewish textile sweatshops, the Jewish English journalist Herman Bernstein was the translator, [...] and it ended up as a great journalist epopee.”<sup>10</sup>

Berkowitz mentioned a tour to the Lower East Side, where the building of the Educational Alliance was located. It is not necessary to assume Sholem Aleichem visited the Alliance during the same tour, but it was his first introduction to the neighborhood. Furthermore, Berkowitz mentions Herman Bernstein as the translator. That means the two men met as early as Sholem Aleichem had landed in New York. The letter itself opens with the words “There, where we have talked about Jewish children,” referring to an earlier discussion between them.

In her memoir *My Father, Sholom Aleichem*, Marie (Marusi) Waife-Goldberg also recalled the first acquaintance between the two men:

“As we neared America [in December 1914] a wireless came for my father from New York. It was from a man he had met on his earlier visit to America in 1906 – Herman Bernstein, an Anglo-Jewish newspaperman, close to the German Jewish Establishment, and the self-appointed guardian of the poor Jewish immigrants from Russia. On the earlier visit [...] Bernstein had been assigned by [William Randolph] Hearst to take my father for a stroll on the East Side and write down his impressions of America for an article in the Sunday *New York American*.”<sup>11</sup>

The event Sholem Aleichem alludes to in his letter is a visit to the Educational Alliance, a German-Jewish philanthropy entrepreneurship which had been established in 1889 as a corporation between the Hebrew Free School Association, the Clara Aguilar Free Library Society, and the Young Men’s Hebrew Association. The corporation was supported by wealthy New York Jews, mostly German, to help and support new immigrant Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe. The Educational Alliance building had been erected in 1891 at 197 East Broadway in the Lower East Side, leading children, adults, and elderly Jewish immigrants towards Americanization.<sup>12</sup>

Sholem Aleichem appeared publicly at the Alliance during both of his stays in New York, and the organization’s involvement in his visit began in proximity to his first arrival; a special committee dedicated to the author’s visit was established, and the first meeting was held in the EA headquarters.

9 This refers to the *New York American*, a New York daily established in 1902.

10 Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz, *Kitve Y. D. Berkovitch* [Y. D. Berkowitz’s Writings], Part 2: *Ha-rishonim ki-vne-adam* [Our Forebears as Human Beings], Tel Aviv 1959, 123.

11 Marie Waife-Goldberg, *My Father, Sholom Aleichem*, New York 1968, 280.

12 For a historical survey, see Adam Bellow, *The Educational Alliance. A Centennial Celebration*, Arlington, Va., 1990.



A brief report about it was published on 25 October 1906 in the Yiddish daily *Der Morgen Zhurnal* (Morning Paper):

“The first meeting [...] was held last Tuesday [23 October] afternoon in the Educational Alliance; Dr. Blaustein, the superintendent of the Educational Alliance, was the chairman of the meeting, and Mr. Boris Thomashevsky – vice chairman. [...] Dr. Blaustein explained the purpose of the meeting – to hold a nice ‘*sholem aleichem*’ [literally: welcome] for Sholem Aleichem. [...] Yesterday [24 October] the second meeting in the Educational Alliance was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Lubarsky,<sup>13</sup> and everyone in the meeting agreed upon a big welcome for our important guest.”<sup>14</sup>

In February 1907, Sholem Aleichem made a visit to the Educational Alliance which was covered by *Der Morgen Zhurnal*. The report, titled *A Joy for Children*, was published on 28 February 1907. “In the Educational Alliance,” it read, “a *purim* festival will be held today afternoon for the Jewish children who learn there.”<sup>15</sup> The following day, on 1 March, the same paper reported that “the well-known Yiddish humorist Sholem Aleichem delivers a warm performance.” The short article thus mentions his visit and the fact that Sholem Aleichem read for the young audience his 1901 piece *Visiting with King Ahasuerus*.<sup>16</sup> The children received the Jewish humorist with a warm applause and burst into loud laughter when he read them his piece.<sup>17</sup> The report concludes: “[T]he children made such a good impression on Sholem Aleichem and he commented that it was almost the first time he was absolutely sure that all listeners had understood him well and laughed at the right time.”<sup>18</sup>

This event left the children as well as other attendees well impressed. The Yiddish writer Kalmen Marmor observed Sholem Aleichem’s American visit of 1906/07. Born in 1876 in a town near Vilnius, Marmor immigrated to America only few months before Sholem Aleichem; he arrived in Philadelphia harbor on 12 February 1906. Marmor recalls,

“I cannot forget Sholem Aleichem’s speech in the ‘Jewish Educational Alliance’ in New York. There were three generations of Jewish listeners: grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, and school children. The last ones, born in America, didn’t have

13 Abraham Elijah Lubarsky (1856–1920) was a prominent figure in the Hebrew and Yiddish literary world in the nineteenth century. Lubarsky was born in the Russian Empire, immigrated to the United States in 1903, and inspired the local Hebrew movement. Y. D. Berkowitz describes Sholem Aleichem’s relationship with Lubarsky as follows: “Only two men were about to meet him in New York harbor: His young brother [...] and his old friend from Odessa, Abraham Elijah Lubarsky.” See idem, *Ha-rishonim ki-vne-adam*, 120.

14 A Welcome for Sholem Aleichem, in: *Der morgen zhurnal* [Morning Paper], 25 October 1906, 1.

15 A Joy for Children, in: *Der morgen zhurnal*, 28 February 1907, 7.

16 The Yiddish title was *Baym kenig Akhashveres*. See Ale verk fun Sholem Aleykhem [Sholem Aleichem’s Collected Works], 28 vols., New York 1917–1923, here vol. 9, New York 1918, 53–71.

17 Purim Ball at the Hebrew Institute, in: *Der morgen zhurnal*, 1 March 1907, 4.

18 Ibid.

the chance to learn in a school where the language is Yiddish. [...] [S]o quickly though, when Sholem Aleichem began reading his humoristic materials, all barriers broke down between old and young, migrants and natives.”<sup>19</sup>

Sholem Aleichem visited the Educational Alliance again during his second and final stay in the United States, for its annual meeting and 25th anniversary on 21 March 1915.<sup>20</sup>

I suggest that the letter presented here describes a visit which is not mentioned in any of these articles and which took place soon after Sholem Aleichem’s arrival in New York for the first time in October 1906. The letter describes a somewhat private meeting of Sholem Aleichem with the children without the presence of their parents or any other adult. This specific setting leads to the assumption that it was not part of the events carefully organized by the Alliance for Sholem Aleichem, but rather an informal and spontaneous one.

An important sign for the early occurrence of this encounter can be found in an interview with Sholem Aleichem, conducted by Nixola Greeley-Smith for the newspaper *The Evening World*. The interview was published on 27 October 1906, only a week after the author’s arrival. It took place in Jackson Street in the Bronx, where Sholem Aleichem’s brother lived. The interviewer asks “the Jewish Mark Twain” about “the funniest thing” he had seen in America, to which he replies,

“I recall no funny thing. The most remarkable thing is the difference in the spirit of the Jewish people in the atmosphere of the Ghetto. In Russia the Jew lives in and looks to the future. The present means for him only gloom, persecution, despair. Here there is the wonderful feeling of hope, of liberty, equality, fraternity.”<sup>21</sup>

His genuine amazement at the Jewish American status is remarkable. Sholem Aleichem tells the interviewer further, “[A] little Jewish boy of four down on the East Side said to me the other day, ‘I am an American.’ And he said it so proudly that I heard in the exclamation all the intoxication of hope that I have felt myself since I landed here.”<sup>22</sup> A similar expression, in fact almost identical, can be found in the letter above: “[W]e love America because here

19 Kalmen Marmor, Sholem Aleykhems ershter bazukh in Amerike [Sholem Aleichem’s First Visit to America], in: *Yidishe Kultur* [Yiddish Culture] 6 (1939), 24 f.

20 Sholem Aleichem’s funeral had a major stop at the Educational Alliance’s building, where the casket was presented and eulogies were delivered. For a detailed research on the funeral and its meanings, see Ellen D. Kellman, *Sholem Aleichem’s Funeral*, New York 1916. The Making of a National Pageant, in: *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 20 (1991), 277–304.

21 Nixola Greeley-Smith, The Jewish “Mark Twain” at Home Here, in a Little Brick House in the Bronx, in: *The Evening World*, 27 October 1906, 5.

22 Ibid.

we are equal to everyone else. These last words were said [...] in an expressive tone, with fire and pride.”

In the same interview, Sholem Aleichem reveals, “I have been among my people, talked with them in their shops, without their knowing me.”<sup>23</sup> Very similar words can be found in the letter: “I turned towards those young brothers and sisters with a short lecture and told them: you know me and don’t know who I am.” Besides the similar language and the same subterfuge, that last sentence can provide further evidence for the earliness of the letter: In 1914–1916 it is hard to imagine a Jewish immigrant in the Lower East Side – a child or an adult – who would not recognize Sholem Aleichem; a disguised tour seems simply impossible. Around October 1906, on the other hand, shortly after his first arrival in the United States, it is reasonable to assume that Sholem Aleichem could have taken such a tour.

### “How Quickly They Become American Patriots”

The theme of Jewish cultural assimilation in general, and Americanization in particular, is the axis of the letter. It is also a dominant topic in various works by Sholem Aleichem – notably the last chapters of *Menakhem-Mendl* (The Adventures of Menahem-Mendl), *Blondzhende shtern* (Wandering Stars), *Der misteyk* (The Mistake), the last chapters of *Tevye der milkhiker* (Tevye the Dairyman), the short story *Nishto keyn naves* (Otherwise, There’s Nothing New), the monologues *Mister Grin hot a dzhab* (Mr. Green Has a Job), and *A mayse mit a grinhorn* (A Story of a Greenhorn), and of course the second part of *Motl Peysi dem khazns* (Motl, the Cantor’s Son).<sup>24</sup> As the Yiddish scholar Khone Shmeruk puts it,

“The comparison between ‘here’ and ‘there,’ between the old East European home and the new home in America, is a constant element in his works about immigration and about the immigrants’ environment. At times this comparison also becomes the structural foundation for his exploration of American themes.”<sup>25</sup>

23 Ibid.

24 For detailed lists of Sholem Aleichem’s works on American themes, see Khone Shmeruk, Sholem Aleichem and America, in: YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science 20 (1991), 211–238, esp. fn. 2; Delphine Bechtel, America and the “Shtetl” in Sholem Aleichem’s “Di goldgreber” [The Gold Diggers], in: MELUS 17 (1991–1992), no. 3, 69–84, here 82, fn. 5.

25 Shmeruk, Sholem Aleichem and America, 221 f.

Of course, Sholem Aleichem himself was not an outsider to this historical drama; he was indeed a Russified modern Jew, an intellectual, and an ideological writer.<sup>26</sup> When discussing the non-Jews' image in the second half of the nineteenth century, Israel Bartal argued that Sholem Aleichem represented in his works three new socio-political opportunities for Jews in Russian society: revolution, nationalism, and assimilation. These were the three major trends for acculturation in Russian society among Russian Jews at the turn of the twentieth century. Judging by his use of literary images, Sholem Aleichem viewed cultural integration as a generally positive, albeit limited, process. A total assimilation was neither optional nor desirable.<sup>27</sup>

A famous example for the axis Eastern Europe–America in Sholem Aleichem's writing is the 1907 play *Di goldgreber* (The Gold Diggers), which depicts a direct confrontation between an Americanized Jewish immigrant and the Eastern European shtetl Jew. In the play, Beni, who has left Europe and settled in America, returns to visit his hometown and confronts the Jews of the old world.<sup>28</sup> Beni's Americanization is portrayed as completely detached from his Jewish heritage and culture; it is an assimilation which leads to the loss of Jewish identity. Beni's language is an English-Yiddish hybrid, similar to the Russian-Yiddish spoken by the converted Christian-Jewish police officer in the play. Their broken language represents their broken identity.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Sholem Aleichem's evaluation of American Jewry is ambiva-

26 See Marc Caplan, Neither Here nor There. The Critique of Ideological Progress in Sholem Aleichem's Kasrilevke Stories, in: Sheila E. Jelen/Michael P. Kramer/L. Scott Lerner (eds.), *Modern Jewish Literatures. Intersections and Boundaries*, Philadelphia, Pa., 2011, 127–146, here 131–133.

27 See Israel Bartal, *Ha-lo-yehudim ve-ḥevratam ba-safrut ivrit ve-yidish be-mizrah Eropā ben ha-shanim 1856–1914* [Non-Jews and Gentile Society in East-European Hebrew and Yiddish Literature, 1856–1914] (unpublished PhD thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980), 260–262; Shmeruk, *Sholem Aleichem and America*, 228. Sholem Aleichem also discussed the Zionist option as a cultural and political alternative for the Jewish people. For a collection of his Zionist writings in English, see idem, *Why Do the Jews Need a Land of Their Own?*, transl. from the Yiddish and Hebrew by Joseph Leftwich and Mordecai S. Chertoff, Tel Aviv 1984. On Sholem Aleichem's encounter with Zionism, see Israel Klausner, *Sholom Aleichem the Zionist*, in: *ibid.*, 13–19; Ruth R. Wisse, *The Modern Jewish Canon. A Journey through Language and Culture*, New York 2000, here chap. 1: *The Comedy of Endurance*. Sholem Aleichem, 31–64, esp. 56–64; Michael R. Katz, "Go Argue with Today's Children." *The Jewish Family in Sholem Aleichem and Vladimir Jabotinsky*, in: *European Judaism* 43 (2010), no. 1, 63–77, here 67–69 and 74–76; Dan Miron, *From Continuity to Contiguity. Toward a New Jewish Literary Thinking*, Stanford, Calif., 2010, here chap. 11: *Contiguity. How Kafka and Sholem Aleichem Are Contiguous*, 351–401, here 382–402.

28 *Di goldgreber*, in: *Di tsukunft* [The Future] 32 (1927), 555–568 (October), 618–623 (November), 682–687 (December). The play was written in 1907, but it was published for the first time only twenty years later, eleven years after Sholem Aleichem's death.

29 See Bechtel, *America and the "Shtetl"* in Sholem Aleichem's "*Di goldgreber*", 75–77.

lent: America offers a reality, a shelter for Jews who are willing to put their material needs before their cultural and spiritual ones.<sup>30</sup> However, it is not a fully developed alternative for the Jewish people in the cultural and ideological sense.<sup>31</sup>

The 1907 correspondence *Nishto keyn naves* (Otherwise, There’s Nothing New) also represents a positive but limited view of Americanization.<sup>32</sup> In the first letter, Jacob (“formerly Yenkel”), the American Jew, is thoroughly Americanized. His acculturation is evident from his language and from his total acceptance of American capitalism. In his opinion, the American Jewish tradeoff is well worthwhile:

“We work like horses, but at least we make ends meet. [...] We sweat and toil till we’re blue in the face. But we’re free. I can join any club I like, and if I feel like it, I can become a citizen and vote. The only thing we miss is – home.”<sup>33</sup>

The American option is described here as a generally positive one, although it is presented in an ironic tone. Indeed, America is not home yet, nor is it a cultural or spiritual safe haven. But despite its intellectual dullness, it offers a real chance for economic improvement and political equality. The same sentiment can be traced in the letter to Herman Bernstein, in the quote by the Russian American children: “We despise Russia because there our fathers and mothers and sisters were treated so badly, and we love America because here we are equal to everyone else.” This quote reveals not only the political advantages of America, but also the domestic ones. The positive aspects of Americanization – as well as the rapidly growing patriotism – derive from the political status of the individual and the family: equality versus discrimination; dignity versus scorn.

Nevertheless, the perfect spokesman for the Jewish American way of life is Motl, the graceful orphan who came to America with his family and is trying to find his way in a new city. The first Motl story was published in the Yiddish New York-based newspaper *Der Amerikaner* (The American) on

30 See *ibid.*, 80 f.

31 On the American alternative in the Tevye stories, see Seth L. Wolitz, *The Americanization of Tevye or Boarding the Jewish “Mayflower,”* in: *American Quarterly* 40 (1988), no. 4, 514–536, here 519.

32 See Meir Viner, *Tsu der geshikhte fun der yidisher literatur in 19tn yorhundert* [On the History of Yiddish Literature in the 19th Century], 2 vols., New York 1945–1946, here vol. 2, New York 1946, chap.: *Di sotsyale vortseln fun Sholem Aleykhem’s humor* [The Social Roots of Sholem Aleichem’s Humor], 235–280, here 267 f. See also Shmeruk, *Sholem Aleichem and America*, 222 f.

33 *Sholem Aleichem, Some Laughter, Some Tears. Tales from the Old World and the New*, transl. by Curt Leviant, New York 1968, chap.: *Otherwise, There’s Nothing New*, 237–242, here 238.

17 May 1907; it ends on the indication “May 12th, 1907, New York.”<sup>34</sup> Dan Miron’s seminal work with the Motl stories traces the origins of the work to that same visit in the United States during 1907. As Miron argues, “The Motl stories can be read as Sholem Aleikhem’s most radical statement about the social and historical forces transforming Jewish existence.”<sup>35</sup> Sholem Aleichem practically approves in this series the great Jewish transfer from the shtetl in Europe to the American metropolis, from the past to the future. His attitude to the past is emphatic to some extent, but by no means nostalgic.<sup>36</sup>

In an undated letter to the Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, written probably around July/August 1907, Sholem Aleichem wrote,

“I send you now the first six parts of ‘Motl, the Cantor’s Son’ [...] and I have twenty more in the making, in the final touch-up stage. These twenty are about Motl, Peyse’s son, in America – a new world for Jewish *Children*.”<sup>37</sup>

It is obvious that the new American experience of Sholem Aleichem during 1906 and 1907 shaped his writing on Jewish immigrant children, as it is clearly represented in the letter to Bernstein.

Moreover, in January 1908, Sholem Aleichem wrote a letter to Martin Buber regarding a manuscript he had sent Buber previously: “I needed to send off the last three chapters of the cantor’s young boy: 19, 20 and 21. I asked you to send them back to me via [mail] rail.”<sup>38</sup> This letter proves that the first book about Motl, *From Home to America*, was complete by the end of 1907. Indeed, it is clear that the Jewish American influence, especially of children, affected Sholem Aleichem’s writing from 1907 onwards.

34 Today is a Holiday – No One Should Cry. A Tale of a Cantor’s Son, Narrated for Shavues by Sholem Aleichem, in: Der amerikaner [The American], 17 May 1907, 3; see also Khone Shmeruk, Sipure Motl ben he-ḥazan le-Sholem Aleykhem. Ha-situ’azia ha-epit ve-toldotav shel ha-sefer [Sholem Aleichem’s Stories about Motl, the Cantor’s Son. The Epic Situation and the History of the Work], in: Siman Kri’ah 12–13 (1981), 310–326. The following tales of Motl were published in the same journal during 1907. The second part of the book, dealing with Motl’s family arriving in America and with the immigrant experience, was first published in 1916 in the New York Yiddish newspaper *Di varheit* (The truth).

35 Dan Miron, Bouncing Back. Destruction and Recovery in Sholem Aleykhem’s “Motl Peyse dem Khazns,” in: YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science 17 (1978), 119–184, here 176.

36 See *ibid.*, 177.

37 Shmeruk, Sipure Motl ben he-ḥazan le-Sholem Aleikhem, 313, fn. 19 (emphasis in the original). Sholem Aleichem left America in June 1907. The letter was sent from Geneva before 18 August. The original letter is held at Beth Sholem Aleichem; a copy is held at the National Library of Israel, Archives (henceforth NLI), Collection of Letter Copies from Beth Sholem Aleichem, Series 1: Letters by Sholem Aleichem, ARC. 4°1185 5 185.

38 NLI, Sholem Aleichem to Martin Buber, 15 January 1908; NLI, Martin Buber Archive, Series 8: Correspondence, MS. Var. 350 008 067. See also the previous letter from 10 January 1908. The identification of the last word (in parentheses) is uncertain.

When Sholem Aleichem writes to Bernstein about “Jewish Children, how quickly they become American patriots,” we cannot but think of Pinney, the family friend. And so says Pinney,

“There is a law in America that little boys have to go to school. Otherwise their parents are punished. In America, parents get punished for their children’s mischief. On the other hand, children are taught in school free of charge. [...] In the old country, Jewish children were kept from going to school – while here in America they’re actually dragged to school by their forelocks. And if they should refuse to go, they get punished. Only for this, says Pinney, Russia can bury itself in the earth for shame.”<sup>39</sup>

However, the approach Pinney represents is not simply patriotic, but rather hyper-American. The reader cannot accept his words as ultimate truth; his statement is absurd and exaggerated:

“You’ve forgotten that you are in America, the country of freedom and equality – and not in Russia, the land of swine. You forgot that all American millionaires and billionaires have worked in their youth by the sweat of their brows and have made their fortunes at menial tasks. [...] Ask Rockefeller or Carnegie, ask Morgan or Vanderbilt – ask any of them what they used to do in their youth [...] or look at the great people of this country – Washington, for instance, or Lincoln, or Roosevelt – were they all born great? Were they all presidents from birth? Or take our present president, Mr. Wilson himself. What did he use to be? Begging your pardon, nothing but a teacher!”<sup>40</sup>

This paragraph is carefully shaped to create a distance between Pinney and the readers. One can feel immediately how unbalanced and ludicrous his view of America is. This distance can be explained as the result of Sholem Aleichem’s own disappointment with America, the disconnect between dream and reality. But it is also the distance between the child and the adult, between the new American Jewish children and the old Russian Jewish man watching them becoming American in true wonder.

Khone Shmeruk noted that gap in Sholem Aleichem’s approach to Americanization: As he argues, the typical adult protagonists of Sholem Aleichem will likely not settle in completely well in the American reality, whereas young protagonists will usually acclimate quite easily.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the same principle is evident from the letter under discussion: the swift Americanization of the young Russian Jewish children – and the astonished but estranged gaze of the adult.

39 Sholem Aleichem, *Adventures of Mottel, the Cantor’s Son*. English and Yiddish, transl. by Tamara Kahana, New York 2001, 265.

40 *Ibid.*, 272 f.

41 Shmeruk, *Sholem Aleichem and America*, 229.

When describing the responses in the Jewish and non-Jewish press in the United States to Sholem Aleichem's first visit to America, Nina Warnke focuses on his unsuccessful attempts to enter the Yiddish theater in New York. Warnke argues,

"Within the context of Sholem Aleichem's career, this visit belongs to one of the most disappointing periods in his life. This is due not only to the community's failure to make a place for him, but also to his lack of insight into the immigrants' sensibilities and his overestimation of his potential role as a cultural renewer of American Jews."<sup>42</sup>

While this may be true for Sholem Aleichem's experiences in the Yiddish theater in America, the letter discussed here may imply he did in fact have "insights into the immigrants' sensibilities," insights which he developed very early in his visit and turned into literary themes.

## Conclusion

In the USSR edition of Sholem Aleichem's letters, published in Kiev in 1939, the editors declare:

"The epistolary form was for Sholem Aleichem one of the most adequate means of expression. Already in the first years of his literary activity in Yiddish he uses this form in various works. [...] Sholem Aleichem is one of the world's classics, who adopted the epistolary form in a virtuosic way. The same professionalism we can see also in his private letter correspondence."<sup>43</sup>

The letter identified and presented here demonstrates his professionalism: the dramatic tone, the literary and performative tactics towards the children and towards the recipient of the letter, and the juxtaposing of children and adults, America and Russia, knowing and not knowing.

42 Nina Warnke, *Of Plays and Politics. Sholem Aleichem's First Visit to America*, in: *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 20 (1991), 239–276, here 241. For a different account of Sholem Aleichem in America, see Jeremy Dauber, *The Worlds of Sholem Aleichem. The Remarkable Life and Afterlife of the Man Who Created Tevye*, New York 2013, 182–194 and 294–318.

43 Y. Mitlman, *Sholem Aleikhem's epistolarishe yerushe [Sholem Aleichem's Epistolary Legacy]*, in: *Frages fun Sholem Aleykhem's shafung. Biuleten fun der Sholem-Aleykhem-sesye funem opteyl far sotsyale visnshaftn fun der visnshaft-akademye fun USSR [Issues in Sholem Aleichem's Creative Work. Bulletin of the Sholem Aleichem-Session of the Department of Social Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences]*, Kiev 1939, 48–53, here 48.



Furthermore, the letter serves as a means of understanding Sholem Aleichem’s state of mind during his first days in America, including his instant amazement and surprise in the face of the American Jewish child experience. The letter revealed here adds another piece to Sholem Aleichem’s epistolary legacy, illuminating a hitherto unknown part in the intricate fabric of his life and work.



Gregor Feindt

## New Industrial Men in a Global World: Transfers, Mobility, and Individual Agency of Jewish Employees of the Baťa Shoe Company, 1938–1940

In a short memoir-styled essay published in 1999, the British playwright Sir Tom Stoppard reflected on his family history and told the story of how his Jewish parents had fled Czecho-Slovakia in March 1939 with their two young sons. The Stráussler family, including 21-month-old Tom or Tomík (diminutive for his Czech name Tomáš), went off to Singapore and later India immediately after the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>1</sup> The Stráusslers' story is a remarkable example of flight and mobility on the eve of World War II and was only possible because of Eugen Stráussler's successful work for the Baťa shoe company in Zlín. Without any doubt, their moving to Asia saved the family from the Holocaust.

Ever since World War II, Baťa maintained a reputation for saving its Jewish employees in the wake of German occupation, and several memoirs account for as much as 400 or even 1,400 Jewish families which were saved.<sup>2</sup> However, recent scholarship challenged this narrative and narrowed down the numbers to approximately eighty employees with their families. Martin Marek and Vít Strobach, two Czech historians, have studied the company's personnel management in great detail and argued that the emigration, or rather professional transfer, of Baťa employees to Asia and the Americas followed economic and management calculations rather than humanitarian

- 1 Tom Stoppard, *Another Country*, in: *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 10 October 1999, 15–22.
- 2 Jan Antonín Baťa, *Těžké časy. Román z průmyslového života* [Hard Times. A Novel from Industrial Life], Krásná Lípa 2008, 250.

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motives.<sup>3</sup> Other research has shown that under German occupation during World War II, Baťa factories in Zlín, Ottmuth (German Reich), and Chelmek (general government) relied extensively on Jewish forced labor.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the company's role during World War II has been fiercely contested since 1945. The company had sought a cooperative relation with Nazi Germany even before the Munich Agreement and produced boots for the Wehrmacht during the war. At the same time, between 1938 and 1940, Baťa decentralized its organization, transferred qualified personnel to neutral and Allied countries and established new subsidiary companies in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. In 1945, after the war, the Czechoslovak National Court denounced Jan Antonín Baťa for collaboration with the Nazis and thus provided a legitimization of nationalizing the company.<sup>5</sup> In his trial, the fate of Jewish employees served as evidence to clear Baťa of such charges. For instance, one of the central documents about the transfer of Jewish employees, Jiří Stein's list of rescued Jews from Zlín, was a witness statement in the trial.<sup>6</sup> Jan Antonín Baťa himself reproduced the story several times.<sup>7</sup>

Against this background, Baťa's stance towards Jews must be considered ambivalent. In total, Baťa's transfer of Jewish personnel to factories overseas

- 3 Martin Marek, Z baťovského Zlína do světa. Směry transferu a kvalifikační kritéria přesouvaných baťovských zaměstnanců v letech 1938–1941 [From Baťa's Zlín to the World. Destinations and Qualification Criteria for Baťa Workers Transferred in 1938–1941], in: *Moderní dějiny. Sborník k dějinám 19. a 20. století* [Modern History. Studies into 19th and 20th Century History] 19 (2011), no. 1, 157–197; Martin Marek/Vít Strobach, “Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce.” Personální politika Baťova koncernu a řízené přesuny zaměstnanců v letech 1938–1941 [“Batism, Accelerated Modernity, and Labor Pioneers.” The Baťa Group's Staff Deployment Policy and Controlled Staff Transfers in 1938–1941], in: *Moderní dějiny* [Modern History] 18 (2010), no. 1, 103–153; Vít Strobach/Martin Marek, Batismus a “židovská otázka” na přelomu 30. a 40. let dvacátého století [Batism and the “Jewish Question” at the Turn of the 1930s and 1940s], in: Petr Pálka (ed.), *Židé a Morava XVII. Kniha statí ze stejnojmenné konference konané v Muzeu Kroměřížska dne 10.11.2010* [Jews and Moravia. A Book of Essays from the Conference of the Same Name, Held in the Museum of Kroměříž on 10 November 2010], Kroměříž 2011, 233–240.
- 4 Sebastian Piątkowski, Żydowscy robotnicy przymusowi w radomskiej fabryce obuwia “Bata” (1941–1943) [Jewish Forced Laborers in the Radom “Bata” Footwear Factory (1941–1943)], in: *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* [Jewish History Quarterly] 227 (2008), no. 3, 322–333; Martin Marek, *Středoevropské aktivity Baťova koncernu za druhé světové války* [The Baťa Concern's Activities in Central Europe during World War II], Brno 2017, 375–437.
- 5 See Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing. Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia*, Cambridge 2005.
- 6 However, the sentence against Baťa was revoked in 2007. For Stein's list, see Jan Herman, Baťa, Židé a Steinův seznam (1938–1939) [Baťa, Jews, and Stein's List (1938–1939)], in: *Moderní dějiny* [Modern History] 26 (2018), no. 1, 111–134, here 128–132.
- 7 See, e. g., Baťa, *Těžké časy*, 250.

was very comprehensive. Among 1,078 employees on a transfer to overseas factories between 1938 and 1941, between 77 and 81 were of Jewish descent or religion. Given the fact that by 1938 only 92 Jews worked for Bat'a in Zlín, this is a remarkable figure.<sup>8</sup> Jews, and especially those highly skilled and well educated, such as the physician Eugen Stráussler, made up a significant group of Bat'a's transfers and deserve further scholarly attention.

This article takes up Marek's and Strobach's argument that the emigration of Bat'a's Jewish employees between 1938 and 1940 does not primarily reflect on humanitarian action but pivots on management decisions, and combines this claim with an analysis of individual agency of those who attempted to leave Zlín. To assess such mobility, the article calls for differentiating the individual situation of Jewish employees at Bat'a with regard to their place of residence, social status within the company, and position they were working in. It argues that the possibility of spatial mobility depended on the individual's performance, ability, and their adherence to the company's social engineering. In other words, mobility reflected upon the individual's status as a "new industrial man" with Bat'a.<sup>9</sup> After an introduction of Bat'a's social project of the new industrial men and Zlín's vernacular cosmopolitanism, the article discusses the company's reorganization and decentralization before World War II. It proceeds to inquire into exemplary cases of Jewish employees and their individual stories of successful and unsuccessful emigration, such as the Stráussler family. This includes confronting individual emigration with the Holocaust in Zlín. Against this background, the article discusses the bureaucratic logics of identifying new men suitable for transfer, concluding that they coincided with the Jewish employees' individual strategies in leaving Zlín and Czechoslovakia.

8 Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, 169 and 176; Herman, *Bat'a, Židé a Steinův seznam*, 127; Státní okresní archiv Zlín (henceforth SOkA Zlín), *Bat'a II/2*, kart. 1040, i. č. 42, *Rozvaha o výchově lidí v zodpovědnější místa* [Reflections on Training People for Most Responsible Positions], 37.

9 In the following, the term "new industrial men" serves to describe Bat'a's concept of an ideal employee which the company brought forward in several instructions and outreach publications. At the end of the 1930s, it appeared as "industrial men," "new men," "new Czech men" or "new industrial men." See SOkA Zlín, *Bat'a II/1*, kart. 1012, i. č. 17, *Výběr a výchova průmyslového člověka. Instrukční příručka* [Selection and Training of the Industrial Man. Manual], Zlín n. d.; *ibid.*, *Bat'a II/5*, kart. 1192, i. č. 39, *Výchova průmyslového člověka* [Training of the Industrial Men], n. d., 1–9; *ibid.*, *Bat'a II/5*, kart. 1187, i. č. 5, *Výroční zpráva. Průmyslové Školy ve Zlíně. Za školní rok 1938-39* [Annual Report. Industrial School in Zlín. For the School Year 1938-39], Zlín 1939, 5.

## New Industrial Men and Vernacular Cosmopolitanism in Zlín

In 1938, Zlín, a small town in Southern Moravia situated approximately 100 km East of Brno, was a model town of utopian and rationalized industrialism in the underdeveloped countryside. In less than twenty years, the local shoe company Baťa had become a leading global shoe manufacturer and transformed the provincial small town, its infrastructure and population, dramatically. By 1938, Zlín counted 38,000 inhabitants – approximately one in two working for Baťa – compared to 4,600 in 1920. The town had been steadily developed by the company to an ensemble of modernist, rational architecture.<sup>10</sup> Zlín was Baťa's management headquarters and the center of a global network of factory towns and subsidiary companies that spanned across thirty countries and covered nearly all of Europe. Zlín also became a model for the company's planning of "ideal industrial towns"<sup>11</sup> in emerging markets, such as Kenya, Brazil, or India, and turned into a multinational and polyglot town with Baťa employees from ten or more countries living here, including, at times, Indians and Egyptians.<sup>12</sup>

Working for Baťa and living in Zlín exposed these men and women to a radical social project that "strove to form an ideal (and simultaneously *normal*) member of a company collective"<sup>13</sup> by means of disciplinary action and discursive indoctrination. As the factual sovereign, the company owned virtually all residential buildings and much of the social and commercial spaces, also controlling most of the town's institutions, including schools and municipal administration.<sup>14</sup> Following the ideological inspiration of company founder Tomáš Baťa, workers produced not only shoes but their own modern body and biography. What started with suggestions on a preferable diet, savings, and personal lifestyle, turned into an authoritarian model

10 See Helen Elizabeth Meller, *European Cities 1890–1930s. History, Culture and the Built Environment*, New York 2001, 129–145; Ondřej Ševeček, *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole. Továrna, městský prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900–1938* [The Birth of Baťa's Industrial Metropolis. Factory, Urban Space, and Society in Zlín in the Years 1900–1938], České Budějovice/Ostrava 2009; Martin Kohlrausch, *Brokers of Modernity. East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects, 1910–1950*, Leuven 2019, 198–202.

11 SOKA Zlín, Baťa V/15, *Ideální průmyslové město* [The Ideal Industrial City].

12 *Ibid.*, Baťa II/2, kart. 1040, i. č. 42. See, e. g., the account of the Swiss apprentice Paul Metzger and his fascination with these international colleagues. Tobias Ehrenbold, *Bata. Schuhe für die Welt, Geschichten aus der Schweiz*, Baden 2012, 30; Gemeindearchiv Möhlin, 841-143-1, Paul Metzger, *Tagebuch*.

13 Marek/Strobach, "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce," 104.

14 See Gregor Feindt, *Eine "ideale Industriestadt" für "neue tschechische Menschen."* Baťa's Zlín zwischen Planung und Alltag, 1925–1945, in: idem/Bernhard GiBibl/Johannes Paulmann (eds.), *Kulturelle Souveränität. Politische Deutungs- und Handlungsmacht jenseits des Staates im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2017, 109–132.

of social conditioning that selected and formed the “new industrial man.”<sup>15</sup> Addressing both men and women in Zlín, such ideological claims imagined the prototypical new man as male and severely limited the professional advance of women, restricting married women to the household.<sup>16</sup>

As most workers lived in dormitories, had their meals in company-run canteens, and frequented centrally controlled leisure activities, Baťa’s ideology comprehensively penetrated the employees’ everyday life. More extremely, this applied to apprentices – or “young men” and “young women” in the company’s idiom – who went through a four-year vocational training program with an emphasis on character formation, foreign languages, and economic skills such as accounting. These young, and potentially new, men should combine a healthy, clean, and highly productive body with a rational and industrious mind and aim for personal optimization.<sup>17</sup> The indoctrination of employees corresponded with their status within the company, making the new men effectively an elitist concept. While the ideological claim of discipline and optimization targeted all workers, clerks, and other staff, even those inhabitants of Zlín who did not work for Baťa, only successful apprentices and highly skilled male employees embodied “new industrial men.”

Mobility was central in the role-model biographies of new men, both as a qualification and an experience. Workers moved to Zlín from the entire republic and neighboring Central European countries. Transfers to other Baťa factories, possibly to foreign factories, were also a reliable path to earn a promotion and declared a virtue that “multiplies a man’s knowledge, [...] gains and finds new business opportunities,”<sup>18</sup> consequently providing work and income. In such exemplary biographies, published in the company’s newspapers, graduates of the “Baťa School of Work” spent their savings on study trips to the United Kingdom, France, or other parts of the world to improve their language skills and job experiences, either returning to Zlín for qualified work at Baťa or developing their own business strategy. In fact, around 1937, 4.2 percent of Baťa’s workforce in Zlín had already worked abroad, especially highly qualified workers temporally transferred to Baťa

15 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/1, kart. 1012, i. č.17, Výběr a výchova průmyslového člověka. Instrukční příručka [Selection and Training of the Industrial Man. Manual], Zlín n. d.

16 See Theresa Adamski, *Der Pionier. Konstruktionen von Arbeit und Männlichkeiten in der deutschsprachigen Zeitung der Firma Baťa 1935–1939*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 67 (2018), no. 3, 349–373.

17 See Zachary Austin Doleshal, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes. Zlín, Baťa, and Czechoslovakia, 1923–1941* (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2012), 142.

18 Tomáš Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy* [Reflections and Speeches], Prague 2013, 115 (first publ. 1932).

factories in Germany, France, or Yugoslavia, but also in Africa, Asia, or the Americas.<sup>19</sup>

Nationalism, in contrast, seemed absent from Zlín until the end of the democratic First Republic. Qualified personnel was expected to be multilingual and highly adaptive, while citizenship or nationality had little effect on individual prospects within the company or social life in Zlín until 1937. National chauvinism was reprimanded but reports of such cases remain few. Consequently, Zachary Doleshal argues that hardly any national discrimination against minorities took place, as the company's strict control mechanism would have exposed such incidents.<sup>20</sup> For instance, Czechoslovak Germans, the country's biggest and most conflictive national minority, worked for Bat'a in plenty, regardless of their possible political affiliation with the Sudeten German Party that radicalized the Czechoslovak Germans and leaned towards Nazi Germany.<sup>21</sup> In democratic Czechoslovakia, therefore, Zlín was an island of national indifference within an increasingly divided and differentiated society. In many ways, the company's approach resembled the state's institutional attempts to overcome national difference, i. e. in the military or in schools.<sup>22</sup> However, in Zlín such identity did not foster civic loyalty towards the Republic but the successful participation in Bat'a's social engineering.

Similarly to national belonging, religion was no virtue for the new industrial man. The company's founder, Tomáš Bat'a was areligious but did not openly promote secularism; his company widely ignored religious questions. While Zlín was situated in the traditionally Catholic region of Moravian Slovakia, religious practice remained low, and the rapidly growing town failed to build new churches or other religious facilities to a greater number.<sup>23</sup> The town had only a small Jewish community with a prayer room in a local state-ly home.<sup>24</sup> Polemic articles against the rationalized factory, such as Ilya Eh-

19 SOKA Zlín, Bat'a II/2, kart. 1040, i. č. 42, Rozvaha o výchově lidí v zodpovědnější místa, 51.

20 See Doleshal, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes*, 185.

21 See *ibid.*, 187.

22 See Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Loyalitäten in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918–1938. Politische, nationale und kulturelle Zugehörigkeiten*, Munich 2004; Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität. Die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918–1938*, Munich 2006; Mirek Němec, *Erziehung zum Staatsbürger? Deutsche Sekundarschulen in der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1939*, Essen 2010.

23 See Michal Kohout/Stephan Templ/Pavel Zatloukal, *Česká republika. Architektura XX. století. Morava a Slezsko [Czech Republic. Twentieth-Century Architecture. Moravia and Silesia]*, Prague 2008, 175 and 182.

24 See Jaroslav Klenovský, *Židovské památky Zlínského kraje [Jewish Landmarks of the Zlín Region]*, Zlín 2010, 115.



renburg's portrayal of the company founder,<sup>25</sup> alleged Baťa's antisemitism, but Strobach and Marek convincingly objected to such claims.<sup>26</sup> In the factories and dormitories, Baťa implemented a policy of both national and religious indifference and cautioned against any harassment or intolerance.<sup>27</sup>

However, Jewishness was a contested category of statistical classification in interwar Czechoslovakia, not only in Zlín, centering on the question if Jews were Czechs or rather Germans. In 1930, the state census registered 103 Jews in Zlín and, in 1937, 92 Jews worked for Baťa, which equaled 0.37 percent of Baťa employees in the town. However, Jewish employees worked in relatively high positions with the company as a more detailed list of Jewish employees written in 1935 reveals. While the majority of them appeared in production, correspondent clerks made up 18 percent and medical doctors or dentists 12 percent.<sup>28</sup> In internal statistics, Baťa distinguished between religion and nationality similarly to the official census. While the number of 92 Jews was based on religion, only 14 employees identified as Jewish in the sense of nationality (*národnost*).<sup>29</sup> Kateřina Čapková has stressed that the concept of Jewish nationality posed an exception to the linguistic foundation of both the supposed Czechoslovak nation and the national minorities, most importantly Germans, Hungarians, and, in Carpathian Ruthenia, Ruthenians. The self-declaration as a Jewish national moved beyond religion and expressed, first and foremost, loyalty towards the Czechoslovak state. Declaring Jewish nationality meant avoiding a self-declaration as German or Hungarian based on everyday language.<sup>30</sup> Against the rise of German nationalism

25 Ilya Ehrenburg, Der Schuhkönig Thomas Bata, in: Das Tage-Buch, 7 November 1931, 1743–1750.

26 See Strobach/Marek, Batismus a “židovská otázka,” 234–236.

27 See, e. g., the house rules for dormitories. SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/5, kart. 1192, i. č. 39, 24. See also Zachary Austin Doleshal, National Indifference and the Transnational Corporation. The Paradigm of the Baťa Company, in: Maarten van Ginderachter/Jon E. Fox (eds.), National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe, Abingdon/New York 2019, 81–105. For a broader discussion of national indifference in the Czech lands, see Tara Zahra, Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948, Ithaca, N. Y., 2008.

28 Statistický lexikon obcí v zemi Moravskoslezské. Úřední seznam míst podle zákona ze dne 14. dubna 1920, čís[lo] 266 Sb[írka] zák[onů] a nař[ízení] [Statistical Lexicon of Municipalities in the Moravian-Silesian Country. Official List of Places under the Law of 14 April 1920, no. 266 of the Collection of Laws and Decrees], Prague 1935, 46; SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, kart. 1051, i. č. 67. See also Lukáš Matlak, Removing the Jews from the City of Shoes. The Holocaust in Zlín (unpubl. BA thesis, Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín, 2013), appendix VII–X.

29 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, kart. 1040, i. č. 42, Rozvaha o výchově lidí v zodpovědnější místa, 35 and 37.

30 See Kateřina Čapková, Czechs, Germans, Jews? National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia, New York 2012, 46–56.

in Czechoslovakia during the 1930s, many of these Jewish nationals changed their declaration to Czech, as Marsha L. Rozenblit maintains.<sup>31</sup>

The shared experience of intercultural and multilingual contacts, the national indifference, and the company's global orientation provided for a cosmopolitan horizon of expectations in Zlín's everyday life. Even for the majority of Baťa employees that would never leave Czechoslovakia, vernacular cosmopolitanism fostered a sense of being part of a global enterprise and Baťa became a symbol of the young state.<sup>32</sup> It was not based on the affirmative transgression of national borders but the company's situational suppression of such differences in Zlín's everyday life.<sup>33</sup> In this specific setting, the vernacular cosmopolitan experience of Zlín intersected with a global network of factories and the spatial and social movement of men, women, and objects. It is obvious that the company relied on their employees' global expectations and the economic aspects of this national indifference, but vernacular cosmopolitanism more significantly created individual agency both within Czechoslovakia and beyond the country. Baťa's new industrial men were extremely mobile both geographically and socially, that is, with regard to the individual capability and opportunity to move beyond spatial or social boundaries. The ideal type of such employees connected local rootedness, transcultural orientations, and global entanglements, but motility not necessarily inflicted mobility.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the value of such capability and factual mobility of Jewish employees before the outbreak of World War II awaits further analysis.

31 See Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Jews, German Culture, and the Dilemma of National Identity. The Case of Moravia, 1848–1938*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 20 (2013), 77–120, here 99–109.

32 See Sarah Lemmen, *Tschechen auf Reisen. Repräsentationen der außereuropäischen Welt und nationale Identität in Ostmitteleuropa 1890–1938*, Cologne 2018, 291 f.

33 See Isabella Löhr/Bernhard Gißibl, *Die Geschichtswissenschaften vor der kosmopolitischen Herausforderung*, in: idem (eds.), *Bessere Welten. Kosmopolitismus in den Geschichtswissenschaften*, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2017, 9–44.

34 See Weert Canzler/Vincent Kaufmann/Sven Kesselring, *Tracing Mobilities. An Introduction*, in: idem (eds.), *Tracing Mobilities. Towards a Cosmopolitan Perspective*, Aldershot 2008, 1–12; see also Sarah Panter/Johannes Paulmann/Margit Szöllösi-Janze, *Mobility and Biography. Methodological Challenges and Perspectives*, in: *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte/European History Yearbook* 16 (2015), 1–14, here 7–10.

## Decentralization of Management and the Authoritarian Turn in Czechoslovakia

While Baťa operated around the globe since 1921 and expanded further since 1931, the company dramatically changed its strategy on the eve of World War II with the decentralization of the global enterprise. Martin Marek convincingly reconstructs how the company carefully monitored the diplomatic crises of the 1930s and linked them to business opportunities and management structures. At the same time, the situation in Czechoslovakia changed dramatically both politically and with regards to the status of national minorities. With the rise of the Sudeten German Party and their open support for Nazi Germany, the relationship between nationalities deteriorated harshly. In return, new regulations on state defense in 1936 questioned the loyalty of Germans in Czechoslovakia and, by extension, of other minorities.<sup>35</sup> Politically, the republic developed increasingly authoritarian traits that culminated in a radical overhaul of the political system after the cession of the Sudeten German territories to Germany.

After the annexation of Austria into the German Reich on 12 March 1938, the so-called *Anschluss*, company management anticipated a possible German occupation and isolation of the town itself. Baťa established a second headquarter with the subsidiary company Abex in Eindhoven in the Netherlands and began to relocate staff there and to other factories.<sup>36</sup> After the occupation of the Czech lands on 15 March 1939, Baťa adopted a stricter policy of transferring highly skilled and multilingual personnel overseas. Accordingly, the company chose more and more graduates of its own School of Work in the process of establishing a new center for its organization in Canada.<sup>37</sup> Decentralization or “controlled transfers” (*řízené přesuny*) de facto split the global company network into national entities that could act independently throughout the war. Marek distinguishes four phases of such transfers, which are (1) before the Munich Agreement, 29 September 1938, and the forced cession of Czechoslovakia’s German-speaking borderlands, (2) the authoritarian Second Republic, (3) from the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, 15 March 1939, to the beginning of World War II, and, finally, (4) last transfers until the breakup between Zlín and the overseas factories.<sup>38</sup>

35 See Mark, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, and Christoph Boyer, *Nationale Kontrahenten oder Partner? Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen Tschechen und Deutschen in der Wirtschaft der ČSR (1918–1938)*, Munich 1999, 351–387.

36 See Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, 163. See also Baťa, *Těžké časy*, 27 f.

37 Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, 179 f. and 186.

38 *Ibid.*, 171–187.

In their first attempts to restructure the global company, Baťa transferred approximately 200 employees between March and September 1938. This meant a significant increase in numbers as earlier transfers had first and foremost brought instructors from Zlín to newly established factories. On occasion, these transfers had included several Jews, however, with the changing situation in Czechoslovakia and the rise of antisemitism, the Jewish representation among transfers increased substantially. In the first phase, Jan Herman identifies 17 Jews, equaling 8 percent of all transfers. They stood out as only some of them went to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or France, which posed the significant scenes of decentralization. The majority transferred to non-European destinations, such as India, Jamaica, Morocco, Mexico, Singapore, Sudan, Syria, Tahiti, or the United States.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Jan Antonín Baťa reproduced the discursive othering of Jews. In August 1938, he published an article in the company daily *Zlín* under the title *Baťa, a Czech Jew* opposing antisemitic propaganda in German media claiming he was de-facto Jewish. This assertion reformulated anti-slavic propaganda that the German shoe industry had brought up since the 1920s.<sup>40</sup> Baťa however stressed his Catholic, that is “Aryan,” descent, and deconstructed the propaganda without openly denouncing racism.<sup>41</sup>

After the Munich Agreement, Zlín played an exceptional role in Czecho-Slovakia, as the country’s name was now spelled until its dissolution in March 1939 to underline Slovakian autonomy. Two general directors of Baťa took cabinet posts, Hugo Vavrečka in September as a minister without portfolio and Dominik Čipera in December as minister for public works. Both introduced Baťa’s ideas of rational modernity into the authoritarian state and secured the company’s sovereignty over the town. As a consequence, Baťa was able to prevent any Jewish refugees from coming to the town by decision of the municipal council, thus extending a strict policy of exclusion that had been practiced with the unemployed and the poor before.

Even more drastically, Jan Antonín Baťa openly discussed in another newspaper article *Where to Take the Refugees?* At the end of October 1938, the head of the company argued that not only all Jewish refugees who had come to Czecho-Slovakia but also Czecho-Slovak Jews should find a place

39 Herman, Baťa, *Židé a Steinův seznam*, 120.

40 See Eduard Kubů, “Die Bata-Gefahr.” Antibat’ovská propaganda a bojkotové akce v Německu na přelomu 20. a 30. let 20. století [“The Baťa Threat.” Anti-Baťa Propaganda and Boycott Actions in Germany at the Turn of the 1920s and 1930s], in: Bronislav Chocholáč/Jiří Malíř (eds.), *Pocta Janu Janákovi. Předsedovi Matice moravské, profesorů Masarykovy univerzity věnují k sedmdesátinám jeho přátel a žáci* [Homage to Jan Janák. President of the Moravian Matica, Professor of the Masaryk University, Donated for His 70th Birthday by His Friends and Pupils], Brno 2002, 527–539.

41 Jan Antonín Baťa, *Baťa český žid* [Baťa, a Czech Jew], in: *Zlín*, 10 August 1938, 1.

abroad, but “at least serve our economy.” He went on, “They are mostly traders. And traders, exporters are exactly what we need to set up and employ production for our people – for the export.” He concluded that, as for “our Jews, who today cannot live among us as it is not safe enough, [...] we should permit them to move away in 1939 and help them find new homes and work, which would allow us from this point on to cooperate with them for our and their benefit.”<sup>42</sup> Along this line, the company, allegedly on behalf of Čipera, commenced in November 1938 a training program for overseas transfers. In the second phase of the organized transfers, out of approximately 200 transferees, 45 were Jewish.<sup>43</sup> Jiří Stein, a Jewish clerk with Baťa since 1933 who emigrated to Kenya in 1938, described the courses that he and his wife attended in a witness report in 1946. Having survived the Holocaust, he gratefully remembered that he attended the courses without having his salary cut and being “trained to take up work abroad and learning international trade, selling techniques, merchandise, pedicure and so on.”<sup>44</sup> Such courses seem to have been the norm and can be traced in several personnel files. They were also open to non-Jewish personnel being transferred.<sup>45</sup>

What appeared to be a strategic rescue plan was ambivalent, as it took up racist discourse and questioned the status of Jewish employees as new industrial men. Besides all humanitarian rhetorics, Jan Antonín Baťa’s articles exposed the radical transformation of the company’s national indifference and adopted the racist othering of Jews as foreigners. The Czech historian Michal Frankl maintains that, during the Second Republic, public discourse on the “Jewish question” increasingly blurred the difference between foreign refugees and domestic citizens eventually framing Jews as foreign.<sup>46</sup> Such othering of Jews can be traced in the company’s daily newspapers at first with regard to Ruthenian Carpathia, Czechoslovakia’s Eastern region with a significant Jewish population that was annexed by Hungary on 2 November 1938. The papers brought forward reports of Carpathian backwardness and “dark Jewish masses,” often picturing the local Jews as skilled traders.<sup>47</sup>

42 Idem, Kam s uprchlíky? [Where to Take the Refugees?], in: Zlín, 31 October 1938, 1. However, in a later account in his memoirs *Hard Times*, J. A. Baťa described the directors as openly antisemitic and claimed to have personally initiated the emigration program for Jewish employees.

43 See Marek, Z baťovského Zlína do světa, 174 f.

44 Herman published Stein’s report and his list of saved Jewish employees as an appendix to his article. See Herman, Baťa, Židé a Steinův seznam, 128–132. Stein gave his report in defense of Čipera who was facing a trial for collaboration with the German occupation.

45 See Jan Beránek, Being Bata’s Pedicurist, 17 September 2017, <<https://searchingforsilvestr.wordpress.com/2017/09/17/being-batas-pedicurist/>> (1 July 2022).

46 See Michal Frankl, Prejudiced Asylum. Czechoslovak Refugee Policy, 1918–60, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 49 (2014), no. 3, 537–555, here 550 f.

47 Strobach/Marek, Batismus a “židovská otázka,” 234.

At the same time, Baťa called out against racial hatred and maintained the company's value of cooperation (*spolupráce*). In an internal radio broadcast Baťa declared he wanted to “collaborate with everyone and learn from everyone, everything serves our effort.”<sup>48</sup> Baťa's ambivalent self-positioning sought to maintain entrepreneurial room for maneuver. Whereas racial conflict itself should be suppressed in Zlín to guarantee the effectiveness of production, in a broader national and international discourse the appropriation of racist stereotypes could guarantee the company's business position and possible collaboration with German authorities. Stressing, for instance, the cosmopolitanism of Jews also helped to advocate their removal from Zlín and the country and consequently anticipated the introduction of anti-Jewish legislation under German rule.

This discursive othering turned into practice when antisemitism grew more and more violent, for instance in Slovakia. Less than a month after Jan Antonín Baťa's article, on 23 November, the company fired a Jewish employee “for organizational reasons.” The man hailed from Carpathian Ruthenia and had worked at a Baťa shop in the Eastern Slovakian town of Pavlovce nad Uhom. In the documentation of his dismissal, the company simply rationalized that “as an Israelite, he cannot be in Slovakia”<sup>49</sup> and paid his remaining wages. The former employee objected to his dismissal and asked for a specific reason, but obtained no answers. In August 1939, he received another 3,000 Czechoslovak crowns in compensation, which indicates that the personnel department was well aware of his precarious situation.<sup>50</sup> In consequence, the handling of Jewish employees was ambivalent and reflected on local situations. Including Zlín-based employees in a transfer program did not contradict to the dismissal of other Jewish employees across the country. Clearly, for the company it was not the safety of Jewish employees that was in question, but their professional availability and their economic value in a given context.

48 Jan Antonín Baťa, Hleďte spolupráci [Strive for Cooperation], in: Zlín, 6 March 1939, 1.

49 Marek/Strobach, “Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce,” 133.

50 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, k. 1075, i. č. 31, č. 33.

## Fleeing from Zlín: The Strössler Family and Other Jewish Emigrants

The situation of Jews worsened in Czecho-Slovakia towards the end of 1938 as the new government adopted increasingly discriminatory and antisemitic policies.<sup>51</sup> This section will discuss the organized transfers along individual examples at the beginning of the third phase, that is directly after 15 March 1939, as the German occupation significantly altered the conditions of emigration. Over a period of 13 weeks, from December 1938 to mid-March 1939, 44 Jewish employees left Zlín in slow succession.<sup>52</sup> In the days after the German occupation, at least 16 further employees fled Zlín, mostly to non-European workplaces.

In addition to the training program, both the company and employees seeking a transfer had prepared a possible move and gathered the necessary paperwork since fall 1938. This included both Czechoslovak travel documents and visas or other documents allowing the entry to a given country, as, for instance, the United Kingdom had tightened its admission policy and clearly preferred German or Czech refugees to Jews.<sup>53</sup> Although Jewish and other relief organizations provided financially for the migration of Czechoslovak Jews, they could only secure a limited number of visas and the feasibility of successful emigration largely depended on their individual financial means and capability to mobilize other resources.<sup>54</sup> While some like Walter Kellner, an employee of eight years, left on 16 March 1939 “on his own account” for an unknown location,<sup>55</sup> others left on a rushed transfer. Many of these individual cases in mid-March 1939 are only inaccurately documented in personnel files and remain inconclusive beyond the flight from Zlín itself, but the analysis of both company documentation and ego-documents reveal the logics of preparation and actual mobility.

51 See Wolf Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Lokale Initiativen, zentrale Entscheidungen, jüdische Antworten 1939–1945*, Göttingen 2016, 38–42.

52 Herman, *Bat'a, Židé a Steinův seznam*, 123.

53 See Peter Heumos, *Die Emigration aus der Tschechoslowakei nach Westeuropa und dem Nahen Osten 1938–1945. Politisch-soziale Struktur, Organisation und Asylbedingungen der tschechischen, jüdischen, deutschen und slowakischen Flüchtlinge während des Nationalsozialismus. Darstellung und Dokumentation*, Munich 1989, 48.

54 See *ibid.*, 46–53.

55 Herman, *Bat'a, Židé a Steinův seznam*, 124; SOkA Zlín, *Bat'a II/2*, kart. 999999, i. č. 74, *Seznam zaměstnanců v zahraničí* [List of Employees Abroad].

In his biographical essay, Tom Stoppard describes how the Jewish physicians of Zlín's Baťa hospital met on behalf of the head physician Dr. Albert to discuss their immediate emigration on 14 or 15 March 1939.<sup>56</sup> Stoppard has no memory of the events as he was only 21 months old and relies on Albert's widow and the chronicler of Jewish life in Zlín, Emil Máčel, as sources. The exact chronology of emigration remains inconclusive, as several personnel files state that Jewish employees left the company on 23 March 1939 "at their personal request." In contrast, a list of 23 Jewish physicians, who had worked at the hospital between 1937 and 1939, assembled by the human resources department suggests most of these physicians had left the company by 1 March and had been stripped of their status by 15 March.<sup>57</sup>

As described above, emigration was not only an abrupt decision but relied on early preparations and reflected on the individual position of an employee within the company. The story of Eugen and Marta Stráussler, Stoppard's parents, is a case in point. Dr. Eugen Stráussler's personnel file presents the successful biography of a physician at Baťa's hospital. Here, he had started his career in 1932 after studying in Brno and met his wife Marta, who was working for Baťa as a secretary at that time. In 1934, just a month after having married, they moved into one of the typical cubic family houses on Zálešná Street. Dr. Stráussler was well rated as an "absolutely diligent" physician and "friendly" or "loyal" towards the company. He was serving as deputy senior doctor, the right hand and protégé of Dr. Albert, and was regularly awarded high gratifications for his effort. Moreover, he also received a gift of 1,000 Czechoslovak crowns when his second son Tomáš was born on 3 July 1937.<sup>58</sup>

Information on Stráussler's emigration is scarce, but at some point, the entry on religion in his personnel file was underlined and his file marked in red with the word "Jew." On 28 February 1939, he and his wife both received 30 British pounds, equaling 4,200 Czechoslovak crowns, as he was supposed to transfer to Singapore "for the period of three years as a physician for the Czecho-Slovaks working for Baťa" and his wife should accompany him.<sup>59</sup>

56 Stoppard suggests 14 March, while Marie Albertová stated the meeting took place on 15 March. See Stoppard, *Another Country*, 20; Hana Benešová, *Baťovy broskve [Baťa's Peaches]*, in: *Reflex*, 19 May 2004, 23.

57 The number of Jewish doctors leaving the service of the Baťa hospital grew with the threat of war and occupation. Marcel Sladkowski/David Valůšek, *Příběh Desidera Ornsteina [The Story of Desider Ornstein]*, 13 December 2016, <<https://www.holocaust.cz/zdroje/prezentace/osobni-pribehy/pribeh-desidera-ornsteina/pribeh-desidera-ornsteina-13/>> (1 July 2022).

58 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II kartotéky, kart. 1036, i. č. 18, poř. č. 3 (all quotations on the personnel file's printed form).

59 *Ibid.*



The document also states that Marta Stráusslerová had been issued a travel passport on 19 September 1938, her first ever, as her son later remarked.<sup>60</sup> Clearly, this document was not granted for touristic reasons, as Stráusslerová had no recollection of special holidays of any sort, but in anticipation of a probably sudden departure. The day after the payment, 1 March, Stráussler, like many other employees preparing for transfer, was issued with his “orientation” or training plan of four weeks manual labor in the shoemakers’ school, in rubber-making, sales, and pedicure, and in the human resources department to qualify him for this new position. Due to the political developments and the German occupation, his training, however, was cut short. On 14 March, the entire family was declared “suitable for a journey and residence in the tropics”<sup>61</sup> and set off for Asia.

Traveling to Singapore by boat meant a six-week journey, as other Bat’a men described in their memoirs. Bat’a had opened the factory in Singapore in 1931 as a facility of its British company. Some twenty to thirty Czechoslovak citizens – mostly young and single men – worked there, but the number doubled during the large-scale transfer of 1938–1940.<sup>62</sup> Similar to other European families, the Stráussler family led a colonial life with domestic servants until Japanese forces advanced towards Singapore and all women and children were evacuated to Australia or India. Attempting to follow his family, Eugen Stráussler died in February 1942 when he tried to escape the siege and his boat was sunk by the Japanese navy. In India, Marta Stráusslerová resumed working for Bat’a and managed a shoe shop in Darjeeling to support her two sons. Eventually, she remarried and followed her second husband, a British officer named Kenneth Stoppard, to England with her sons.<sup>63</sup> Although the company objected female wage labor, the war situation – and probably the limited availability of suitable workers in India – eased such strict regulations, similarly to Zlín, where previous female workers were re-employed by 1942. Despite all wartime hardship and the death of Eugen Stráussler, Bat’a had proved a reliable network for the family both in fleeing Czecho-Slovakia and in finding support later on.

The high representation of physicians, such as Stráussler, among successful Jewish transfers underpins the correlation between qualification, pro-

60 Stoppard, *Another Country*, 20.

61 SOKA Zlín, Bat’a II kartotéky, kart. 1036, i. č. 18, poř. č. 3, 1.

62 See Jan Beránek’s blog on his great-uncle Silvestr Beránek who worked for Bat’a in Singapore between 1939 and 1942 and died in the Battle of Singapore in 1942. Jan Beránek, *Silvestr’s Voyage to Singapore*, 16 June 2018, <<https://searchingforsilvestr.wordpress.com/2018/06/16/silvestrs-voyage-to-singapore/>> (1 July 2022).

63 Stoppard, *Another Country*, 21 f. Marta Stráusslerová’s previous employment was noted in her husband’s personnel file, see SOKA Zlín, Bat’a II kartotéky, kart. 1036, i. č. 18, poř. č. 3.

fessional position, and social status. These facets contributed to receiving a transfer and reveal factors of decision-making inherent to the company. The mobility of Strüssler and his family therefore serves as a case in point. The example of Werner Kirchenberger, another physician at the Baťa hospital, illustrates Baťa's efforts to prepare such transfers. Kirchenberger was to leave for the United States on a short notice. He filed an official request to the American consulate and was placed on a waiting list for an immigration visa on 29 December 1938 which, under normal circumstances, took one to two years. Through their Prague lawyer Josef Blažek, the company intervened with the consulate in Prague to press the matter. A decision remains unclear, but shortly after Kirchenberger was reshuffled for a transfer to Argentina and underwent the same procedure and schedule as Strüssler. He left Zlín between 15 and 23 March 1939, but his later fate cannot be determined.<sup>64</sup> Such interventions or patronage for travel documents or fast-track decisions can be found in several cases, mostly connected with the company's interests or personal motives of supervisors.<sup>65</sup> It is beyond question that the Jewish physicians at Baťa's hospital possessed a high degree of motility, as they were all capable of adapting to new work places and received the opportunity to do so. While much of the research underlines the economic capability of bourgeois refugees facilitating such transfers,<sup>66</sup> this argument falls short of explaining the case of the relatively poor Dr. Strüssler. In his and other cases, Baťa provided both the financial means and the opportunity, thus rewarding a form of qualification that moved beyond medical expertise.

### Unsuccessful Migration: Zlín's Jews and the Holocaust

In contrast to the Jewish employees who escaped Nazi rule thanks to Baťa's transfers, at least 32 citizens who lived in Zlín before World War II can be identified as victims in the Holocaust.<sup>67</sup> Confronting the exemplary personal story of successful migration with individual examples of Zlín Jews who died in 1939 or the Holocaust sheds light on the failing of emigration plans, helps to determine the factors deciding for or against moving abroad, and

64 See Herman, *Baťa, Židé a Steinův seznam*, 121 f.; SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, k. 1075, i. č. 31, poř. č. 30.

65 See Marek/Strobach, "Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce," 146–148.

66 See Heumos, *Die Emigration aus der Tschechoslowakei nach Westeuropa und dem Nahen Osten 1938–1945*, 64 f.

67 See *Databáze Obětí [Database of Victims]*, 2 April 2014, <<https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/>> (1 July 2022).

carves out the individual agency of Jewish employees. While this article will not inquire into the Holocaust in Zlín as such, the social and professional profiles of those Jewish citizens of Zlín who could not leave the town provide further insights into the logics of Baťa's transfer program.

In his account of Jewish employees with Baťa and their fate in the Holocaust, Emil Máčel mentions two tragic examples of Jewish physicians working at the Baťa hospital who could not utilize their motility. The first, Desider Ornstein, was a dentist working for Baťa since May 1935 and lived with his family in one of the company-owned semi-detached houses on Lipová street. On the third day of German occupation, Ornstein together with all remaining Jewish medical practitioners in Zlín and across the Protectorate lost their license.<sup>68</sup> According to the local commanding police officer, Ornstein had made all necessary arrangements to leave the country with his family but had not made the final decision by 15 March.<sup>69</sup> Having missed the small window of opportunity, he witnessed the beginning persecution of Jews in Zlín and committed an act of desperation. On 22 March, he stabbed his two children aged twelve and five, and attempted to stab his wife, Kamila. As she could fight him off and called for help, Desider Ornstein fled the scene and later jumped out of a window of the Hotel Společenský dům committing suicide.<sup>70</sup> After these tragic events, Kamila Ornsteinová left Zlín to live in Prague with her brother. She was deported to the East in 1942 and it is most likely that she was murdered in Ujazdów.<sup>71</sup> Ornstein's case reflects on the trajectory of personal agency and the lack of alternatives to fleeing Zlín even before organized violence and killings began. While it is widely held that the suicide rate among Jews before the Holocaust was relatively low, Christian Goeschel stresses an increase before decisive steps, even when flight seemed possible.<sup>72</sup> While we cannot determine Ornstein's motives for a lack of sources,<sup>73</sup> both the missed opportunity, the drastic decision to flee the town, and the imminent Nazi discrimination policy should be taken into account.

68 Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren*, 55.

69 Jaroslav Pospíšil/Hubert Valášek/Hana Pospíšilová, Herr Direktor a ti druzí. Albrecht Miesbach, protektorátní ředitel Baťových závodů [Mr. Director and the Others. Albrecht Miesbach, Director of the Baťa Factories during the Protectorate], Zlín 2015, 56.

70 Židovské muzeum v Praze (Jewish Museum in Prague, henceforth JMP), Archive, box 80, *Židé a my, občané zlíňští* [Jews and We, Citizens of Zlín]. Suicides such as Ornstein's were frequent in the first days and weeks after the German occupation. See Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren*, 53.

71 Sladowski/Valášek, *Příběh Desidera Ornsteina*; see the entry on Kamila Ornsteinová, in: *Databáze Obětí* [Database of Victims], 12 January 2016, <<https://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-victims/victim/147432-kamila-ornsteinova/>> (1 July 2022).

72 See Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, Oxford/New York 2009, 104 f.

73 His personnel file, e. g., merely contains a short note on the events with no further details or other information. SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, k. 1030, i. č. 16, č. 33.

Vilém Klausner is the second tragic case. On 1 September 1939, he was arrested as part of the Gestapo action Albrecht I, but released shortly after.<sup>74</sup> According to Máčel, Hynek Baťa, a distant relative of Tomáš and Jan Antonín Baťa, who came into a management position in 1939, arranged for a visa to the United States for Klausner's entire family. However, their son Tomáš was deaf-mute and would not have been allowed to enter the country. In consequence, the family decided to remain in Zlín. Vilém Klausner was arrested for a second time and deported to Buchenwald. His family was transported to Theresienstadt and murdered in Auschwitz.<sup>75</sup>

Both Ornstein and Klausner failed to utilize their motility, the first for unclear reasons, the latter for his deaf-mute son. While their tragic examples do not explain how emigration could be successful, they reveal it as a personal hazard. In addition to the logics of the transfer program and the individual motility, the capability of bringing all this into action relied on a personal decision. After 15 March 1939, only ten Jewish employees remained with Baťa. Strobach and Marek identified another 68 employees as possibly endangered by the Nazi racial laws that came to be extended to the Protectorate. The last of those Jewish employees were dismissed in the fall of 1939.<sup>76</sup>

### Rationality, the Contingency of Citizenship, and Individual Agency

Sträussler's case points to the rational evaluation of personnel and their qualification. Beyond personal stories, any decision for a transfer – or dismissal – relied on precise knowledge about available staff and the information obtained before the political ruptures reflected upon the changing relevance of criteria. Not only with regard to Jews but in general, bringing data to use signified the differentiation and classification of staff. In 1937, probably under the new law on state defense that restricted the employment of foreigners, Baťa began systematically to collect the nationality of their employees, focused on the loyalty of foreigners, and thus re-conceptualized Jewishness.

74 Mirsolava Menšíková/František Vašek, Akce Albrecht der Erste. Události 1. září 1939 se zvláštním zaměřením na Brno a jižní Moravu [Action Albrecht der Erste. Events from 1 September 1939 with a Special Focus on Brno and South Moravia], in: *Paginae historiae. Sborník Státního ústředního archivu v Praze* [Paginae historiae. Proceedings of the State Central Archive in Prague] 7 (1999), 206–255.

75 JMP, Archive, box 80, Židé a my, občané zlíňští. See also United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Library and Archives, RG-48.008M, reel 133, 256.

76 Strobach/Marek, *Batismus a "židovská otázka,"* 237.

A statistic of employees according to nationality covering 1938/1939 counts employees of Jewish religion as nationals.<sup>77</sup> Beforehand, citizenship and religion had been documented individually in personnel files – and until 1939 the form for personnel files was not changed. In the wake of liberal democracy and subsequently during the authoritarian turn, nationality became a qualification just as loyalty or attitude towards the company had been before.

From May 1938 onwards, Baťa began to systematize their knowledge about employees and compiled a catalogue of those deemed suitable for a transfer. A first edition of the catalogue was most likely destroyed around 15 March 1939,<sup>78</sup> but a later version beginning in August 1939 can be found in the company records. The catalogue of approximately 1,000 men (and eleven women) was based on the extensive personnel files and further collected data, for instance character profiles and the health status of entire families. A typical entry would summarize that the employee was Czechoslovak, “healthy, without defects,” “suitable for work overseas,” and suggest a position that was similar or slightly more important than his position in Zlín.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the moral qualification of candidates was discussed between the technicians of disciplinary action, such as the human resources and social departments and workplace supervisors.<sup>80</sup> The organized transfers relied on a bureaucratic process of consolidating such information – both in a categorized form and in oral and written inquiries.

Regardless of the personal situation of employees, all these transfers presupposed the eventual return to Zlín. This made the transfer of Jewish personnel problematic as the company assumed that they would not return to Zlín given the antisemitic turn both in legislation and cultural life under the authoritarian Second Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>81</sup> In February 1939, Jan Antonín Baťa discussed this question openly with other managers as one of them lobbied for sending the so-called young men to overseas factories since they would surely return home to Zlín.<sup>82</sup> A few months later, in May, Baťa decided to recruit especially young men and women from the Baťa School of Work for new factories in North America and imposed an age limit of thirty for international transfers. However, management struggled

77 Doleshal, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes*, 197; Herman, Baťa, *Židé a Steinův seznam*, 123; see also SokA Zlín, Baťa II/3, kart. 999999, i. č. 4, fol. 24.

78 Marek/Strobach, “Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce,” 106.

79 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II/2, kart. 1047, č. 52.

80 Marek/Strobach, “Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce,” 121 f.

81 See Jan Gebhart/Jan Kuklík, *Druhá republika 1938–1939. Svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě* [The Second Republic 1938–1939. The Struggle between Democracy and Totalitarianism in Political, Social, and Cultural Life], Prague 2004, 195 f.

82 See Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, 177.

to find candidates and General Director Hugo Vavrečka openly questioned the young men's "personal courage" to move abroad. One can only assume that the breakdown of vernacular cosmopolitanism, the uncertainty of a professional future abroad, and the dramatic political situation at home made these young employees hesitant to leave Moravia. In their harsh reaction to this crisis, management devaluated the status of these young employees as "new industrial men." In general, higher management conceptualized new men (and increasingly new women) as mobile, qualified, and highly adaptable, but in this situation, they put this ideal into question and consequently deconstructed the company's ideology itself.<sup>83</sup>

In addition, during the political crisis of Czechoslovakia the allegedly rational categories became contingent and influenced the motility of employees. Here, a comparison to the case of Sudeten German and Hungarian employees helps to illuminate the logics of such reorganization.<sup>84</sup> After the Munich Agreement, Baťa closed down all shops in the Sudetenland and – for reasons of "national consolidation" – dismissed more than 500 employees, mostly sales staff, who were considered German.<sup>85</sup> Just a few months later, such employees became useful in a new constellation after the German occupation and the outbreak of World War II. Now, Baťa factories in Germany or Hungary relied on new industrial men who had worked in Zlín before the war and – either as former Czechoslovak citizens with a minority background or as longtime nationals – could now work in important management positions.<sup>86</sup> Nationality and citizenship turned into situational resources that could be applied only as circumstances allowed.

In consequence, the categorization of employees with regard to their transferability both delimited and allowed for individual agency. Weert Canzler et al. argue that motility, that is, in this case, the capacity to move from Zlín to the world, can also be used to avoid spatial mobility and the confrontation with foreign environments.<sup>87</sup> Comparing the diverging examples of Jewish physicians, Czechoslovak apprentices, and German or Hungarian salespeople reveals that motility was based on an economic rationale and created individual agency. In March 1939 and the following months, individual perspectives and growing antisemitism prompted opposing trajectories in this agency. The Jewish physicians and all other Jewish employees

83 See Zachary Doleshal, *Imagining Baťa in the World of Tomorrow. The Baťa Company, Czechoslovakia, and the 1939 New York World's Fair*, in: Ondřej Ševeček/Martin Jemelka (eds.), *Company Towns of the Baťa Concern. History – Cases – Architecture*, Stuttgart 2013, 61–81, here 78 f.

84 See Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*, 175.

85 Doleshal, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes*, 187.

86 See Marek, *Z baťovského Zlína do světa*.

87 See Canzler/Kaufmann/Kesselring, *Tracing Mobilities*, 5.

had a personal interest in being transferred. Antisemitic discrimination, social and professional exclusion, and the imminent danger of life made them utilize their mobility preferring spatial to (upward) social mobility. Young Czecho-Slovak employees, however, maintained the illusion of remaining at their current position.

### Fleeing to Zlín: The Case of Hans/Jan Bader

Bat'a's practice of mobility aimed at the "new industrial men" of Zlín and their families and did not include other endangered persons. According to this rationale, transfer within the company to a position in Asia or South America was open to long-standing and successful employees. However, in 1938 and 1939, finding work at Bat'a seemed a possible mobility strategy for Jews, as the story of Hans or Jan Bader illustrates. Bader failed in his attempt and was murdered in the Holocaust, but his case demonstrates both the mechanisms of personnel management and its restraints around the Munich Agreement.

Bader, born in Vienna in 1919, applied on 12 September 1938 for an office position or any manual labor with Bat'a in Zlín. In his impressive application letter, he summarized his life as a young Jewish student who had passed his *matura* (high school diploma) with honors and took up studies at the Hochschule für Welthandel in Vienna. After one term, he was forced to give up his studies "by the sudden change of the political situation" or "Umsturz," as he described the situation in the German version,<sup>88</sup> both of which signified the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany and the subsequent antisemitic harassment. Bader filed his request in four languages – his native German, English, French, and Czech, a language he was willing to learn "within a few months"<sup>89</sup> – to demonstrate his worth to the international company. Although he met several recruiting criteria, Bader, at first, could not attract the company's attention.

Applying barely two weeks before the Munich Agreement, Bader was in a difficult position. He had fled Vienna to Kyjov, a small town in Moravia some sixty kilometers from Zlín, where he was staying with his uncle. Bader's parents hailed from Moravia, but he himself held German citizenship after the Anschluss. In his letter, he stressed that his father had only accept-

88 SOKA Zlín, Bat'a II kartotéky, kart. 1036, i. č. 18, poř. č. 5, 22 and 20.

89 Ibid., 23.

ed Austrian citizenship for professional reasons,<sup>90</sup> but the company ignored his pledge of national loyalty completely. Bader must have been aware of his low chances as only a few days later the wife of the Brno provincial president, Julie Černá, intervened on his behalf. She had spoken to Bader's uncle Theodor, but "with regard to the current situation"<sup>91</sup> Baťa would not request Jan Bader's service. In the meantime, in November 1938, the Zlín city council, controlled by Baťa and its employees, banned all "refugees from foreign areas" to live and work in the city, effectively aiming at Jewish refugees such as Bader.<sup>92</sup> However, with the personal intervention of the provincial president, Jan Černý, things changed. Only when Černý telephoned the personnel department on 2 January 1939 and urged them to accept Bader, the company would eventually hire the student as a correspondence clerk. In a test, Bader proved his abilities with sample letters in French, English, and Czech. As an intern, Bader should be introduced to Baťa's foreign trade and after three months transfer to a position abroad. This plan clearly resembles the preparatory program for Jewish physicians but did not rely on a successful career with Baťa. It only anticipated Bader's possible performance.

The antisemitic turn in Czecho-Slovakia's refugee policy culminated in the four month between Bader's application and the start of his work on 16 January 1939, when after the Munich Agreement Czecho-Slovakia de facto prohibited Jewish refugees from entering the countries and, moreover, began to exclude Czecho-Slovak Jews from public life.<sup>93</sup> In fact, Bader was only working at Baťa for five weeks when the provincial administration – that is President Černý's administration – declined to issue a work permit stating that,

"with regard to the exceptionally unfavorable economic circumstances due to the Munich Agreement there is a surplus of domestic subjects without employment and therefore the situation of the domestic labor market does not allow to employ foreigners. Inasmuch it is indispensably necessary to provide employment primarily for Czecho-slovak [sic] citizens."<sup>94</sup>

In fact, such a decision was in line with earlier restrictions to the employment of foreigners introduced in 1936. The company objected to this administrative decision without success and Bader had to leave Zlín. In 1940, he arrived

90 Ibid., 22.

91 Ibid., 16.

92 Doleshal, *Life and Death in the Kingdom of Shoes*, 194.

93 See Frankl, *Prejudiced Asylum*, 547.

94 SOKA Zlín, Baťa II kartotéky, kart. 1036, i. č. 18, poř. č. 5, 6.



at the Prague ghetto and was registered in 1941 on a transport to Łódź, where he was murdered.<sup>95</sup>

Bader's case reveals that social categories and cultural capital turned contingent during political crisis, emigration, and flight, and his fate conclusively exposes the logics of dealing with Jewish refugees in Czecho-Slovakia at the turn of 1938/39. Family and personal networks mattered greatly for Jewish emigrants from post-*Anschluss* Vienna, as Melissa Jane Taylor has demonstrated.<sup>96</sup> When Bader left his hometown after March 1938, it is most likely that he hid his Jewishness from Czech authorities and was considered Austrian of Czech descent, which guaranteed entry to the country. In Czecho-Slovakia, family networks provided both shelter and a persistent recommendation to Bat'a, which eventually was successful because Bader met the qualification criteria. In his file, the company's personnel management underlined his religion with red ink, but none of the actors concerned with his employment, neither Bat'a's clerks nor the Černýs, Bader's uncle or any state officials, mentioned his Jewishness. However, Czech descent was not citizenship and could not secure a work permit. Bader thus mobilized social and cultural capital that addressed hegemonic categories of the Nationalist Second Republic. Moreover, his language skills perfectly matched the company's needs, but what he lacked was professional training and a longstanding employment in Zlín. In the end, he failed to secure a possibly life-saving transfer within the company not for being a Jew, but for being a German national.

### Conclusion: Rational Transfers and Individual Strategies of Mobility

This article brings forward that the transfer of Jewish employees to safe destinations overseas was based on Bat'a's ideology of new industrial men. The detailed process of transferring employees to other Bat'a factories worldwide reflects, first, rational and capitalist logics and, second, the individual capability and agency of those becoming mobile. As discussed above, both factors correlated in many cases but also depended on the dramatically changing political circumstances before World War II and migration or em-

95 Bader Hans. Identity Card Application, in: Databáze Obětí [Database of Victims], 12 January 2016, <<https://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-digitised-documents/document/107857-bader-hans-identity-card-application/>> (1 July 2022).

96 See Melissa Jane Taylor, Family Matters. The Emigration of Elderly Jews from Vienna to the United States, 1938–1941, in: *Journal of Social History* 45 (2011), no. 1, 238–260.

ployment regulations. Consequently, studying the organized transfers of capable personnel provides further insights into Bat'a's social engineering and the human categorization of new industrial men.

With regard to the prevalent narratives of these transfers as a rescue program on the eve of the Holocaust, the significant representation of Jewish employees amongst those transferees in 1938 and 1939 – 11.25 percent of all transferees compared to 0.39 percent of the overall workforce – should not be mistaken for a philosemitic or humanitarian policy. In fact, such narratives exaggerate the number of rescued families, often reproducing postwar statements by Jan Antonín Bat'a himself. Instead, the analysis of individual cases of emigration reveals that migration relied on each employee's qualifications, their social status within the company, and their personal decision within a strictly limited time frame. Highly skilled physicians were most likely to be transferred, while ordinary production workers struggled to receive a transfer, and Jews without a long-standing history of employment with Bat'a also failed to benefit from the decentralization program. In other words, Bat'a transferred new industrial men and their families to new factories across the globe, amongst them also Jews. Personal motives and the immediate threat to their lives coincided with the company's interest in utilizing a trained and capable workforce for its decentralization.

Against this background, the migration of Jewish Bat'a men and families should be considered a situational policy as part of the company's decentralization – especially after November 1938, when Bat'a attempted to solve the “Jewish question” within the company.<sup>97</sup> Many Zlín-based employees benefited from this attempt, receiving patronage, documents, financial support, and job opportunities abroad, without having to rely on other Jewish relief and migration organizations. Similar to other possibilities of flight, such a path privileged well-educated and wealthy employees, while other Jewish employees with Bat'a, for example in Slovakia, were fired for being unsuitable for local representation. It is also important to stress that Bat'a's transfers from Zlín took place before the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia or in the first days of the Protectorate, i. e. before the professional activities of Jewish doctors or managers were confined by racial laws and before Jewish migration from the Protectorate was strictly regulated by the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung in Prague.<sup>98</sup>

These situational and flexible practices stressed that, for the shoe company Bat'a, the individual economic value of an employee and their situational ca-

97 Jan Antonín Bat'a himself used the term in his discursive approximation of antisemitic discourse without adopting any violent approach. See Strobach/Marek, *Batismus a “židovská otázka.”*

98 See Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren*, 55 and 68 f.

pabilities and adaptability determined their future with Bat'a. In the political and economic context of Czechoslovakia in 1938–1939, the categories of such assessment were highly dynamic and could even turn contingent. Zlín's vernacular cosmopolitanism that had characterized the town until 1937 dissolved into a management practice of transferring employees before they lost their professional capacity and value. In this situation, categories of difference, such as nationality and religion, that had been irrelevant before, gained significance and could be employed according to situation. Consequently, the transfer of Jewish employees, firstly, aimed at maintaining the company and, secondly, saved lives.



Avi-ram Tzoreff

“An Imagined ‘Desert’ That Is Indeed the  
Core of the Yishuv”:  
Rabbi Binyamin and the Emergence of Zionist  
Settler-Colonial Policies (1908–1914)

In the beginning of 1908, an article by the Galician-born author and essayist Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, also known as Rabbi Binyamin (1880–1957), who had migrated to Palestine a year before, was published in the newspaper *Ha-mizpe* (The Lookout) in Lwów, Eastern Galicia. In this article, R. Binyamin tried to depict the Palestinian landscape of his new home in Jaffa, which was unknown to the Galician readers of the newspaper in his homeland. A large part of his description was dedicated to his new neighbors, the Arabs, whom he considered partners of a future pan-Semitic joint framework:

“And around us are the Arabs, of our own race [...], how close to us are these people! – At this very moment, the sound of the Arab beadle is reaching me: Wake yourselves for Allah’s work! There is a tower to the mosque and up there, around the tower, there is a banister where the beadle is going around and calls his call to every one of the world’s winds, spurring the worshipers on to pray and beg, five times a day. The voice begins with Oy Vey, turns to ‘Steiger,’ to the trill of ‘Melekh’ in Days of Awe and penetrates your soul. And sometimes – when the sounds of the study of the Quran are reaching your ears – you imagine to hear ‘Abaye said’ [*Amar Abaye*] ...”<sup>1</sup>

The Arab character is expressed here through its voice and music, whose familiarity R. Binyamin considered a manifestation of the strong affinity between Jews and Arabs. The music of the muezzin’s call for prayer is entwined in his ears with the sounds of his own traditions – lament, the Eastern European cantors (the *Steigers*), and the trills on the word “king” (*melekh*) in the prayers of the Jewish Days of Awe.<sup>2</sup> The musicality of the reading of the Quran merges with the tune of the traditional Talmud study, the “Abaye

- 1 Rabbi Binyamin [Yehoshua Radler-Feldman], *Filiton katan. Me-hatam le-hacha u-me-hacha le-hatam I* [Small Feuilleton. From There to Here and from Here to There I], in: *Ha-mizpa* [The Lookout], 31 January 1908, 3.
- 2 On Steigers, see Uri Sharvit, *Ha-masorot ha-musikaliyot she-be'al pe be-kerev kehilot Yisra'el. Darche bedika ve-kivune mehkar* [Oral Musical Traditions in Jewish Communities. Ways of Examination and Research Directions], in: *Pe'amim. Riv'on le-heker kehilot Yisra'el ba-mizrah* [Pe'amim. Quarterly for the Study of Jewish Communities in the Orient] 31 (1987), 132–153.

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said.” R. Binyamin spun in these words the thread that connects Judaism and Islam through the musical affinity of their prayers – their voice, sound, and rhythm. This significance of music as a medium of the Jewish-Arab connection is reflected in another essay of R. Binyamin from the same year, where he described the singing of the Bedouins and fellahin (peasants) during the hot summer nights near the Sea of Galilee (*Bahirat Tabariya* in Arabic or *Kinneret* in Hebrew):

“It is no accident that in the night [...], the locals, be they Bedouins or fellahin, rise and start singing. Alone. Each one is a world to himself and sings to himself. Not in the way of the young Jews, who need a choir, [...] and who knows? Maybe the midnight rectification [*arikhat ḥazot*] of the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem is also nothing but the pulse of the Eastern artery [...] and here [...], I understand, or more accurately absorb, the elegiac tune, which is ongoing and spilling through the distances of this our family member, the great Arab people. I understand his ‘Allah akbar,’ his prayers, his bowing and prostrations.”<sup>3</sup>

R. Binyamin here contrasted the musical ways of expression of the young European Jewish immigrants, whom he stayed with at the Sea of Galilee and who needed a choir to sing, and the lone singing of the Bedouins and fellahin. The traditional Jewish music of *arikhat ḥazot* (*tikkun ḥazot*) he associated with song in the privacy of the home. As the voice of the muezzin, this spontaneous singing awakened in him the memories of the well-known musical structure of the elegiac prayer lamenting the destruction of the Temple. For R. Binyamin, this also signaled parallels between the months of Elul and Ramadan, hence another connection between Judaism and Islam communicated through music.

As opposed to many other Zionists who sought to unravel the ancient Jewish music created in pre-exilic Palestine, such as musicologist Avraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882–1938), R. Binyamin did not refer to the voices of the muezzin, the Bedouins, and the fellahin as echoes of a lost authenticity.<sup>4</sup> He considered their shared origin the basis for the creation of two adjoining musical traditions, whose strong attraction in the present he sought to emphasize. The voice of the muezzin did not bring him back to the musical settings of Bib-

3 R. Binyamin, Av-Elul (mi-rigeshot ha-levav) [Father Elul (On Emotions of the Heart)], in: Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir [The Young Worker], 29 September 1908, 13. On this article, see also Hanan Harif, The “Revival of the East.” Pan-Semitism and Pan-Asianism within Zionist Discourse (unpubl. PhD thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013; Heb.), 105 f.

4 Arie Bruce Saposnik, Europe and Its Orients in Zionist Culture before the First World War, in: The Historical Journal 49 (2006), no. 4, 1105–1123, here 1109 f. and 1113. On Idelsohn, see Noah S. Gerber, Ourselves or Our Holy Books? The Cultural Discovery of Yemenite Jewry, Jerusalem 2013, 122–129 (Heb.); Edwin Seroussi, A Common Basis. The Discovery of the Orient and the Uniformity of Jewish Musical Traditions in the Teaching of Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, in: Pe’amim 100 (2004), 125–146 (Heb.).

lical Palestine. On the contrary, the power of these sounds to penetrate the soul derived from the fact that they bore an aspect of intimacy which carried him from Ottoman Palestine to the Jewish music of his Galician homeland. R. Binyamin was not inclined to perceive the voice of the Arabs as an authentic manifestation of the Jewish ideal of the glorious and “healthy” past, but as the voice of a relative that pointed to the Jewish existence in Europe – an existence he did not depict as negative and in need of a transformation or regeneration. This view stood at the center of R. Binyamin’s criticism of Zionist settler-colonial policies, which are the focus of this article.

The notion of Palestine as a Biblical site usually evoked the absence of Palestinians or their existence as mere shadows, gray manifestations of the Biblical past that was “rediscovered” by European powers – what Lorenzo Kamel calls “Biblical Orientalism.”<sup>5</sup> Kamel has pointed out how this system of knowledge was used by the British evangelical Palestine Exploration Fund as a tool for religiously historicizing Palestine as the Holy Land in an attempt to entrench the British presence in Palestine and justify it through the proclamation of the English as the chosen people.<sup>6</sup> These efforts, as Kamel has shown, were concentrated mainly on Palestinian sites which were connectable to the Old Testament, since the sites linked to the New Testament were already under the control of local Orthodox Christians.

The descriptions of Jewish restoration to Palestine/Erez Yisra’el in Zionist literature, as well, mirrored this reference to Palestine as a Biblical site, and were taken mainly from the Books of Judges and Kings as signs of a sovereign past. The restoration to Palestine was understood as a restoration to the land of the Bible and its values, as well as a return to an “authentic” Jewish existence. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that the secular Zionist notion of return to the Bible, in negating post-Biblical Jewish literature, followed the before-mentioned Anglican Protestant view of Palestine as the Holy Land, while replacing the image of an ancient church with the image of a Biblical sovereign Jewish community.<sup>7</sup>

This reference carried in itself the same perception of the people of the Palestinians as shadows – as an object of fascination and a Biblical model for imitation which, at the same time, was to be replaced by the “right” Bib-

5 Lorenzo Kamel, *The Impact of “Biblical Orientalism” in Late-Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*, in: *New Middle Eastern Studies* 4 (2014), 1–15. See also Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine. Writing Palestinians into History*, in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21 (1992), no. 2, 5–28, here 7–9.

6 Kamel, *The Impact of “Biblical Orientalism,”* 6–8.

7 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exile, History and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory. Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return*, in: *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3 (2013), no. 2, 37–70, here 43–54.

lical heirs.<sup>8</sup> An example for this is the depiction of the study of the Quran by writer Meir Wilkansky as a “remnant of ancient times.”<sup>9</sup> The secular Zionist negation of the recent Jewish past and Jewish exilic culture was strongly connected to the denial of the political collective existence of the Palestinian local population, their depreciation as Biblical shadows, and the aspiration to take their place. The negation of exile alongside the glorification of the Biblical past formed the foundation of the cultural and political transformation that was considered necessary for Jews to undergo as part of the process of their “convalescence.” Against this background, R. Binyamin’s appreciation of both the Galician Jewish traditional music and the Muslim Palestinian one can be understood as an alternative approach.

As in the case of English “Biblical Orientalism,” the Zionist Biblical imagination and its implications for the Palestinians were not limited to the sphere of the cultural, but served as a basis for a set of policies that shaped the ways in which Zionism developed in Palestine. In the same year that R. Binyamin published the article in *Ha-mizpe* (1908), the Zionist Palestinian Office (henceforth PO), which R. Binyamin later worked for, was founded in Jaffa, with Dr. Arthur Ruppín as its first director. Etan Bloom has argued that Ruppín played a major role in organizing and constructing the cultural repertoire of the Zionist Yishuv during these constitutive years – a repertoire that largely determined how it would crystallize in the years to come. This repertoire was characterized by a tendency to create the Yishuv as spatially and economically distinct from its Arab surroundings, and as an organic and pure space that would enable the restoration of “vitality” to the Jewish exilic body – according to the eugenic discourse that Ruppín represented.<sup>10</sup> In order to achieve this goal, Ruppín developed a selective migration program which Orthodox Ashkenazi or Sephardi Jews did not have any place in, and which also served as the basis for the development of ethnic stratification within the Yishuv itself, manifested mainly in the proletarianization of Yemenite Jews following their signification as “natural workers.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the foundation of

8 Ibid., 56.

9 Meir Wilkansky, *Mi-yeme ha-alayah* [From the Days of the Aliyah], in: *Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir*, 20 September 1911, 22.

10 In this context, see also Yfaat Weiss, *Central European Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 11 (2004), no. 1, 93–117, here 105–111; Derek J. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy. The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918*, Bloomington/Indianapolis, Ind., 1991, 80–102.

11 R. Binyamin was one of the PO’s officials in charge of the absorption of the Yemenite Jews. On his ambivalence towards the discourse enhanced by Ruppín, see Avi-ram Tzoreff, *Jewish-Arab Coexistence against the Secular Discourse. Theology, Politics, and Literature in the Writings of Yehoshua Radler-Feldman (R. Binyamin, 1880–1957)* (unpubl. PhD thesis, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2018; Heb.), 201–218.



the PO should be considered a clear turning point in the history of the Zionist Yishuv in Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

Ruppin’s vision was practiced through the adoption of settler-colonial policies that entailed land purchases from absentee landlords and the expulsion of Palestinian fellahin from their lands; the exclusion of the Palestinians from the emerging economy and the creation of a culturally and linguistically segregated sphere within Palestine. As Lev Grinberg and Daniel DeMalach have shown, these policies encouraged the emergence of a new type of colonization model, which they named “confrontational settlement.” It was characterized by the use of physical force against the growing Palestinian resistance to the Zionist land purchases and the displacement of the local population, creating a direct link between the willingness among Jewish settlers to perform agricultural labor and to organize for violent acts in order to achieve the goal of the conquest of land.<sup>13</sup> This process manifested itself, as Rashid Khalidi, Jonathan Gribetz, and Emanuel Beška have demonstrated, in the growing political opposition to Zionism. Throughout the years 1908 to 1914, and particularly in 1910 and 1911, Arab journalists and officials, such as Najib Nassar (1865–1947) and Shukri al-Asali (1878–1916), wrote intensively in protest of increasing land purchases by the Zionist movement and what they considered the Ottoman abandoning of Palestine.<sup>14</sup> This growing awareness among Palestinians of the developments that occurred within the Zionist political course have strengthened the view that the years 1908 – the foundation of the PO – to 1914 – the outbreak of World War I – were formative with regard to Zionist settler-colonial policies and their implications for the Palestinian opposition and Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine. As Areej Sabbagh-Khoury has shown, the examination of Jewish-Arab relations from the perspective of settler-colonialism – a perspective that concentrates on the settlers’ ambition to purchase lands and take the place of its indigenous population – allows for a better understanding of the processes that brought about the mass expulsion of Palestinians in the *Nakba* in 1948, and prevents

12 Etan Bloom, Arthur Ruppin and the Production of Modern Hebrew Culture (unpubl. PhD thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2008; Heb.), 1–26; Gershon Shafir, The Meeting of Eastern Europe and Yemen. “Idealistic Workers” and “Natural Workers” in Early Zionist Settlement in Palestine, in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13 (1990), no. 2, 172–197.

13 Daniel DeMalach/Lev Luis Grinberg, What Happened to the Conquest Groups? A Sociological View of the Violent Struggle over Land in the Lower Galilee 1908–1914, in: *Israeli Sociology. A Journal for the Study of Society in Israel* 20 (2019), no. 2, 59–87 (Heb.).

14 Rashid Khalidi, Palestinian Identity. The Construction of Modern National Consciousness, New York 1997, 89–144; Jonathan Marc Gribetz, Defining Neighbors. Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter, Princeton, N. J., 2014, 85–89, 93, 139–147, 150–156, and 165–169; Emanuel Beška, Political Opposition to Zionism in Palestine and Greater Syria. 1910–1911 as a Turning Point, in: *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59 (2014), 54–67.

seeing it as an isolated event.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, these years are the focus of this article in order to shed light on the development of Zionist settler-colonial policies.

However, it is not only the emergence of these policies which is of interest here, but rather the opposition to them voiced by R. Binyamin from his standpoint as a Zionist and PO official. R. Binyamin was born in Zborów, Galicia, and immigrated to Palestine in 1907. He was one of the fiercest critics of the measures taken to create the Zionist Yishuv in Palestine – known mainly as the “Conquest of Land” and “Conquest of Labor” – which were led by the PO. R. Binyamin – an observant Jew – saw the religious and cultural affinities between Judaism and Islam as a ground for Jewish-Arab cooperation, and criticized the secular Zionist discourse that promoted the idea of a segregated Jewish existence in Palestine. After the war and the establishment of the British Mandate, R. Binyamin was one of the main members of the binational movements, such as Brit Shalom, Kedma-Mizraha, the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement, and Ihud, that called for the construction of a Jewish-Arab joint political framework. Following the Palestinian *Nakba* – the expulsion and the prevention of the return of some 770,000 Palestinian refugees – and the foundation of the State of Israel, R. Binyamin, as the editor of the journal *Ner* (Candle), was one of the few Jews in Israel who called for their return.<sup>16</sup>

Some scholars of R. Binyamin’s work have focused mainly on two of his earlier and well-known writings – *Panshemiyut* (Pan-Semitism, 1903) and *Masa Arav* (An Arabian Prophecy, 1907).<sup>17</sup> Hanan Harif has explored R. Binyamin’s gradual recognition of Semitism as a basis for Jewish-Arab relations in his later essays, and the place that his perception occupied in the circles of the binational movements in which he participated.<sup>18</sup> Hereinafter, the article will shift its focus from the pan-Semitic ideas to the way they were practiced through R. Binyamin’s resistance to PO policies. In doing so, it will center on three aspects: his criticism of the Zionist policies of spatial and economic segregation; his rejection of Zionist representations of Palestinian

15 Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, *Settler Colonialism, the Indigenous Perspective, and Sociology of Knowledge Production*, in: Te’oriah u-bikoret [Theory and Criticism] 50 (2018), 391–418, here 405 f. (Heb.).

16 Tzoreff, *Jewish-Arab Coexistence against the Secular Discourse*, i–viii.

17 Zohar Maor, *Political Moderation from Right to Left. Rabbi Binyamin to the Present*, in: *Zehuyot. Ketav et le-tarbut ve-zehut yehudit* [Identities. Journal of Jewish Culture and Identity] 1 (2011), 41–56 (Heb.); Anita Shapira, *Yosef Haim Brenner/Rabbi Binyamin. Two Approaches to the “Arab Question,”* in: *Religion and Politics in Jewish Thought. Essays in Honor of Aviezer Ravitzky*, 2 vols., here vol. 2, ed. by Benjamin Brown, Me-nachem Lorberbaum, Avinoam Rosenak, and Yedidia Z. Stern, 703–720 (Heb.).

18 Harif, *The “Revival of the East,”* 71–164.

resistance; and his promotion of the study of Arabic in the Yishuv. The last subject will also provide an opportunity to examine R. Binyamin’s intensive writing during the “War of the Languages” (*milḥemet ha-safot*) and his understanding of Hebrew as a native and non-colonial language. This turn towards R. Binyamin’s opposition in these formative years of settler-colonial Zionist policies may constitute an interesting and important case study for, in Raef Zreik’s words, the moment when “the settler stays but colonization goes.”<sup>19</sup>

## R. Binyamin on Zionist Spatial and Economic Segregation

In his memoir, *Mi-Zborow ve-ad Kinneret* (From Zborów to Kinneret, 1949), R. Binyamin wrote about his decision to participate in the foundation of a farm in Dleka, referring to Menachem Shenkin’s surprise to this decision with the words, “How come that you go to a place of Bedouins and malaria which is far from the Yishuv.” R. Binyamin sought to unravel the origins of Shenkin’s anxieties and described the way in which his own experience alongside the Arabs had diminished such fears:

“He remembers how, before he migrated to Palestine [...], he listened to the same fears: Palestine is in wild Turkey, there is no security, neither for your life nor for your property [...]. [A]nd here he is more than a year in the Sharon. And he feels like a fish in the water. The moon, the orchards, the smells of perfume, the view of the sea and its waves; the appearance of the Arabs, their black hair, their voice, their walk. He walks between them as one who walks between his own relatives. As if he was born here. One month he lived [...] in Ajami. He used to walk alone at night after midnight. Nothing ever happened. The Arabs were sitting in the coffee houses [...]. Once when he visited Kfar-Saba, [...] he stayed late. In the night, he wandered in the direction of his home. He reached a place of Bedouins who were celebrating, and one of them accompanied him for a long hour and showed him the way.”<sup>20</sup>

R. Binyamin ascribed Shenkin’s anxieties to the European discourse that depicted the East, including the Ottoman Empire, as a wild and uncivilized world, a scary and frightening place. Unlike this narrative, which continued to provide the basis for the Zionist alienation from its surroundings within

19 Raef Zreik, When Does a Settler Become a Native? (With Apologies to Mamadani), in: *Constellations* 23 (2016), no. 3, 351–364, here 357.

20 R. Binyamin, *Mi-Zborow ve-ad Kinneret*. *Pirke zichronot* [From Zborów to Kinneret. Memories], Tel Aviv 1949, 220 f. On R. Binyamin’s literary choice to use the third person in his memoir, see Tzoreff, *Jewish-Arab Coexistence against the Secular Discourse*, 64–76.

Palestine, R. Binyamin presented an alternative of integration on Palestinian ground. While other Second-Aliyah immigrants might have agreed with his view of Palestinian Arabs sharing the same origins, as part of their vision of restoration to the East, most of them did not see the present similarities between Jews and Arabs as he did. To them, the Arabs were mere “remnants” of a Biblical “ancient period” (*tekufa kadmoniya*).<sup>21</sup> Hence they lacked R. Binyamin’s broader perception of a possible Jewish-Arab coexistence in the same space. The security R. Binyamin felt derived from his feeling that he was not alien to the new place but rather familiar like “a fish in the water” – in his eyes, the Palestinian landscapes were not the ones to level the European homelands, but to give the feeling of being at home.

The landscape that R. Binyamin depicts is not ethnically homogeneous, but rather one that serves as a background for encounters between Jews and Arabs. His residence in Ajami, a neighborhood that symbolized the urban expansion of Jaffa beyond the walls of the old city and was considered one of the most beautiful and spacious in the new city, reflected his resistance to the segregationist tendencies that directed the development of the Zionist Yishuv and the way in which he saw the joint urban Jewish-Arab coexistence as an alternative model. This inclination towards the Ottoman-style coexistence in the city demonstrates R. Binyamin’s proximity to the attitudes held at the time by the local Jewish, mainly Sephardi, population, who criticized the policies of the Zionist movement. Their continuing self-identification as Ottoman citizens played a major role in the formulation of this criticism.<sup>22</sup> R. Binyamin’s attitude was also rooted in his Galician past, where he engaged with the model of coexisting imperial, regional, and national centers of identification.<sup>23</sup> His affinity to Ajami can be considered an opposition to the rationale that guided the foundation of Tel Aviv, which was built, like other colonial cities, as an urban space explicitly different from its original city, Jaffa. This also shaped its social fabric, in which the Arabs of Jaffa had

21 Saposnik, *Europe and Its Orient in Zionist Culture before the First World War*, 1109 f. and 1113; Wilkansky, *Mi-yeme ha-aliah*, 22.

22 Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers. Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*, Stanford, Calif., 2011; Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire. Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule*, Syracuse, N. Y., 2011, 31–40 and 53–60; Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common. Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Hebron*, transl. by Haim Watzman, Oxford/New York 2014; Hillel Cohen, *The Life and Death of the Arab-Jew. Eretz Israel-Palestine and Beyond*, in: *Iyunim bitkumat Israel. Thematic Series 9* (2015), 171–200, here 180–185 (Heb.).

23 On the commonalities of the perceptions that developed in the multinational imperial sphere, see Israel Bartal, *Cossack and Bedouin. “Land” and “People” in Jewish Nationalism*, Tel Aviv 2007, 152–169 (Heb.).

no place.<sup>24</sup> This negation of Jaffa was a negation of both its Arab and Jewish residents – an indicator of how both the Arab existence in Palestine as well as the traditional Jewish existence in Palestine were perceived by the Zionist movement. R. Binyamin refers to this perception in his criticism of the Hebrew press and its focus on Tel Aviv and the colonies (*moshavot*):

“And if you want to know the relation of ‘Tel Aviv’ to Jerusalem, you only need to go through the latest issue of *Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir* [...]. [I]n this double issue [...], only one city is treated in terms of ‘it shall not be mentioned and shall not count’ – Jerusalem. For the ‘Tel Aviv’ chronicle, there is no Jerusalem in the world and nothing has happened there in two weeks, [...] Jerusalem is not comparable, with all its tens of thousands of Jews, thousands of craftsmen and workers, tens of schools and important institutions, even to Be’er Ya’akov and Nes Ziona. By the way: The coverage of Jaffa is also interesting. You pass through the four long reports and you do not find anything about Jaffa. Everything concerns ‘Tel Aviv’ and its successful residents. [...] [W]hat does it teach us? It teaches us that there is a line that distinguishes the nine thousand Jews who live in the city [of Jaffa] and the upper ‘thousand’ of the ‘lower heaven.’ It teaches us that the residents of this heaven lost any connection and relation to the simple Jews.”<sup>25</sup>

According to R. Binyamin, *Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir* (The Young Worker) was a symbol of what the Yishuv was becoming. Tel Aviv was at the center of this new Yishuv, a distinct urban sphere alongside the segregated colonies, completely disconnected from the local Jewish people, who were not considered partners of the collective framework envisioned by the Zionist leadership. The self-image of the residents of Tel Aviv, he claimed, was that of a sort of high society, who had the authority to determine the structure of Jewish existence in Palestine. They drew the boundaries of the Yishuv – beyond which remained the majority of Palestinian Jews: craftsmen, urban workers, and teachers who were not part of the new city and did not fit the cultural ideal of the new Jew. This unequal treatment by the newspaper of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv was matched by a similarly unequal treatment of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, as the residents of the latter colonial garden city – an insignificant minority in this large urban landscape – occupied its main interest. This demarcation, according to R. Binyamin, of Tel Aviv from the shared Jewish-Arab urban spaces of Jaffa and Jerusalem demonstrated the ways in which the spatial segregation policy of the PO targeted both the local Arab and Jewish populations.

24 Ruth Kerk, Yafo. *Zemihata shel ir, 1799–1917* [Jaffa. The Growth of a City, 1799–1917], Jerusalem 2003, 86–115; Rachel Hart, *So Close So Far Away. Jewish-Arab Relations in Jaffa and Tel Aviv, 1881–1930*, Tel Aviv 2014, 32–43 (Heb.).

25 R. Binyamin, *Sofismus shel zekhuyot* [Sophism of Rights], in: *Ha-herut* [The Freedom], 13 May 1914, 2.

An example for this segregationist logic is found in an essay published in 1912 by Asher Zvi Ginsberg, also known as Aḥad Ha'am (1856–1927), titled *Sakh ha-kol* (All in All). In this essay, he depicts the Jewish colonies in Palestine as “spots” in-between which the traveler moves. There are “lots of fields and villages of gentiles,” but the traveler “sees the *shetaḥ ha-hefsek* [break zone] as if it is nothing but an empty desert.”<sup>26</sup> R. Binyamin published an indignant reply shortly afterwards, challenging this portrayal of an Arab “break zone” and “empty desert”:

“A Jew who lives in Palestine, passes from one place to another, and meets the break zone every single day, cannot relate to it as a desert and to renounce it in his passing thoughts as any leavened food [*ḥamez*] that someone owns. The heart of the Palestinian Jew is now shrinking in light of this awful desert – an imagined ‘desert’ that is indeed the core of the Yishuv. [...] This aspiration to create a settlement that provides a kind of ‘safe shelter,’ and sees in front of itself only this tiny hope to conquer another point and another point, and rejoices like someone who finds great spoil if it succeeds to remove another point from the ‘break zone,’ while not paying attention to the fact that this success in itself [...] becomes an ‘accusing devil’ [...]. They [the leaders of the Yishuv] are closing their eyes in front of the break zone, closing their ears in order to not hear the murmur of hatred that starts to penetrate the hearts and blood of those hundreds of thousands of people, and when they willingly become blind and deaf and gather within their separated spots, they imagine that they have done something great and that victory is in front of them.”<sup>27</sup>

Using the image of *ḥamez* – the leavened food that is not permitted during Passover – R. Binyamin criticized the way in which the Arab villages of the “break zone” or “desert” in-between the “spots” of Jewish settlements were seen as a presence to be removed or ignored while creating distinct and separate Jewish national spaces. According to R. Binyamin, Zionist institutions considered the Arab environs an “awful desert,” which they sought to control and strip of its “Arabness” in order to establish new Jewish “spots” on its soil. From their perspective, the fact that Jewish settlements slowly devoured the perceived nothingness around them was a victory. R. Binyamin saw in this a misconception of “the core of the Yishuv” which would awaken the resistance of the Arabs. They would not stand by and watch while the Zionist institutions wiped them off their own map. The logic of spatial segregation, which debased the Arab space as a “break zone,” fueled the Palestinians’ hatred towards the Zionists. R. Binyamin suggested an alternative model of a shared space that would form “the core of the Yishuv” – a space that included different national collectives and was not based on the correlation between

26 Aḥad Ha'am, *Sakh ha-kol* [All in All], in: *Kol kitve Aḥad Ha'am* [All Writings of Aḥad Ha'am], ed. and introduced by Ḥayim Yehuda Ruth, Jerusalem 1954, here 427.

27 R. Binyamin, *Be-reshit* [In the Beginning], in: idem (ed.), *Bentayim. Kovez safuti* [In the Meantime. Literary Collection], Jaffa 1912, 97.

nation and territory.<sup>28</sup> It was his experience of urban Jewish-Arab coexistence in Ajami as well as his continuing impression of the “old Yishuv” that informed his vision.

One of the main principles of the emerging settler-colonial policy of spatial segregation and the development of the agricultural settlements was that of the “conquest of labor,” the provision of work to Jewish settlers. In his exchange with Aḥad Ha’am, R. Binyamin depicted the leaders of the Zionist institutions as people who saw “their mission and their obligation in an increase of actual labor and [...] do not come to discuss especially this issue [Jewish-Arab relations and the Zionist spatial logic], which requires a complete change of the situation and which can turn the obstacle into a cliff of hope.” In an essay he published on Rosh ha-Shanah 1913 in *Ha-herut* (The Freedom), a newspaper whose editors and majority of writers were local Sephardis, R. Binyamin sharply criticized this principle and its spatial implications, while relating to the passionate descriptions of the young workers in the agricultural settlements:

“Self-labor is a necessity. But it is not the only one [...]. The Yishuv also has life. Its life depends on several conditions. One of them is the creation of good and desirable relations with the people that live in this land. It seems that, in the beginning of building this Yishuv, we must add: ‘For the sin we have committed against the indigenous population of the land’ [...]. It seems that the settling method of our days, which is based [...] on the politics of an ostrich, [...] is inadequate and defective.”<sup>29</sup>

An uncompromising adherence to the principle of the conquest of labor, and the attempt to recreate the Jew as a native peasant, became the basis of a method whose implications were neglected. By focusing all efforts of the Zionist movement on creating separate Hebrew labor, the institutions of the Yishuv completely overlooked existing Jewish-Arab relations. In this, and what it meant for the development of the Yishuv, R. Binyamin saw the main sin of the Zionist leadership.

It bears noting that R. Binyamin was not the only critic of the Zionist Hebrew labor policy. Several First-Aliyah immigrants, such as Zalman David Levontin (1856–1940) and Aaron Aaronsohn (1876–1919), also opposed it. They, however, saw the use of Arab labor as a means to establish Jewish settlements and then develop the Jewish population into an elite of agricul-

28 R. Binyamin was not the only one who opposed the settler-colonial spatial policies of the PO and gave a voice to the Palestinian opposition. Notably, Yitzhak Epstein was the first to speak out against these tendencies, before the foundation of the PO, in his speech from 1905 with the title *The Hidden Question*, which was published in 1907. See also Yosef Gorny, *The Arab Question and the Jewish Problem*, Tel Aviv 1985, 47–55. Gorny named this approach “the altruist-integrationist approach,” while ignoring the settler-colonial policies that served as the object of this critique.

29 R. Binyamin, *Tora hi’ ...* [Torah Is ...], in: *Ha-herut*, 27 October 1913, 2.

tural specialists.<sup>30</sup> R. Binyamin, on the other hand, viewed the Jewish-Arab relations as an integral part of Zionist objectives and therefore emphasized the ways in which the Zionist policy of “conquest of labor” was perceived by Palestinians.

His 1913 essay in *Ha-herut* attracted the objection of Nechama Pochachevsky (1869–1934), who called him a man from the city who spoke pompously about the “settlement method.”<sup>31</sup> In his response, R. Binyamin countered that, ironically, even from an urban Jew’s perspective, it was “unfortunately of more public interest when a fly is removed from one worker’s forehead than the question of the relations between one people and another.” Regarding to Pochachevsky’s claim that the Arabs benefitted from the modern agricultural methods that Jewish settlements brought along, he replied that

“the question is how we brought them along. There is a legend to Yisra’el about one man who feeds his father toasted pigeons on a daily basis while another employs him in hard labor and, unexpectedly, the latter is the one who observed the commandment of ‘honor thy father’ properly.”

R. Binyamin vigorously rejected the Jewish claim about the goods they brought to the land and understood it as just another attempt to camouflage their “patronizing [...] coquetry [...] and scornful attitudes towards others.” R. Binyamin called for a change to a different settlement method which the Palestinian Arabs would “be pleased with.”<sup>32</sup>

R. Binyamin’s reaction to Aḥad Ha’am’s essay reveals that he regarded the PO’s settler-colonial policies of “conquest of land” and “conquest of labor” – which found their expression in the foundation of Tel Aviv as a colonial garden city and establishment of segregated Jewish agricultural settlements – as major cause for the growing anti-Zionist attitudes among Palestinians. In turn, R. Binyamin presented the Jewish-Arab coexistence in urban centers as a model of integration. In doing so, he demonstrated the connection that existed within the secular Zionist discourse between the negation of the Arab existence and the negation of the Palestinian Jewish indigenous population and its different spatial patterns. The negation of Ajami was, at the same time, the negation of Jaffa’s nine thousand Jews.

30 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 134 f.

31 Ikara (Nechama Pochachevsky), *Al het* [For the Sin] in: *Ha-herut*, 5 November 1913, 2.

32 R. Binyamin, *Tora hi’ ... (B)* [Torah Is ... (B)], in: *Ha-herut*, 11 November 1913, 2.



## R. Binyamin on Zionist Representations of Palestinian Resistance

The ways in which the resistance of the Palestinian fellahin against the Jewish settlers was perceived illuminates another aspect of R. Binyamin’s position on the hegemonic Zionist discourse and its segregationist tendencies. In 1911, R. Binyamin was one of the editors of *Yizkor* (May He Remember), a memorial volume published in honor of eight Zionists who had died in clashes with the Palestinian fellahin. R. Binyamin’s introduction to the volume – an exception rather than representation of the whole collection – resisted the depiction of these deaths as a sign of Jewish land ownership that was obtained by the blood spilled on it. Instead, he saw the urgent need to create a framework for Jewish-Arab relations to avoid such incidents in the future:<sup>33</sup>

“If in cases of malaria outbreaks we were able to console ourselves, [...] here our spirits are so depressed in light of these new graves, which were dug by humans, by brothers, by a people related by race – and without any grounds or right reason. [...] We returned to our homeland imbued with feelings of love to this people. Long enough, we endured the Aryan peoples’ despotism. We know that Hashem, god of Yisra’el and the god of the whole world, is calling on us and the Arabs to unite in a joint work. [...] We are sure now, as well, that in the end the Arabs will acknowledge, that, just like during the enlightened era in Spain, when Hebrews and Arabs worked together with one accord and through their combined strength brought to the world hidden treasures from all the spheres of culture, so now, their development depends [...] on working together with us.”<sup>34</sup>

It is, of course, important to emphasize that R. Binyamin did not depict the tragedy of their deaths as an outcome of the Zionist policies and growing Palestinian opposition to them, as he had done in his before-mentioned response to *Aḥad Ha’am*. On the contrary, he shows this incident as lacking any reason and rational justification. Four years before, in 1907, Yitzhak Epstein (1863–1943) had already warned of the growing hostility towards the Yishuv, caused by incidents of expulsion of fellahin from their lands, recurring over and over, and had demanded that, in all cases of land purchase, the fellahin should remain on those lands.<sup>35</sup> In light of this early critique, and R. Binyamin’s later writings, this depiction of irrational violence can be

- 33 Yonatan Frenkel mentions the common use of the metaphor of the blood that penetrates the land in various essays in the volume. Yonatan Frenkel, *Sefer “ha-yizkor” mi-shenat 1911. He’ara al mitosim le’umiim bi-tekufat ha-aliyah ha-shniyah* [The Yizkor Book from 1911. A Comment on National Myths in the Years of the Second Aliyah], in: *Yahdut Zemanenu* [Contemporary Jewry] 4 (1988), 67–95, here 74 f. See also Harif, *The “Revival of the East,”* 116.
- 34 A[lexander] Z[iskind] Rabinovich (ed.), *Yizkor. Māzevat zikaron le-ḥalele ha-po’alim ha-ivrim be-Erez Yisra’el* [May He Remember. A Memorial to the Works of the Hebrew Workers in Erez Yisra’el], Jaffa 1911, 4 f.
- 35 Yitzhak Epstein, *She’ela ne’elama* [A Question Disappeared], in: *Ha-shiloah* [The Sending] 17 (1907), 193–206.

seen as an example of how close he was himself to the Zionist hegemonic discourse and the limitations it imposed on his views. He departs from this discourse, however, by rejecting the way these violent incidents were framed by Zionists as evidence that the ongoing violent struggle was unavoidable and to justify the Yishuv's segregationist policies and aggressive actions.

R. Binyamin's introduction was fiercely attacked by one of the leaders of the Po'ale Zion movement, Ya'akov Zerubavel (1886–1967), who found it “ingratiating” and “apologetic,” and claimed that it revealed the powerful influence of the exile, which “has gained ground within the Israelite's spirit.”<sup>36</sup> For Zerubavel, the aspiration of a joint Jewish-Arab framework in Palestine was an echo of an exilic and submissive Judaism and he revealed in this perspective the connection that existed between the Zionist notion of the negation of Exile, the perception of the land as something empty, and the existence of the Arabs as a problem to be solved.<sup>37</sup> R. Binyamin's opinion was going in the opposite direction, and thus he replied:

“These people that dealt with the editing of this book will not deny the certain fact that the exilic essence controls them. A history of more than two thousand years cannot be erased by mere utterance ... [A] change of place is still not a change of spirit [...]. Is it true that only the Jew apologizes? The one who is a little bit familiar with the experiences of peoples knows how much every people apologizes [...]. [T]he writer of this column keeps thinking that our settlement work should be practiced alongside the Arabs. [...] [T]he events of a momentary confrontation do not say much.”<sup>38</sup>

While for Zerubavel, exile was something that must be neutralized, R. Binyamin described it as an integral part of his personality. In that, he distanced himself from the hegemonic Zionist “time-consciousness,” unprepared to go through the spiritual transformation that was considered inseparable from the spatial transformation. R. Binyamin's refusal to become accustomed to the denial of exile – that is to say to the denial of his own selfhood – constituted the origin of his resistance to the logic of spatial segregation. It bears noting that R. Binyamin's embracement of exile did not imply a justification of the Jewish existence in Europe; it came rather down to his very different understanding of an “exilic” Jewish existence in Palestine itself. He viewed this Jewish existence

- 36 Ya'akov Zerubavel, Yizkor (Shivrei ra'ayonot, B) [May He Remember (Fragments of Ideas, B)], in: Ha-aḥdut [The Unity], 9 January 1912, 17 f. On the debate, see Frenkel, Sefer “ha-yizkor” mi-shenat 1911, 67–96; Anita Shapira, Land and Power. The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948, Tel Aviv 1992, 109–121 (Heb.); Meir Chazan, Moderation. The Moderate View in Ha-po'el Ha-za'ir and Mapai, 1905–1945, Tel Aviv 2009, 57–62 (Heb.).
- 37 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Exile within Sovereignty. Critique of “The Negation of Exile” in Israeli Culture, in: Zvi Ben-Dor Benite/Stefanos Geroulanos/Nicole Jerr (eds.), The Scaffolding of Sovereignty. Global and Aesthetic Perspectives on the History of a Concept, New York 2017, 411–413. See also Frenkel, Sefer “ha-yizkor” mi-shenat 1911, 86–89.
- 38 R. Binyamin, Al odot Yizkor [On Yizkor], in: Ha-po'el Ha-za'ir, 24 January 1912, 12.

in Palestine not as a reawakening of a glorious Biblical past, but as a journey to the present land to join its people as a fulfillment of a pan-Semitic connection.

R. Binyamin stood by his views in a heated debate that erupted after an incident in the village of Zarnuqa occurring on 23 July 1913: Arabs had entered one of the vineyards of Rishon le-Zion and got caught taking grapes by one of the guards. They had managed to grab his weapon and to run off. The residents of Zarnuqa had then clashed with the Jewish guards of the colony, the members of the Zionist militia Ha-shomer, leading to the death of two Jews and one Arab.<sup>39</sup> In an article that was published a week after, Yosef Aharonovich (1877–1937) criticized the Jewish colonists of Rehovot, whom he accused of cynical behavior in that “the Arabs of Zarnuqa returned to their work in Rehovot the same day.” Aharonovich considered the continued employment of Arabs a desecration of the name of Shmuel Friedman, the guard who had been killed during the confrontation, and a sign of indignity and lack of self-respect on the part of Rehovot’s residents. According to Aharonovich, the clash showed yet again that the segregation promoted by PO and labor movements was justified.<sup>40</sup> In his reply to Aharonovich, R. Binyamin reminded him that an Arab had been killed, as well, and sarcastically threw the claim of cynical behavior back at him:

“A rumor says that an Arab was killed too (or at least could have been killed) and if so, there is room to think about Arab cynicism as well, since on that day they went to do Yisra’el’s labor, and tomorrow they might go to sell [the Jewish settlers] some of their fields. How contemptible they are!”<sup>41</sup>

Seeking to add the facts missing from Aharonovich’s one-sided discussion, who framed the incident as one caused by the Arabs’ “wild situation,” R. Binyamin argued that violence broke out only when armed Jewish settlers began chasing

39 Pele, Rehovot, in: Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir, 25 July 1913, 15. This incident became a basis for a conflict between the residents of Rehovot, who were First-Aliyah immigrants, and the guards from the Ha-shomer organization. Following this conflict, the guards left Rehovot. The petitions of the residents of Zarnuqa to the Ottoman capital Istanbul show how differently they considered their relations with the colony before and after the beginning of Ha-shomer’s activity in the colony. See Ya’akov Ro’ie, *Yahase Rehovot im shkhenea ha-aravim (1890–1914) [The Relationship of Rehovot with Its Arab Neighborhood (1890–1914)]*, in: Ha-ziyonut [Zionism] 1 (1970), 150–203, esp. 197; Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Rural Reactions to Zionist Activity in Palestine before and after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 as Reflected in Petitions to Istanbul*, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2013), no. 3, 349–363; Chazan, *Moderation*, 62–64.

40 Tmidi [Yosef Aharonovich], *Le-inyane ha-sha’a [On the Issue of Time]*, in: Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir, 1 August 1913, 3 f. Hazan did not refer to Aharonovich’s claims of the “exilic” character of Rehovot’s residents that “kiss their beaters,” and discussed mainly Aharonovich’s resistance to the issue of endangering life for insignificant incidents such as theft as a manifestation of his “moderation” – a questionable claim given Aharonovich’s statement that, “[a]nyway, the language of the whip must be understandable to them.”

41 R. Binyamin, *Bi-sha’at kerit’ah [At Reading Hour]*, in: Ha-herut, 11 August 1913, 2.

the grape “thieves,” who were now likely to be dead. The surprising return of the Arabs of Zarnuqa to their work in the Jewish colonies might be considered as the manifestation of the Arabs’ “exilic” character and signaled obsequiousness before the powerful Jews. The whole story of this confrontation revealed the gaps in Aharonovich’s narrative, who sought to use it for justifying the segregation policy. R. Binyamin’s argumentation did not merely aim at promoting Jewish-Arab coexistence and cooperation at all costs, despite the violence, but at fostering an understanding for the motivations of the Palestinian resistance.

His own awareness of a growing Arab opposition, then, derived from his ability to read Palestinian newspapers. This leads us to another aspect of R. Binyamin’s criticism of the settler-colonial policies: the lack of Arabic knowledge.

### Arabic Creates a “Lasting Connection” to this Land

Yehouda Shenhav has claimed that the Hebrew language that was developed in the Zionist discourse and based on the European-Christian tradition of secularism and return to the Bible, renounced the linguistic dialogue that had existed between Hebrew and Arabic during the post-Biblical periods, and was reconstructed as a distinct and “pure” national language.<sup>42</sup> The Hebrew-Arabic linguistic dialogue, as Yonatan Mendel has shown, thus seemed a threat to the purity of Hebrew as a national language.<sup>43</sup> Itzhak Bezalet, Abigail Jacobson, Yuval Evri, and Moshe Behar have all argued that the issue of the knowledge of Arabic was an important site of polemics between the local Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, First-Aliyah immigrants, and Zionist institutions.<sup>44</sup> The Sephardi Jews saw the Zionist failure to acquire Arabic as a

42 Yehouda Shenhav, *The Politics and Theology of Translation. How Do We Translate Nakba from Arabic to Hebrew*, in: *Israeli Sociology* 14 (2012), no. 1, 157–184, here 161.

43 Yonatan Mendel, *Ha-safa ha-aravit [The Arabic Language]*, in: *Mafteah [Key]* 9 (2016), 31–51, here 33 f. See, e. g., Ish Ivri, *Hashash [Fear]*, in: *Ha-shiloah* 17 (1907), 594–596.

44 Itzhak Bezalet, *Noladetem ziyonim. Ha-sefaradim be-Erez Yisra’el ba-ziyonut u-va-tehiya ha-ivrit ba-tekuvah ha-Otma’anit [You Were Born Zionists. Sephardim in Israel in Zionism and Hebrew Revival in the Ottoman Period]*, *Jerusalem* 2008, 255; Abigail Jacobson, *Jews Writing in Arabic. Shimon Moyal, Nissim Malul and the Mixed Palestinian/Eretz Israeli Locale*, in: Yuval Ben-Bassat/Eyal Ginio (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine. The Period of the Young Turk Rule*, London 2011, 165–182; Abigail Jacobson, *Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the “Arab Question” in Pre-First World War Palestine. A Reading of Three Zionist Newspapers*, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 39 (2003), no. 2, 105–130; Yuval Evri, *Translating the Arab-Jewish Tradition. From Al-Andalus to Palestine/Land of Israel*, Berlin 2016; idem, *The Return to Al-Andalus. Disputes over Sephardic Culture and Identity between Arabic and Hebrew*, Jerusalem 2020, 150–193; Moshe Behar, 1911. *The Birth of the Mizrahi-Ashkenazi Controversy*, in: *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 16 (2017), no. 2, 312–331.

sign of disrespect for the Arabs and ignorance of their growing opposition to Zionism. The clearest manifestation of this opposition were several articles published in Palestinian and other Arab newspapers, which the Zionists, for a long time, did not bother to read themselves.

An important example for how Arabic was perceived and the ways in which this issue reflected broader cultural questions can be found in a debate sparked by the initiative for the foundation of a Jewish newspaper in Arabic in 1911 – a debate that Behar has identified as “the birth of the Mizrahi-Ashkenazi controversy.”<sup>45</sup> Shimon Moyal (1866–1915) and Nissim Malul (1892–1959), who were the initiators of the newspaper, saw it as an important tool to create an understanding for Zionist goals among the Arabs – “to explain to the whole of our Ottoman brothers, the local residents, that we have not come to damage but to improve” – to use Malul’s words.<sup>46</sup> Malul and Moyal were excoriated by Avraham Ludvipul (1865–1921), who suspected the goal of assimilation behind the initiative, based on his European Jewish experience, where the use of the majority language meant in itself the erasure of another distinct language.<sup>47</sup> In his response to Ludvipul’s criticism, Moyal presented the Ottoman Jewish experience as one characterized by coexisting imperial, regional, and national centers of identification, in which the use of the language of the region’s majority (Arabic) did not carry the meaning of “the melting of all races into a general society.”<sup>48</sup> Malul added another aspect two years after the controversy, when he claimed that “through the Arabic [...] we can create a real Hebrew culture.”<sup>49</sup> The acquisition of Arabic was seen by Malul as a crucial factor in the crystallization of a Semitic Jewish nationalism.

The development of the Palestinian press was one of the reasons behind Moyal and Malul’s initiative. The renewal of the constitution in 1908 had brought about a fast development of the Arab press and the foundation of new newspapers in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.<sup>50</sup> Rashid Khalidi has shown the important place that was occupied by the Palestinian press in leading the Palestinian opposition to Zionism. Newspapers such as *al-Karmil*

45 Behar, 1911; Jacobson, *Jews Writing in Arabic*, 165–182; Evri, *The Multiple Faces of “Sephardiut” at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (unpubl. PhD thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2013; Heb.), 128–154.

46 Nissim Ya’akov Malul, *Al dvar yisud iton aravi (B.) [On the Basics of an Arab Newspaper (B.)]*, in: *Ha-herut*, 25 October 1911, 2.

47 Avraham Ludvipul, *Me-inyane ha-yom [On Today’s Issues]*, in: *Ha-or [The Light]*, 4 October 1911, 1.

48 Shimon Moyal, *Al dvar yisud iton aravi be-Erez Yisra’el [On the Basics of an Arab Newspaper in Erez Yisra’el]*, in: *Ha-herut*, 19 October 1911, 1.

49 Nissim Ya’akov Malul, *Ma’amadenu ba-Arez (sof) [Our Status in Erez Yisra’el (End)]*, in: *Ha-herut*, 19 June 1913, 2.

50 Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East. A History*, New York 1995, 50–72.

(The Mount Carmel) and *Falastin* (Palestine) reported on a daily basis about land purchases and the expulsion of fellahin, and warned of the dangers that arose from the Zionist policy of the conquest of land. The discussions about Zionist policies were not limited to Palestinian newspapers only, but attracted great attention by newspapers in Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo as well, including *al-Muqtabas* (The Selection), *al-Ahram* (The Pyramids), and *al-Mu'fid* (The Useful), leading centers of Arab journalism. The authors critically discussed the segregationist orientation of the Yishuv and its rejection of any relationship with the local Palestinian population.<sup>51</sup>

Eventually, the opposition to the Zionist movement, as manifesting itself in the reports of the Palestinian press as well as the circulation of newspapers – the editors of *Falastin*, for example, sent a copy of every issue of their newspaper to every village – could no longer be ignored by the official Zionist institutions. As Ya'akov Ro'ie has shown, in 1910, the PO began to try and collect information about articles critical of the Yishuv, and later created a dedicated department operating within the press bureau that was founded near the PO office. This department was staffed by three people: Malul, an insider of Arab journalistic circles, especially in Egypt and Lebanon; Aharon Mani, who translated the articles from the Arabic, wrote contributions that responded to debates in the Arab press, and criticized Zionist policies alongside Malul; and R. Binyamin, who oversaw the department's operations and translated into German.<sup>52</sup>

The department's foundation can indeed be considered a milestone in what Shenhav and Mendel have described as the process of excluding the Arabic language and signifying it as the language of the other, the enemy. In this context, the acquisition of the language was seen as a purely strategic asset in the diplomatic negotiations of Palestinian claims and to ensure the continued development of the Zionist settlement. By making the knowledge of Arabic a field of expertise – “Arabic as Latin,” to use Mendel's words – it served the segregationist Zionist policy in creating two different linguistic spheres, one of which was to exist under the supervision of experts, rather than having a bridge of translation across both.<sup>53</sup> However, to Malul, Mani, and R. Binyamin, the engagement with the Arab press and acquisition of Arabic were the foundations of a common Jewish-Arab space. And the appointment of

51 Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 119–122; Beška, *Political Opposition to Zionism in Palestine and Greater Syria*.

52 Ya'akov Ro'ie, *Niseyonotehem shel ha-mosadot ha-ziyoniim le-hashpi'a al ha-itonut ha-aravit be-Erez Yisra'el ba-shanim 1908–1914* [Zionist Endeavors to Influence the Arab Press in Palestine, 1908–1914], in: *Zion* 32 (1967), no. 3–4, 201–227, here 213–225.

53 Mendel, *Ha-safa ha-aravit*, 37.

Malul – one of the fiercest critics of the Zionist position towards Arabic – as an expert for the PO, set the department off in a very different direction.

In R. Binyamin’s later essays, where he described his work in the department, he presented it as his first opportunity to become aware of the political and cultural tendencies crystallizing among Palestinians – he saw this work as part of an attempt “to utilize any chance for connection” with the Arabs.<sup>54</sup> This description, which was written under the impression of the catastrophic expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 and the prevention of their return, demonstrates how R. Binyamin sought not to turn the department into a symbol for the instrumentalization of Arabic as strategic asset, but into the foundation of Jewish-Arab coexistence and cooperation for which the knowledge of Arabic was a necessity. In several essays that he published during his time at the department, he strongly criticized the neglect of Arabic in the Yishuv. These papers show his identification with the Sephardi intellectuals, with whom he also shared his workplace and who saw the multiplicity of languages not as a threat to the purity of Hebrew, but as just another manifestation of the imperial setting of coexisting centers of identification.

One example revealing this perception is found in R. Binyamin’s response to an article that was published in 1910 by Kadish Yehuda Silman (1880–1937), titled *As Long as the Time Has Not Yet Passed!*. Silman scathed an initiative of the Odessa Committee to organize evening classes in Arabic for the Jews who migrated to Palestine. The flourishing of the Arab press and literature was, according to Silman, a “spiritual danger” that threatened the developing Hebrew literature and press. The study of the Arabic language and literature was considered by him a recipe for assimilation or, more accurately, for the abandonment of the Hebrew language in favor of Arabic, French – which was taught in the schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) – and Yiddish.<sup>55</sup> In his exchange with Silman, R. Binyamin rejected his attempt to base the need for the advancement of Hebrew and its literature on the so-called threat by Arabic. He thus called on Silman to follow the Arabs as a role-model rather than oppose their literature as competition, writing that “the Arabs are doing what they should do, they light the candle of their soul and start to develop their spiritual assets, thus we must gird our power and do the same for our own soul as well.”<sup>56</sup> These languages, claimed

54 R. Binyamin, *Be-ritmat ha-ahava* [The Harness of Love], in: *Ner* [Candle] 4 (1953), no. 12, 7.

55 Kadish Yehuda Silman, *Kol od l’o avar ha-mo’ed!* [As Long as the Time Has Not Yet Passed!], in: *Ha-shiloah* 22 (1910), 391–394.

56 R. Binyamin, *Al ha-medokha III. Kol od l’o avar ha-mo’ed* [On this Stone III. As Long as the Time Has Not Yet Passed], in: *Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir*, 27 July 1910, 6 f.

R. Binyamin, would not exist at each other's expense, but could thrive simultaneously.

R. Binyamin also criticized Silman's assertion that "French is needed here in the war of existence no less than Arabic," which aimed to undermine the importance of Arabic in Palestine. R. Binyamin argued that while French was the language of the intelligentsia – who also spoke Arabic – and derived its power from French educational institutions, Arabic was "the language spoken by half a million people, needed in both city and village, and in every corner that we turn to." He thus invalidated Silman's premise of Arabic as a language in the "war of existence" with mere diplomatic value, and showed how it was essential for taking root in Palestine. On this basis, R. Binyamin added another aspect, which concerned the different cultural implications of learning either French or Arabic:

"[T]he one who comes to study French is to some extent a candidate for abroad. Indeed, this is the way in which the AIU justifies widening the study of French in its schools, because it is possible that some of the students won't make their living in Palestine and will have to move abroad. They thus should be armed with the knowledge of a European language. While the one who comes to study Arabic shows their will to form a lasting connection to this land [*keshet shel kayama*]."

R. Binyamin chose to focus on one of Silman's minor arguments, but it seems that he found it most indicative of the overall narrative Silman was trying to create by denouncing Arabic as a "spiritual danger" to be countered with the expansion of Hebrew. This way, language became an extension of Zionist spatial segregation efforts. Meanwhile, R. Binyamin declared Arabic the means to form a "lasting connection" with this land – a precondition to make Palestine a home.

Returning to R. Binyamin's before-mentioned exchange with Aḥad Ha'am, which was published at a time when he worked at the PO's Arab press department and watched the Palestinian anti-Zionist opposition grow, while Zionist institutions closed their eyes and ears, two additions to his publications need highlighting. Those were two passages from articles originally published in *al-Karmil* and in *al-Ra'i al-A'm* (Public Opinion) in Hebrew translation, which he included "as an echo" of the opposition. They contained sharp criticism of the Ottoman government, which was accused of abandoning local Palestinian fellahin, while their lands were purchased by Zionist institutions, village after village, and local inhabitants expelled. The articles called for an end to these purchases, warning of "the destruction and loss of the homeland" and the Zionist movement's aspiration "to take the whole of Palestine and its surroundings, in order to fulfill what is written in



their history.”<sup>57</sup> By including this “echo” from the Arab press, R. Binyamin – similar to other Sephardi Jews who published their translations mainly in the *Ha-herut* newspaper – strove to open the Yishuv’s eyes to the reality of Palestinians’ perception of Zionism.<sup>58</sup> The willing blindness to the Arab existence, that was reflected in spatial – Jewish “spots” amidst an “Arab break zone” – as well as linguistic segregation efforts had resulted in an “Arab nationalism which perceives us as a dangerous enemy and has started to warn about the dangers.”

In another place, R. Binyamin reacted to the critique of “the lovers of Ibrahim” by Ya’akov Rabinovich (1875–1948), who portrayed Arabic as a challenge to the status of Hebrew. Rabinovich claimed that it was of major political importance to establish Hebrew in Palestine, so that “the world will acknowledge our national right.” Rabinovich referred to the idea of a joint Jewish-Arab university and argued that, as long as the Hebrew language did not occupy a major place in Palestine, this initiative could only be considered a manifestation of the interests pursued by “the children of Ibrahim” over the interests of “the children of Abraham.” He painted the initiative as one derived from the assumption that “Hebrew-speaking and educated Ibrahim will be less hostile and dangerous for us than the current Ibrahim.”<sup>59</sup> He thus only saw a strategic reason for the initiative, and nothing more. In his reply, R. Binyamin shifted the focus to the question of the study of Arabic:

“The heart of the lovers of Ibrahim is not at all distracted from the children of Abraham. On the contrary, they are concerned not only about the children of Abraham of Palestine but also about the ones that are still in Exile. [...] Thus, they find the foundation of the university necessary for this reason, as well [...]. They believe in the victory of the Hebrew language through this measure, as the children of Ibrahim will learn this language [...]. [O]n the other hand, they acknowledge the need that the wonderful and talented children of Abraham know the language of Ibrahim as well.”<sup>60</sup>

As was the case in his discussion with Silman, R. Binyamin rebuts Rabinovich’s allegation that Hebrew and Arabic were adversaries. The development of the Hebrew language and its transformation into one of the languages spoken in Palestine – even by the Arabs – could not be doubted, according to him. But that was only one side of the picture, while the Jewish acquisition of Arabic was the other side. R. Binyamin’s alternative take on the university was one of a platform for dialogue, where Hebrew and Arabic could be studied side by side.

57 Idem, *Be-reshit*, 100 f.

58 See, e. g., Y. D. Maman, *Al dvar ha-itonut ha-aravit* [On the Arabic Press], in: *Ha-herut*, 21 August 1911, 1 f.

59 Ya’akov Rabinovich, *Reshimot* [Lists], in: *Ha-po’el Ha-za’ir*, 1 August 1913, 7–9.

60 R. Binyamin, *Bi-sha’at kerit’ah*.

These words were written by R. Binyamin around three months before the outbreak of the “War of the Languages” following the proclamation of the board of governors of the Technion in Haifa that, upon request by its sponsor, the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden (Relief Organization of German Jews), the institute’s language of instruction shall henceforth be German. Following this announcement, three members of the board – Aḥad Ha’am, Yehiel Tzel-nov, and Shmaryahu Levin – resigned.<sup>61</sup> During the next six weeks, R. Binyamin was among those protesting the Hilfsverein’s decision. He published a series of condemning articles in *Ha-herut*, focusing on the problematic power relations that had developed between the German philanthropic body and educational institutions in Palestine, due to which schools were now obliged to teach in German, a language with no connection to the land. Ironically, he remarked, the location of management, rather than the location of the institution seemed to dictate the teaching language.<sup>62</sup> The struggle against the imposition of the German language on Jewish educational institutions in Palestine was depicted in his writings as a resistance to the attempt of the Hilfsverein to base its power and authority in Palestine through the language of instruction. R. Binyamin considered its intention to turn the Technion into a “fortress of the German language,” an idea fueled by Orientalists such as Martin Hartmann, a fulfillment of the German striving for political and cultural colonial expansion.<sup>63</sup> One can identify in R. Binyamin’s words an attempt to distinguish the Hebrew language from the colonial languages – in this case German – and to depict it as a language which was not only a national Jewish, but a local Palestinian one as well. The rejection of German as a colonial language – and not as a foreign language that threatened the “purity” of the Hebrew language – conveys the perception of Hebrew as a Middle Eastern local language and, in this capacity, as matching the Arabic language as a means to establish a “lasting connection” to the land.

The fact that R. Binyamin published these articles in *Ha-herut* also deserves attention. *Ha-herut* reported on the reactions to the language controversy in Arab newspapers, as well.<sup>64</sup> It cited an article from the Egyptian

61 Margalit Shilo, Milḥamat ha-safot k-“tenu’ah amimit” [The War of the Languages as a “Popular Movement”], in: Katedra. Le-toldot Erez Yisra’el ve-yishuva [Cathedra. For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv] 74 (1994), 86–119.

62 R. Binyamin, Rak lo be-shem ha-dat [But Not in the Name of Religion], in: *Ha-herut*, 3 December 1913, 1.

63 Idem, Tavim le-zikaron [Signs of Memory], in: *Ha-herut*, 24 November 1913, 1. In this context, see also Kamel, The Impact of “Biblical Orientalism,” 5 f. In particular, see the quotation from one of the participants in his meetings with Rabbi Moshe Franko, the Hakham Bashi. See R. Binyamin, Ezel ha-Hakham Bashi be-Yerushalayim [At Hakham Bashi’s in Jerusalem], in: *Ha-herut*, 29 January 1914, 1 f.

64 See Bezalel, Nolatetem zionim, 267 f.

newspaper *al-Muqattam* (The Mokattam [Hills]), for instance, that wrote about the Zionists’ stubborn persistence to turn the Technion into a national institution for Jews only, while the Hilfsverein envisioned an institution “whose gates will be open to all residents of Palestine.”<sup>65</sup> Ḥayim Ben-Attar (1885–1918), *Ha-ḥerut*’s editor, alleged that such claims were probably the result of the Hilfsverein’s attempt to influence the Arab press and to enlist it in its favor, thus widening the gap between Jews and Arabs. Ben-Attar also wondered how the author could conclude that the Hilfsverein would open the institution to all people, given that the language of instruction was set to be German.<sup>66</sup> *Ha-ḥerut* also cited Arab voices that criticized the Hilfsverein’s position, such as Arab leaders in Haifa whose articles were published in newspapers in Istanbul, demanding that Arabic and Turkish, alongside Hebrew, should be the languages of instruction.<sup>67</sup>

In doing so, *Ha-ḥerut* appreciated that the “War of the Languages” was an event whose implications were not limited to the Jewish national sphere and Hebrew language, but one that reverberated throughout the region. R. Binyamin’s framing of the Hilfsverein’s decision as an attempt to impose a colonial language on Palestine, as well as his contribution to a newspaper that ascribed importance to the Arab perspective on the struggle, reveal his aspiration to place Hebrew alongside Arabic as a non-colonial and local language. Added to this is his insistence to depict the “War of the Languages” not as one taking place between the Hilfsverein and the new Zionist Yishuv, but as a unified struggle of both “new” and “old” Yishuv – in which the latter was the one at the front.<sup>68</sup> The emphasis on the position of the old Yishuv is another example for how R. Binyamin saw Hebrew as a significant local language that represented the traditional Jewish existence in Palestine, that of the “natives of the land,” rather than being a by-product of the secular national idea of the Hebrew Biblical language as promulgated by the Zionist movement.

65 N. a., Ba-itonim u-va-yarḥonim [In the Newspapers and in the Monthlies], in: *Ha-ḥerut*, 9 February 1914, 2 f.

66 N. a., Kneset-Yisra’el be-za’ar [Israel’s Kneset in Regret], in: *Ha-ḥerut*, 8 February 1914, 2. Bezalel claimed that Ben-Attar’s suspicions of the Hilfsverein’s influence on the Arab Press were well-founded. Bezalel, *Noladetem z̄iyonim*, 267.

67 Mendel Kremer, *Ḥadashot ha-yom* [News of the Day], in: *Ha-ḥerut*, 22 January 1914, 3.

68 R. Binyamin, *Rak lo be-shem ha-dat*; idem, *Ha-ortodoksia ve-ha-morīyah* [The Orthodoxy and the Moriah], in: *Ha-ḥerut*, 4 December 1913, 2. On the major role of the newspaper, in particular, and of Sephardi Jews, in general, in the “War of the Languages,” see Bezalel, *Noladetem z̄iyonim*, 256–279.

## Conclusion, or: On the Question of Indigenoussness

World War I, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of the British Mandate created new conditions for the Zionist Yishuv. The Zionist movement was considered an ally of the Mandate authorities, both in terms of developing Jewish-Arab relations and its role within the Jewish population in Palestine. While the authorities supported the Zionist movement and allowed the foundation of distinct Jewish national institutions in Palestine, it rejected the creation of a local political institution representing Palestinian political and national interests. In this respect, the British Mandate supported Zionist aspirations for hegemony in Palestine. The Zionist movement transformed from a representative of a distinct unit within the Ottoman Empire into an ally of the colonial regime. This moment marks the shift from the segregationist settler-colonial policies adopted by the PO during the period that stood at the center of this article, to a new stage of deepening relations and cooperation between the Zionist movement and the colonial powers. In 1923, R. Binyamin, in an article which he wrote from the perspective of a fictional character, a young Arab teacher named Ahmad Effendi, explicitly attacked the PO's segregationist policies:

“You did not, apparently, pay any attention, that you have indeed come to rob what is most precious to us and to steal what is most important to us. You are coming with aspirations of conquest. Indeed, a conquest through money, bills, and law [...], but a conquest nevertheless. You are not coming to live amongst us, with us, and near us [...]. You are coming with certain intentions, with intentions of distinction and segregation. [...] You emphasize the distinction and the difference: Here is the Hebrew, here is the Arab [*po ivri u-po aravi*].”<sup>69</sup>

Through the character of Ahmad Effendi, R. Binyamin was very clear about how Zionism was seen by Palestinian fellahin as a manifestation of the aspirations of conquest, and the land purchases as robbery. While the Zionist movement, armed with the power of market economics and settler-colonial logic, saw the land purchases as a basis for the expulsion of the fellahin and the creation of a pure and segregated national space, the fellahins' perspective, the perspective of the colonized, revealed the nature of this policy as one of conquest and expulsion of local inhabitants. R. Binyamin/Ahmad Effendi also pointed to the ideological foundation of this policy of conquest – the particular intentions of “distinction and differentiation.” The distinct national perception, which from the very beginning did not ask to be integrated into the Palestinian space, but sought to create its very own unit within it, formed the basis of the construction of the settler-colonial policy of land purchases

69 R. Binyamin, Mizrah u-ma'arav [East and West], in: Ha-tekufa [The Era] 21 (1923), 450.

and the expulsion of those living there. The Biblical notion of the Palestinian inhabitants as mere shadows was another manifestation of this view. R. Binyamin’s traditional imagination, which associated the voice of the muezzin of Jaffa to the Galician cantor’s *Steiger*, thus, marks an alternative, an option of living “amongst” and “with,” and not detached from the rest.

The shift by R. Binyamin towards an opposition to the emerging settler-colonial policies during his early years in Palestine may serve as an important vantage point to engage with the question raised by Raef Zreik, “How does a settler become a native?” and with his phrase “the settler stays but colonization goes.”<sup>70</sup> One may describe R. Binyamin’s attitude as an opposition to the hegemonic Zionist settler-colonial paradoxical notion of indigenoussness. The latter was based on a segregated and thus pure spatial, economic, and linguistic national existence, and was practiced through land purchases and the expulsion of fellahin, the creation of a segregated economy, and the defense of the “purity” of the Hebrew language. These measures were seen as steps towards a return to the Biblical past, while the present land and its people became a non-issue. R. Binyamin’s notion of indigenoussness, on the other hand, entailed the recreation of connections with relatives. He thus emphasized the strong affinities between Jews and Arabs, Judaism and Islam. This understanding of return was critical of the Zionist denial of both local Palestinian and Jewish exilic existence and implied a return to the present locale, its people and their languages. R. Binyamin’s writings during the language controversy demonstrate that he viewed Hebrew not as a pure language that belonged to a separate settler-colonial community, but as a local and thus non-colonial language, which had preserved its connection to the main local language – Arabic. R. Binyamin’s resistance to the segregationist policies of the Zionist leadership created a different horizon for the Jewish existence in Palestine – a local existence, integrated, and bilingual. In other words, R. Binyamin’s opposition can be thought of as a horizon for a non-colonial Zionist existence in Palestine – one in which the settler stays, but colonization goes.

70 Zreik, When Does a Settler Become a Native?



Schwerpunkt  
Jews in Early Postwar Europe

Edited by Kata Bohus  
and Elisabeth Gallas





## Introduction

In the documentary film *Shores of Light*, Rivka Cohen, a child of Holocaust survivors, comments on a photo of her family from the immediate postwar years that she had discovered only recently. “I found a picture of me and my parents in which they are smiling. I asked my mother, ‘How can this be? You were in Auschwitz one year before, you lost your parents, your entire family, how can you be smiling?!’”<sup>1</sup> Cohen’s puzzlement over the strength and determination of Holocaust survivors to build a new life after the catastrophe is one shared by many. For a long time, trauma, devastation, loss, and isolation were the dominant notions used to describe the “emotional regime” of the survivors. This very comprehensible perspective became increasingly complicated as, on closer examination of their early testimonies, a different tone emerged: that of new beginnings, of self-determination, and a regained independence. The rebuilding of Jewish life in the years following the Holocaust has inspired many fiction and non-fiction books and has also been attracting the attention of contemporary historical research for two decades now. The so-called Aftermath Studies became a more and more nuanced and established field, revealing prospects, opportunities, “roads not taken,” and dynamics of a period in transit between the end of the disastrous battles in Europe and the Pacific, and the beginning of a new form of global warfare, the cold war of ideologies.<sup>2</sup> Especially for the Jews – in Europe but also in places of refuge like the United States, the Latin Americas, Asia, South Africa, and the Yishuv (Palestine) – the first years after the liberation from the Nazi onslaught and genocide were of crucial importance. In the wake of despair and catastrophe, a glimmer of hope flickered; the Jewish world rose in support of the survivors (manifested most strongly in the activities of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) and to restore Jewish lives, dignity, and rights.

Thanks to an ever-growing body of scholarship in the broader field of Jewish studies, we know today of a plethora of political, social, and legal activities initiated by Jews from 1945 onward to come to terms with the chal-

1 *Shores of Light* (director: Yael Katzir, 2015; 56 min.)

2 See, e.g., Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, New York 2005; Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent. Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, New York 2012; Ian Buruma, *Year Zero. A History of 1945*, New York 2013; Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe, 1914–1949*, London 2015.

lenging situation and to create a future perspective. They range from welfare for and care of the survivors, refugee as well as migration aid, and rebuilding of Jewish infrastructures on the spot, to the manifold initiatives in the realm of legal prosecution of perpetrators, claims of indemnification, a fight for justice, and even sometimes calls for revenge.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, the postwar commitment of international organizations such as the Joint, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Agency, to only name a few, as well as the fate of the Jewish displaced persons in the Allied occupation zones of Germany have received the greatest attention.<sup>4</sup> Related works were able to refute the traditional view that depicted the postwar era as one of passivity.<sup>5</sup> They were able to highlight the (not always successful) engagement of Jewish actors in documenting the crimes and bringing perpetrators to trials, in their calls for restitution of looted Jewish property, in creating new centers of Jewish culture and life in and outside Europe, and in commemorating the dead and making the world aware of the disasters of

- 3 To only name some examples: Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust. Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Princeton, N. J., 1997; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton, N. J., 2007; Katharina Stengel (ed.), *Opfer als Akteure. Interventionen ehemaliger NS-Verfolgter in der Nachkriegszeit*, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2008; Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, Oxford/New York 2012; Mark Lewis, *The Birth of the New Justice. The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment, 1919–1950*, Oxford/New York 2014; Laura Jockusch/Gabriel N. Finder (eds.), *Jewish Honor Courts. Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust*, Detroit, Mich., 2015; Leah Wolfsohn, *Jewish Responses to Persecution, 1944–1946*, London 2015; Regina Fritz/Éva Kovács/Béla Rásky (eds.), *Als der Holocaust noch keinen Namen hatte. Zur frühen Aufarbeitung des NS-Massenmordes an den Juden/Before the Holocaust Had Its Name. Early Confrontation of the Nazi Mass Murder of the Jews*, Vienna 2016; Avinoam J. Patt et al. (eds.), *The JDC at 100. A Century of Humanitarianism*, Detroit, Mich., 2019; Max Czollek/Erik Riedel/Mirijam Wenzel (eds.), *Rache – Geschichte und Fantasie* (exhibition catalogue Jewish Museum Frankfurt), Munich 2022.
- 4 See, e. g., Menachem Z. Rosensaft (ed.), *Life Reborn. Jewish Displaced Persons, 1945–1951*, Washington, D. C., 2001; Angelika Königseder/Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope. Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany*, Evanston, Ill., 2001; Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope. The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Cambridge 2002; Avinoam J. Patt/Michael Berkowitz (eds.), *We Are Here. New Approaches to the Study of Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, Detroit, Mich., 2010; Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945–1957*, New York 2010.
- 5 Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love. American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962*, New York 2009; David Cesarani/Eric J. Sundquist (eds.), *After the Holocaust. Challenging the Myth of Silence*, London 2012; François Azouvi, *Le mythe du grand silence. Auschwitz, les Français, la mémoire* [The Myth of the Great Silence. Auschwitz, the French, and Memory], Paris 2012; Elisabeth Gallas/Laura Jockusch, *Anything but Silent. Jewish Responses to the Holocaust in the Aftermath of World War II*, in: Simone Gigliotti/Hilary Earl (eds.), *A Companion to the Holocaust*, Hoboken, N. J., 2020, 311–330.

the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup> Focusing first on the development in Western Europe and the French, British, and American policies in Germany, researchers have started to integrate the Eastern European countries into their postwar narrative. The specifics of their transition into Communist states and the possibilities and challenges of establishing a Jewish existence as well as memory formation under Soviet influence are taken increasingly into account, thereby further nuancing the story of postwar Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Now a new wave of research, as represented in this special issue, has started to break further ground. Respective scholars often take a micro-historical perspective that allows for uncovering new spaces and the introduction of personal narratives. Previously unconsidered regions, such as the Balkans, the Baltic states, Hungary, or the former German territory in Poland, command more scholarly interest and we witness a turn away from organizational history towards the experiences of individuals.<sup>8</sup> Some of the findings presented here stem from an international conference that was held in Frankfurt in

- 6 David Bankier/Dan Michman (eds.), *Holocaust Historiography in Context. Emergence, Challenges, Polemics and Achievements*, Jerusalem 2008; Natalia Aleksium, *The Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland 1944–1947*, in: *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 20 (2007), 74–97; Laura Jockusch, *Justice at Nuremberg? Jewish Responses to Nazi War-Crime Trials in Allied-Occupied Germany*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 19 (2012), no. 1, 107–147; Zofia Wóycicka, *Arrested Mourning. Memory of the Nazi Camps in Poland, 1944–1950*, Frankfurt a. M. 2013; Elisabeth Gallas, *A Mortuary of Books. The Rescue of Jewish Culture after the Holocaust*, transl. by Alex Skinner, New York 2019; Hans-Christian Jasch/Stephan Lehnstaedt (eds.), *Verfolgen und Aufklären. Die erste Generation der Holocaustforschung/Crimes Uncovered. The First Generation of Holocaust Researchers*, Berlin 2019.
- 7 Natalia Aleksium, *Rescuing a Memory and Constructing a History of Polish Jewry. Jews in Poland, 1944–1950*, in: *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe* 54–55 (2005), no. 1–2, 5–27; Jan T. Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*, Princeton, N.J./Oxford 2007; Gabriel N. Finder/Natalia Aleksium/Antony Polonsky/Jan Schwarz (eds.), *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 20 (2007): *Making Holocaust Memory*; Lucjan Dobroszycki, *Survivors of the Holocaust in Poland. A Portrait Based on Jewish Community Records 1944–1947*, London 2015; Mark Edele/Sheila Fitzpatrick/Atina Grossmann (eds.), *Shelter from the Holocaust. Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, Detroit, Mich., 2017; Gabriel N. Finder/Alexander V. Prusin, *Justice behind the Iron Curtain. Nazis on Trial in Communist Poland*, Toronto 2018; Markus Nesselrodt, *Dem Holocaust entkommen. Polnische Juden in der Sowjetunion, 1939–1946*, Berlin/Munich/Boston, Mass., 2019.
- 8 See, e. g., Katharina Friedla, *Juden in Breslau/Wrocław 1933–1949. Überlebensstrategien, Selbstbehauptung und Verfolgungserfahrungen*, Cologne 2015; Ferenc Laczó, *The Excruciating Dilemmas of Ernő Munkácsi*, in: Nina Munk (ed.), *Ernő Munkácsi. How It Happened. Documenting the Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry*, transl. by Péter Balikó Lengyel, Montreal 2018, xxiii–lvi; Kamil Kijek, *Aliens in the Lands of the Piasts. The Polonization of Lower Silesia and Its Jewish Community in the Years 1945–1950*, in: Tobias Grill (ed.), *Jews and Germans in Eastern Europe. Shared and Comparative Histories*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2018, 234–255; Katarzyna Person, *Building a Community of Survivors in Post-War Jewish Honour Courts. The Case of Regina Kupiec*, in: Alina Bothe/Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *Shoah. Ereignis und Erinnerung*, Berlin 2019, 171–183.

2017 in preparation for the exhibition *Unser Mut: Juden in Europa 1945–48/ Our Courage: Jews in Europe 1945–48*. This conference was a collaborative project of the Jewish Museum Frankfurt and the Dubnow Institute, and the respective exhibition opened in 2021.<sup>9</sup> The subjects discussed there displayed the mentioned turn towards new approaches, topics, actors, and spaces. The participants dealt with different experiences of Jewish displacement and migration, processes of rebuilding economic, social, and cultural infrastructures in Europe and beyond, as well as memory formation and legal responses to the Nazi crimes, often relying on personal accounts of survivors.

In this special issue, we want to highlight some of these perspectives, focusing on aspects of social and everyday history, political decision-making, and diplomacy. All the presented cases show the fragility and transitory character of these early postwar years and illustrate how Holocaust experiences continued to influence the lives of survivors and their attempts to build a new life. The contributions allow us to hear the voices of ordinary people and to learn from their experiences – a couple in Poland, women survivors in Hungary, or Polish Jewish refugees who survived in the Soviet Union. They demonstrate that decisions were rarely unambiguous, future goals often vague, and emotional budgets incalculable after the overwhelming experience of the genocide. Two issues stand out and form a common thread: agency and gender. The cases discussed here show people, mostly survivors, who – despite the often dire situations they found themselves in by the end of the war – reclaimed the energy to engage in their community and help others, took their lives into their own hands, and cared for family and friends. We see tireless workers who tried to support the poor and needy, and to create a future for the European Jews who wanted to leave for Israel. Agency at the time came with many faces and in many ways. Beyond the better-known narrations of the numerous fighters and social workers from abroad, who came to do relief work and to organize (sometimes illegal) ways to move the survivors off the “bloodstained soil” of Europe, it is crucial to also consider the individual stories of those men and women who tried to cope with the horrors and find a firm ground to stand on. One of the most important aspects of Jewish activities after 1945 was the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine and the efforts of representatives from the Yishuv to take to Palestine

9 Kata Bohus/Atina Grossmann/Werner Hanak/Mirjam Wenzel (eds.), *Our Courage. Jews in Europe 1945–48* (exhibition catalogue Jewish Museum Frankfurt), Berlin/Munich/Boston, Mass., 2020.

as many Jews as possible.<sup>10</sup> Among the survivors, Zionism emerged stronger than ever. Nonetheless, as some of the following discussion will show, the idea of the “gathering of the exiles” in Israel and the decision to move there were not unproblematic both from an institutional as well as personal point of view. Israeli diplomats had to walk a thin line between following the principles of Zionism but also maintaining contact and providing help for Jews who wished to remain in the diaspora. Individuals had to weigh whether the big step of moving to the fragile context of a young state (which was immediately at war) was the wisest choice.

As some scholars have recently highlighted, gender played a significant role in Jewish decision-making during the Holocaust itself, but also in its aftermath.<sup>11</sup> The reconstruction of the different constellations of the postwar Jewish struggle for survival with an attention to gender issues, therefore, adds new layers to the broader picture: Women were in many ways affected differently by flight, internment or hiding, and the post-liberation situation. Their bodies were constant reminders of the ordeals they had endured and could not be fully healed from rape, torture, and medical experiments. Women often had to bear the responsibility of caring and supporting their families, who were traumatized and had neither spiritual nor material resources left. Moreover, they often carried different burdens and consequences from wartime decisions, such as hiding with non-Jews and entering relationships or marriages of convenience, which created very ambiguous sets of emotions and dependencies.

The case studies presented here reveal the manifold attempts of Jews in Europe after the Holocaust to actively establish an existence and to reclaim their rights on a continent that was in ruins, amidst growing tensions between the Western and the Soviet spheres of influence. Frequently, they were surrounded by a hostile and ignorant majority population that did not acknowledge or take responsibility for their guilt in the wartime annihilation of the

10 See, e. g., Dina Porat, *The Role of European Jewry in the Plans of the Zionist Movement during World War II and in Its Aftermath*, in: Yisrael Gutman/Avital Saf (eds.), *She’erit Hapletah, 1944–1948. Rehabilitation and Political Struggle. Proceedings of the Sixth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, October 1985, Jerusalem 1990*, 286–303; Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland. Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Detroit, Mich., 2009; idem, “The People Must Be Forced to Go to Palestine.” Rabbi Abraham Klausner and the “She’erit Hapletah” in Germany, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28 (2014), no. 2, 240–276.

11 Dalia Ofer/Lenore J. Weitzman (eds.), *Women in the Holocaust*, New Haven, Conn., 1999; Andrea Pető/Louise Hecht/Karolina Krasuska (eds.), *Women and the Holocaust. New Perspectives and Challenges*, Budapest 2015; Zoë Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust. A Feminist History*, Oxford 2017; Anna Hájková/Elissa Mailänder/Atina Grossmann/Doris Bergen/Patrick Farges, *Forum. Holocaust and the History of Gender and Sexuality*, in: *German History* 36 (2018), no. 1, 78–100.

Jews. It is an extraordinary period of time which allowed survivors, together with Jews all over the world, to fight for justice, find shelter in the new State of Israel or other places, and, most importantly, create a sense of continuity against all odds.

The first of the four papers, Natalia Aleksiu's *When Fajga Left Tadeusz*, offers a close reading of a unique archival discovery and sheds light on the intimate problems that emerged after the war as a result of wartime relationships between Jews and gentiles. Through the examination of personal correspondence and other documents of a couple living in a camouflaged and later confirmed marriage in Poland, Aleksiu (Gainesville, Fla.) shows that reclaiming their Jewish identity after the war was a complex undertaking for survivors, especially for women. It frequently created tensions with other obligations and roles related to their rescuers, spouses, or families. In a nutshell, this case study presents important insights into general issues of sexuality, emotional fabrics in postwar society, changing dynamics in relationships, and ambivalences in the rebuilding of lives, but also into postwar antisemitism and the treatment of rescuers in Poland.

The following article by Na'ama Seri-Levi (Jerusalem) focuses on the 140,000 Polish Jews who survived the war in the Soviet Union, were repatriated to Poland following the Potsdam Conference of 1945, but then almost immediately moved on to DP camps in the American occupation zone in Germany. Examining various personal accounts and unused sources, Seri-Levi argues that the experience of constant movement and temporariness that these repatriates had lived through during their stay in the harsh shelter of the USSR fundamentally influenced their postwar existence. Seri-Levi shows that this specific condition creates a characteristic form of "refugeeism" engraved into habits, future choices, and memories of those concerned. It had a broad and long-lasting impact on the lives of this group of survivors, who were not fully recognized as such, neither by contemporaries nor by later historians.

Borbála Klacsmann's article also highlights the protracted effects and long-term consequences of Holocaust experiences for survivors after liberation. She focuses on the postwar struggle of three Hungarian women to claim compensation for the health damages and harm inflicted upon their bodies during internment in Nazi camps. Using a micro-historical approach, Klacsmann (Dublin) argues that the female body marked by continued health issues and permanent injuries sustained from medical experiments served as a constant reminder of wartime suffering. The physical violence endured by women during the war fundamentally altered their social, economic, and psychological recovery. This situation was only enforced by the different challenges the compensation procedures imposed on these women, since

they had to prove and show evidence of their suffering, remember and repeatedly describe the details of their torture, and fight for their rights to indemnification against mistrust and indifference.

While also highlighting ambivalence as a main experience in postwar planning, Irit Chen's contribution finally shifts the focus towards the realm of politics and diplomacy. She examines how Israeli diplomats addressed the complex philosophical, political, and economic problem of relationships between Jews and the newly created Federal Republic of Germany. Chen (Jerusalem/Haifa) demonstrates how members of the Israeli consulate in Munich had to strike a balance between maintaining more or less secret contacts with the Jewish diaspora in Germany and the officially proclaimed Israeli boycott of Jewish life there. Pragmatism, Chen argues, led the statesmen involved – both with central European background and fluency in German – to take part in the establishment and consolidation of the postwar German Jewish community, even though this went against the ideological principles of Zionism.

The arguments and perspectives presented in all these contributions clearly trace the emergence of the biggest issue among Jewish survivors and their communities on the European continent: that of transience versus permanence or, in other words, the question of whether there was still a future for Jewish life in Europe.





Natalia Aleksiu

## When Fajga Left Tadeusz: The Afterlife of Survivors' Wartime Relationships

Fajga (Fani, Fanka) Ginsberg (Ginzberg, Ginzburg) survived the Holocaust with the help of Tadeusz Kobyłko, a Polish man who sheltered her in his apartment in Lwów (today Lviv, Ukraine).<sup>1</sup> Offered a chance to live under the guise of being Tadeusz's Catholic wife, she became romantically involved with him. Whilst in hiding, she gave birth to Tadeusz's son, who was baptized and recorded by the local Catholic priest under the name Adam Kobyłko. After the liberation of Lwów in August 1944, the Kobyłkos registered as a married couple and later moved to Bytom, in the formerly German part of Silesia that became Polish. Yet, in August 1946 – only a year after their arrival in Bytom – this Jewish woman left her Polish Catholic husband, taking along with her two young children: the couple's son and her niece Ita (Itta) Keller, whom Kobyłko had also rescued and cared for during the war.<sup>2</sup> For several months thereafter, during her travels across Europe, Fajga continued to correspond with her estranged husband in Poland. In the fall of

- 1 I would like to thank the peer reviewer, the editors Elizabeth Gallas and Kata Bohus, as well as the following colleagues who read and offered their comments on earlier drafts of this article: Omer Bartov, Judy Baumel-Schwartz, Anna Bikont, Emily Gioielli, Anna Hájková, Natalia Judzińska, Agnieszka Ilwicka-Karuna, Kamil Kijek, Jeffrey Kopstein, Magdalena Kozłowska, Laura Levitt, Ruth Lichtenstein, Joanna Sliwa, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, Raphael Utz, and Hannah Wilson. I first came across the letters in 2012 while carrying out research as a Pearl Resnick Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (henceforth USHMM), Washington, D. C. I am grateful to Vincent Slatt for making this material available to me. I also want to acknowledge the feedback I received when presenting drafts of this paper at the conference of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies on 24 November 2019 in San Francisco and the Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena on 25 May 2020. The earlier version of this article appeared in Polish: *Gdy Fajga porzuciła Tadeusza. Wojenne związki ocalałych po Zagładzie*, in: *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* [Holocaust. Studies and Materials] 17 (2021), 229–259.
- 2 See Ita Keller. *Sary Sambor and Lviv, Ukraine*, <<http://missing-identity.net/itta-keller-sary-sambor-and-lviv-ukraine/>> (25 June 2022). Even though her name is written “Itta” in the USHMM Collection, she is spelled “Ita” in the correspondence cited here, therefore the present article adheres to that latter version.

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1947, Fajga and the children arrived in Palestine, where she reunited with family members.<sup>3</sup> However, Fajga and Tadeusz never saw each other again.<sup>4</sup>

In the immediate postwar period, Fajga was one of the many Jewish survivors who negotiated and ultimately reclaimed their identities as Jews, Poles, refugees, and/or citizens. For reconstructed Jewish communities, their choices to move forward were rife with contradictions. They celebrated life and personal victory for surviving the war, while at the same time mourning the destruction of their families and former lives, and continuously facing danger as Jews remaining in Poland. Nevertheless, amidst their mass displacement, the survivors engaged in rebuilding families and communal institutions. Fajga's choice to leave Poland appears to correspond with the wider Jewish response to the pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, which led to a wave of flight across the Polish borders.<sup>5</sup> Her decision also reflects the hope and desire of many Jewish survivors to rebuild their lives away from their former hometowns, where they had lost their families and friends.<sup>6</sup> Despite this general context, a closer reading of Fajga and Tadeusz's letters reveals a more complex emotional fabric to their marriage, which is likely to have begun as a pragmatic relationship under the German occupation. In confronting their separation and the increasing realization of its finality, the couple sought to make sense of their relationship,

- 3 See USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, The Confirmation of Ita Ginzberg's Arrival in Palestine, Issued by the Jewish Agency's Department of Immigration, 25 July 1956. It cites 29 October 1947 as the date of Ita's landing in Haifa. Fajga and the children arrived as tourists under her last name. Adam was listed as Salomon Ginzberg. See Israel State Archives, ISA-moia-moia-009vc9, 549. I am grateful to Sophie Costi for locating this document.
- 4 For an account of her family's life in Israel, see Itta Benhaïem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, Jerusalem 2009 (Heb.). I would like to thank Ofer Dynes and Marta Marzańska-Mishani for their invaluable assistance in locating the book for me.
- 5 For an in-depth study of the pogrom, see Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* [Under the Curse. Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom], 2 vols., Warsaw 2018. For a discussion of anti-Jewish violence in the aftermath of World War II, see Jan T. Gross, *Fear. Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, New York 2006, and Anna Cichopek-Gajraj, *Beyond Violence. Jewish Survivors in Poland and Slovakia, 1944–1948*, Cambridge 2014.
- 6 For a discussion of competing visions of rebuilding Jewish life after the Holocaust, see Natalia Aleksium, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce 1944–1950* [Where To? The Zionist Movement in Poland, 1944–1950], Warsaw 2002; Avinoam Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland. Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Detroit, Mich., 2009; Hana Shlomi, *The Communist Caucus in the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, November 1944–February 1947*, in: Gal-Ed, *On the History of the Jews in Poland 13* (1993), 81–100; Bożena Szaynok, *Bund i komuniści żydowscy w Polsce po 1945 r.* [The Bund and Jewish Communists in Poland after 1945], in: Feliks Tych/Jürgen Hensel (eds.), *Bund. 100 lat historii 1897–1997* [The Bund. 100 Years of History, 1897–1997], Warsaw 2000, 305–324; David Slucki, *The International Jewish Labor Bund after 1945. Toward a Global History*, New Brunswick, N. J., 2012.

their intimate feelings, and their parting of ways after the war. Fajga, like other Jewish women and men, had to come to terms with the deep bonds that emerged during their struggle for survival, particularly with those embodying the complex dependencies on non-Jews during the Holocaust. In the early postwar months and years, these relationships were negotiated – some were reconstituted, while others came to an end.<sup>7</sup>

This article focuses on one such relationship and its far-reaching emotional consequences, as Fajga and Tadeusz's lives remained intertwined long after Poland's liberation. By investigating the afterlife of their wartime relationship, which includes their marriage in Lwów under Soviet rule and life in Bytom, their experience offers an intimate lens into how Jewish survivors navigated uneasy choices moving forward and the emotional price of their decisions. It underscores one of the most contentious issues, that is, the precariousness of reclaiming Jewish identity by survivors who hid as non-Jews during the Holocaust and the ambiguous reactions of their postwar milieu. Hence, the aftermath of Fajga and Tadeusz's relationship serves as a case study for reconsidering the limits of what was "speakable" in the immediate postwar period and in the following years with regards to survival strategies during the Holocaust, and the emotions lingering around the decisions taken in its wake.

My examination of Fajga and Tadeusz's relationship builds on existing scholarship and is enriched by a number of methodological lenses, particularly focusing on the centrality of gender for understanding the ways in which Jewish women and men experienced the policies of persecution and mass murder during World War II. This study also adds nuance to the notion of Jewish agency both during and after the war. With the growing scholarly interest in personal testimonies of Jewish survivors, historians have increasingly paid attention to pragmatic relationships with non-Jews as part of Jewish survival strategies.<sup>8</sup> Accounts of hiding, for instance, indicate that for

7 In discussing changing family constellations, scholars have to date primarily focused on marital relationships that predated the Holocaust. See Katharina Friedla, *Strategie przetrwania i udzielanie pomocy żydowskim partnerom w małżeństwach mieszanych we Wrocławiu i Hamburgu. Studium kilku przypadków* [Survival Strategies and Ways of Helping Jewish Spouses in Mixed Marriages in Wrocław and Hamburg. A Case Study], in: *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* [The Holocaust. Studies and Materials] 11 (2015), 310–324.

8 For a discussion of the phenomenon among German Jews, see Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, New York/Oxford 1998; Susanna Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck. Untergetauchte Juden in München. Verfolgungserfahrung und Nachkriegsalltag*, Göttingen 2015; Beate Meyer, "Jüdische Mischlinge." *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1999. See also Katya Gusarov, *Sexual Barter and Jewish Women's Efforts to Save Their Lives. Accounts from the Righteous among the Nations Archives*, in: *German History* 39 (2021), no. 1, 100–111.

both Jewish women and men, their dramatic vulnerability on the so-called Aryan side may have led them to use or seek intimate relationships with non-Jews. In the eyes of some Poles, proposing marriage to a Jew was a generous offer of protection for the individual under threat.<sup>9</sup> Yet, despite the undeniable power imbalance, Jews were not completely lacking agency in such arrangements. Some of these relationships – like Fajga and Tadeusz’s – morphed into formalized family bonds after the war. Indeed, for many decades after the Holocaust, Tadeusz’s life continued to be affected by his association with Fajga and, more broadly, by his close relationships with the Jews he had sheltered for two years in Nazi-occupied Lwów. This article delves into the complicated aftermath of pragmatic wartime relationships. Such examination allows for greater attention to the personal stories of survivors, where the focus has previously been primarily on the fate of Jewish children and the efforts of individuals or agencies involved in locating child survivors living with non-Jews in postwar Europe.<sup>10</sup>

### Sourcing Intimate Lives

In many survivors’ testimonies, we find intimate recollections of relationships they had forged during the war. However, some of these testimonies only reveal traces of such narratives and oftentimes we encounter strategically employed tropes in their discussion of wartime bonds, especially with regards to sexual barter, pragmatic relationships, and romantic bonds with non-Jews. I would suggest that a large number of survivors were reluctant to reveal extensive details of these sexual and emotional arrangements, which served as strategies when they had struggled to hide or pass as non-Jews. In the case of Fajga Ginsberg and Tadeusz Kobyłko, there is, in fact, ample documentation in the form of Fajga’s collection of letters written to Tadeusz.

9 New scholarship in Poland on the Righteous among the Nations brings such couples into sharp relief but tends to focus on the rescue and on the heroism of the rescuers. Among the notable exceptions is Anna Bikont, *Sendlerowa. W ukryciu* [Sendler. In Secret], Wołowiec (Sękowa) 2017.

10 See Joanna B. Michlic, “The War Began for Me after the War.” Jewish Children in Poland, 1945–49, in: Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust*, London 2011, 482–497; Emunah Nachmany-Gafny, *Dividing Hearts. The Removal of Jewish Children from Gentile Families in Poland in the Immediate Post-Holocaust Years*, Jerusalem 2009; Nahum Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers. The Rescue of Jewish Children with Assumed Identities in Poland*, Jerusalem 2009; Boaz Cohen, *Survivor Caregivers and Child Survivors. Rebuilding Lives and the Home in the Postwar Period*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32 (2018), no. 1, 49–65.

This correspondence, spanning from fall 1946 until 1947, relates Fajga's experiences in transit and her impressions as she adapted to her new life. In her writings, she explains how she felt towards Tadeusz and reflects on what had transpired between them. In addition to her letters, there are also copies of Tadeusz's official correspondence with various institutions and organizations in Poland and abroad, as he sought to tell his side of the story and to mobilize their help in finding his Jewish wife and children.<sup>11</sup> We do, however, lack Tadeusz's side of the personal correspondence with Fajga and, for this reason, one can only speculate on the subject and details of his letters in return. Accordingly, I try to understand his actions and emotions by interpreting the reactions of Fajga, as expressed in her letters. By doing so, this study utilizes the unique opportunity and methodological challenge of reading Tadeusz's official correspondence in parallel with Fajga's intimate letters, in order to reconstruct the complex tangle of gratitude, affection, dependency, disappointment, bitterness, and anger between them. Unsurprisingly, my research shows that their stories remain full of ambiguities, regarding not only their relationship, but also their individual identities. For instance, when signing her letters to Tadeusz, at certain times Fajga used the Polish name that she first took when passing as Kobyłko's Catholic wife (Maria, Manusia), and at other times she used a diminutive of her Jewish first name (Fanka).<sup>12</sup>

On her way to Palestine, Fajga wrote to Tadeusz regularly and her preserved letters from this time help to uncover one side of the couple's intimate and tense conversations. Beyond marking certain milestones in her journey, she reflected upon their experiences during the Holocaust, only sometimes alluding to her hiding, her dependency on Tadeusz, and their incompatibility, which she overlooked while her life was under threat. Seemingly, Tadeusz felt excluded and betrayed, not only by her departure and the separation from his son. He also increasingly believed that Fajga failed to keep her side of the "bargain," which involved his emigration from Poland and their reunification abroad. In his despair and helplessness, Tadeusz even suggested that there was some kind of "international Jewish conspiracy," which he claimed was directly responsible for the breakup of his family. Her letters were at once bitter and flirtatious – though mostly conciliatory and ambiguous – while his official correspondence was filled with a sense of entitlement, indignation, pain, and rage. She wrote about her doubts, hesitations, and expressed her powerlessness. Tadeusz apparently suffered as both the spouse left behind and the potential emigrant waiting in vain for the call to leave.

11 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1; Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, henceforth AŻIH), 301/6612; Yad Vashem Archives (henceforth YVA), M.31.2/5604.

12 For a list of all the names Fajga used, see Benhaiem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 252.

For many years after Fajga's departure, between 1946 and 1973, Kobyłko corresponded with Jewish and non-Jewish institutions, describing his role in her rescue. He was determined to gain their support and to encourage them to intervene on his behalf, both in Poland and in Israel. Yet, there was more to Kobyłko's relationship with rescued Jews than the hope that his wartime heroism would help him prosper in the new postwar Poland.<sup>13</sup> At first, he simply hoped to locate his wife in Israel. Later, he sought to gain moral support and recognition. Tadeusz's letters shed light on how carefully he curated the tale of what had happened between him and Fajga. Moreover, they are witnesses to his understanding and warped perception of Jewish power and influence in Poland and abroad. In the 1970s, Kobyłko also documented his wartime story in letters to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which were subsequently used in proceedings on his behalf as these records also led to his posthumous recognition as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1993, following the initiative of Ita Keller.<sup>14</sup> In his writings, Tadeusz stressed his positive attitude towards Jews in general and his heroic efforts in rescuing Fajga and Ita, without recounting details of the likely bargain between him and his wife. His account followed the convention of many applications for the title of the Righteous Among the Nations by focusing on rescue, sacrifice, and martyrdom. In general, they were unlikely to discuss any wartime arrangements that might have hurt the chances of recognition: for example, if the rescue was of one's own Jewish family or if it was arranged through sexual coercion, barter or payment in exchange for help.<sup>15</sup>

13 In the spring of 1949, Kobyłko was issued a formal confirmation of his assistance to Jews signed by the Jewish Religious Congregation in Bytom. The document confirmed that Kobyłko had helped Jews and "raised them in his milieu." See USHMM, Ita Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Zaświadczenie Żydowskiej Kongregacji Wyznaniowej [Certificate of the Jewish Religious Congregation], Bytom, 3 March 1949.

14 Ita Keller described her journey and search for information about Tadeusz in her memoir, see Benhaiem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 105 and 130–133. For a list of the Righteous among the Nations from Poland, see Righteous among the Nations Honored by Yad Vashem by 1 January 2020, <<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/pdf-drupal/poland.pdf>> (25 July 2021). See YVA, M.31.2/5604, Righteous among the Nations. There seems to be a growing interest in this field of inquiry, see, e. g., Selma Stern Zentrum für Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg (ed.), *Die "Gerechten unter den Völkern" Yad Vashems*, <<https://www.selma-stern-zentrum.de/PostDoc-Akademie/Gerechte-unter-den-Voelkern1/index.html>> (25 June 2022).

15 See Gusarov, *Sexual Barter and Jewish Women's Efforts to Save Their Lives*; Jan Grabowski, *Rescue for Money. Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939–1945*, Jerusalem 2008. On the Righteous among the Nations, see Kobi Kabalek, *The Exception Proves the Rule. "Useful Untruths" in the Memory of the "Righteous among the Nations" in Israel* (forthcoming).

## The Rescue in Lwów

Tadeusz Kobyłko and Fajga Ginsberg were, to say the least, an unlikely couple. She was raised in a traditional Jewish family and probably attended a religious Bnos Yaakov school for Jewish girls, which belonged to a network of new institutions devoted to strengthening the religious commitment of Jewish women.<sup>16</sup> Before the war, she was a member of a Zionist youth movement, preparing to emigrate to Palestine and about to get married.<sup>17</sup> In her registration card issued by the local Jewish committee in Bytom, Fajga only gave basic information about her background and the circumstances of her survival, as many Polish Jews who registered in Jewish committees in postwar Poland did.<sup>18</sup> She stated that she was born on 31 December 1913 in Rymanów to Rywka and Solomon and that she survived “in Lwów with Aryan papers.”<sup>19</sup> Tadeusz was a native of Lwów who was born on 15 July 1913 to Józef and Stefania née Boczyluk.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the available documents – especially his own testimonies – do not allow for a reconstruction of his social background or an early biography.

Having fought in the Polish army in September 1939, Kobyłko managed to avoid capture and returned to Lwów. Under the Soviet occupation, he worked in the chocolate, sugar, and marmalade factory Hazet, which had

- 16 See Naomi Seidman, Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov Movement. *A Revolution in the Name of Tradition*, Liverpool 2019. Ita Keller described her maternal grandfather Shlomo Zalman Ginsburg as a Hassid of Sadigora, see Benhaïem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 227.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 253 f. Ita also remembered Fajga speaking “perfect German.” *Ibid.*, 255.
- 18 Jewish committees were secular grassroots organizations that fulfilled multiple functions for the communities of survivors: They were aid organizations helping survivors look for relatives and friends, organizing Jewish schools, and caring for Jewish orphans. They also appealed to local authorities in individual cases and communal matters. See David Engel, *The Reconstruction of Jewish Communal Institutions in Postwar Poland. The Origins of the Central Committee of Polish Jews, 1944–1945*, in: *East European Politics and Societies* 10 (1996), no. 1, 85–107.
- 19 AŻIH, *Centralna Kartoteka Żydów w Polsce 1945–1951* [Central File on Jews in Poland 1945–1951], 303/V/425/Gbn 1755/79930. She registered on 9 July 1946, giving her name as “Hanka Fajga Ginsberg” and her education as seven grades. According to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Fajga was born in January 1913 in Rymanów and her parents were Salomon and Ryfka (Rywka) Sojchert. See USHMM, Ita Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958. For information on her father, see the Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, <[https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&s\\_lastName=Ginzburg&s\\_firstName=Salomon&s\\_place=Rymanow&s\\_dateOfBirth=&cluster=true](https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&s_lastName=Ginzburg&s_firstName=Salomon&s_place=Rymanow&s_dateOfBirth=&cluster=true)> (25 June 2022).
- 20 See USHMM, Ita Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń [Description of the Following Events]. He described himself as a former professional non-commissioned officer of the Polish army, without property, and a white-collar worker without permanent employment, currently living in 59 Wolności Street, Apt. 16, Bytom.

belonged to a Jewish family before the war. Alongside his fellow Jewish employees, he was, in fact, also taken for being Jewish. In the summer of 1941, he assisted his numerous Jewish co-workers – particularly the young women – when Lwów came under German occupation. He provided them with food and hid them in his apartment as fear of a pogrom increased and they were unable to escape East with the retreating Russian army.<sup>21</sup> He also connected them with his trusted acquaintance Banach – a priest in the Saint Elizabeth Church – who issued forged documents confirming their “Aryan roots.” Likewise, Kobyłko claimed to have escorted some Jews to Stary Sambor (today Staryi Sambir, Ukraine) and Rymanów. While accompanying Jews away from Lwów, he encountered the Kellers, a Jewish family in Stary Sambor he described as the wealthiest in the city, who were harboring a group of orthodox Jewish intelligentsia.<sup>22</sup> He remained in touch with some of the Jews from Stary Sambor, for whom he served as a courier, delivering food and information.<sup>23</sup>

At some point in March 1942, during one of his trips or perhaps even already when working at the chocolate factory in Lwów, Kobyłko met Fajga Ginsberg.<sup>24</sup> In one of his postwar letters to the Israeli Legation in Poland, he explained how their relationship began, reporting vaguely that they lived together shortly after he had helped her escape “on the way to the camp.”<sup>25</sup> In a later account, however, Kobyłko told a different story:

“In order to save at least one life, I persuaded the above-mentioned Jewess not to seek rescue in suicide and I proposed that she return to Lwów, where she would live as an Aryan with me as my supposed wife, hiding under the name of Maria Kobyłko.”<sup>26</sup>

While his family and friends knew nothing of Fajga, Tadeusz began to live as a married man, having been provided with a marriage certificate by Banach.<sup>27</sup> Kobyłko supported Ginsberg financially, especially when she was unable to work during her pregnancy and because the couple feared that, if she were to be registered, “any contact with the authorities always led to suspicions

21 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat [Whoever Saves One Life – Saves the Entire World], 1. The same document is attached to Kobyłko’s letter to the Jewish Historical Institute, see AŻIH, 301/6612, Bytom, 10 February 1973.

22 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 2.

23 Ibid., 3.

24 For the two different accounts by Kobyłko, see *ibid.*, as well as AŻIH, 301/6612, 3 f. See also Benhaïem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 18.

25 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.

26 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 4.

27 The marriage was supposed to have taken place in Gdynia in 1936. See *ibid.*, 8. In 1950, Kobyłko stated that he had never been married, see AŻIH, 301/6612, Odpis oświadczenia, Bytom, 16 May 1950.



and people like that sooner or later were discovered and killed.”<sup>28</sup> In December 1943, Fajga delivered their child at home with Tadeusz’s assistance.<sup>29</sup> Kobyłko explained that “as a result of cohabitation, a baby boy was born, who, with the consent of both parents, was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church and was registered there as a legal child based on the fake marriage certificate [...].”<sup>30</sup> If we are to trust his dates, Fajga gave birth to their son about nine months after their departure from Stary Sambor. It is therefore very likely that Adam was indeed Kobyłko’s biological son and that their relationship began to mirror the story that he had initially provided to explain Ginsberg’s presence in Tadeusz’s apartment.<sup>31</sup>

A few months after Fajga had arrived in Lwów together with Tadeusz to begin her life as his “Catholic wife,” he set out to Stary Sambor on an additional rescue mission.<sup>32</sup> Retrospectively, Kobyłko explained his decision to save the life of another Jewish girl, whom he apparently “took from her parents’ hands, motivated only by humanitarian feeling because she was a relative of his female ward [...].”<sup>33</sup> Fajga’s sister, Salka Keller, had hidden her young daughter Ita in the basement during the forced deportation of all remaining Jews to nearby Sambor. Tadeusz carried the child in his arms, escaping on foot from Stary Sambor, and transported the toddler to Lwów. He noted that Ita, who spoke in “the Jewish jargon,” meaning Yiddish, had to be drugged with sleeping pills during their escape. Kobyłko concluded, “In this way, I became the stepfather of a child who took on the name of Irena Kobyłko.”<sup>34</sup> In addition to Fajga and Ita, he also helped other Jews by giving them shelter, providing food, clothing, false documents, and by personally accompanying them to safety. His apartment became a hub for Jews who escaped from the ghetto and sought temporary refuge: “Given my wife’s background, my apartment was known as the safest point in the first stage of

28 YVA, M.31.2/5604, *Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat*, 7.

29 *Ibid.*, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Bytom, 10 October 1972. According to the copy of Adam Kobyłko’s birth certificate, issued in Lwów, he was born on 11 December 1943, see AŻIH, 301/6612, fol. 755987.

30 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, *Opis ciągłości wydarzeń*. See also *ibid.*, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Consulate in Warsaw, 21 December 1948.

31 Ita Keller recalled that Fajga told her in 1976 that Adam was Tadeusz’s son and that she had tried to end the pregnancy unsuccessfully. See Benhaiem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 108.

32 YVA, M.31.2/5604, *Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat*, 5. For information on Ita Keller’s father Shlomo, see the Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, Shlomo Keller, <<https://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=3936984&ind=7>> (25 June 2022).

33 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, *Opis ciągłości wydarzeń*.

34 YVA, M.31.2/5604, *Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat*, 7.

every escape, where plans for helping various groups and Jewish individuals were thought out.”<sup>35</sup>

Relying on his small circle of relatives, trusted friends, and his limited resources, Tadeusz struggled to support his new family. They lived in constant fear of his non-Jewish associates. When Kulparkowska, the street they lived on, was searched, Kobyłko intervened while Fajga hid in the cesspool and – fearing arrest and torture – tried to commit suicide by taking poison.<sup>36</sup> Later on, in light of the persistent threat of denunciation by their neighbors, they were forced to move, resulting in the loss of Tadeusz’s abandoned property.<sup>37</sup> The need to change addresses whenever suspicions of Fajga’s real identity arose among neighbors further impoverished him.<sup>38</sup> Kobyłko recalled one particularly dangerous incident when, during his absence in April 1944, his family was arrested under suspicion of being Jewish. Having been warned of the impending danger earlier, he managed to secure their temporary release and escape. Following this incident, Tadeusz, Fajga, and the children hid together on the outskirts of the city. They survived under very trying conditions, “leading a life of vegetation,” until July 1944, when the Red Army arrived in Lwów.<sup>39</sup>

### In the Aftermath of Liberation

The couple’s situation did not immediately change after liberation. The family continued to live together and they registered as a married couple on 14 October 1944, with the annotation that they had lived in an “official” marriage since 1941, using Fajga’s false war-time identity. In his testimony, Tadeusz explained that he could not share the information about being “connected with people of Jewish descent because antisemitism was very strong in our country then.” Thus, Fajga chose to continue using his name as her “legal name” for the rest of her life. According to Kobyłko, they moreover

35 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.

36 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 8.

37 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń. They moved to 35 Solnicza Street.

38 See YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 7–9; USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, 28 November 1958.

39 Idem, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

decided “to raise the children in the Polish spirit. They were never to find out about their Jewish descent.”<sup>40</sup>

In September 1945, the Kobyłkos arrived in Bytom as part of the so-called repatriation wave of Polish citizens moving west from the territories that had become part of the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup> Tadeusz began working in a coal mine, while Fajga cared for the children, but the family struggled and suffered from “psychological exhaustion” following their wartime ordeal.<sup>42</sup> They therefore decided to seek assistance and so Kobyłko agreed for his wife and adopted daughter to register with the local Jewish committee. His son Adam, however, was not mentioned in the registration.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the secular Jewish committee became directly involved in the Kobyłko’s lives. Tadeusz also wrote to the Rabbinical Council in Tel Aviv to notify Fajga’s sister Rachela, who had emigrated there in 1936 and married Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Edelstein, about her sister’s survival.<sup>44</sup> The couple drew the attention of rabbis who sought information about Fajga’s fate. In particular, Rabbi Yehuda Elinson visited the family whilst travelling via Katowice in May 1946. Elinson was a member of a rescue delegation of rabbis who had traveled to Europe from Palestine in 1946 with the mission of locating Jewish child survivors.<sup>45</sup> Kobyłko remembered that upon learning of Fajga’s marriage to a non-Jew and raising a child with him, Rabbi Elinson expressed indignation and informed her family in Palestine about the disquieting situation.<sup>46</sup>

Because of their renewed contact with the Jewish community, the Kobyłkos were also approached with propositions concerning Ita Keller’s future. First, Kobyłko was offered to place the girl in a Jewish orphanage, but he declined because of his emotional attachment to the child as well as his opposition to “making the child aware of her being an orphan and

40 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 13.

41 On Jews settling in the new Polish territories, see Kamil Kijek, *Aliens in the Lands of the Piasts. The Polonization of Lower Silesia and Its Jewish Community in the Years 1945–1950*, in: Tobias Grill (ed.), *Jews and Germans in Eastern Europe. Shared and Comparative Histories*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2018, 234–255; Katharina Friedla, “A Naye Yidishe Heym in Nidershlezye.” *Polnische Shoah-Überlebende in Wrocław (1945–1949). Eine Fallstudie*, in: S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 1 (2014), no. 1, 32–42.

42 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 13.

43 USHMM, Ita Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

44 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 13.

45 On the mission of Rabbi Yitzhak Herzog, the chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Palestine, who traveled to Europe to plead for locating Jewish child survivors, see Nachmany-Gafny, *Dividing Hearts*, 108–110, 173 f. and 265.

46 Rabbi Elinson had multiple ties with Fajga’s brother-in-law, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Edelstein (1892–1950) of Ramat Hasharon. See the interview with Rabbi Yaakov Edelstein by Tzvi Yaakovson, 23 March 2017, <[http://beinenu.com/sites/default/files/alonim/176\\_22\\_23\\_77.pdf](http://beinenu.com/sites/default/files/alonim/176_22_23_77.pdf)> pp. 4–5> (25 June 2022).

her [Jewish] background, which could do irreparable harm and expose me to unpleasant humiliations.”<sup>47</sup> Kobyłko received a visit from one “Captain Poker,” likely Aharon Beker, who introduced himself as a representative of a Jewish charitable organization and notified Fajga that her relatives in Palestine wished for her to join them. Poker (Beker) also wanted to place Ita Keller in a Jewish orphanage in the neighboring town of Zabrze and offered Tadeusz 30,000 złoty as reimbursement for his wartime expenses.<sup>48</sup> Kobyłko did in fact voluntarily hand over Ita to the Jewish Religious Congregation in Bytom in the summer of 1946 to be brought up and educated among Jews, because he found himself in a “difficult material situation and [had] no resources to support the child, and her parents [were] no longer alive.”<sup>49</sup> At the time, Tadeusz believed that the Jewish organizations were preparing the Kobyłko family’s “emigration together from the country.”<sup>50</sup> Without warning, on 18 August 1946, Fajga and the children were called upon to leave Bytom, though Fajga assured Tadeusz they would resume their married life in Palestine.<sup>51</sup> It remains unclear as to whether Tadeusz decided to stay behind himself or whether he was prevented from leaving with them.<sup>52</sup>

Left on his own, Kobyłko continued to believe that their separation was only temporary and that his family’s departure “together with other Jews to the accompaniment of the ‘Kielce pogrom’ was necessary.”<sup>53</sup> In his plans to follow them later, he pursued the possibility of emigrating to Palestine

47 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

48 Ibid. Aharon Beker, an activist of the Zionist religious Mizrahi movement, served as a military chaplain in the Polish army and assisted Rabbi David Kahane, chief military rabbi and head of the Association of Jewish Religious Congregations, in seeking Jewish child survivors who remained with non-Jewish individuals and institutions. On Aharon Beker, see Nachmany-Gafny, *Dividing Hearts*, 108 and 115.

49 AŻIH, 301/6612, Protocol, 16 July 1946. The meeting was held in the Jewish Religious Congregation in Bytom in the presence of Moses Neuman and two witnesses, Moses Gelbart and Ps[a]chic Löwenberg. Kobyłko described that he had been summoned to the Jewish Religious Community, where Rabbi Neuman praised him for helping Jews and painted an alluring picture of his life in Palestine to be prepared by his wife. Kobyłko accepted 50,000 złoty for raising a Jewish orphan in order to cover the cost of his family’s emigration from Poland. See USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

50 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, 28 November 1958.

51 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Consulate in Warsaw, 21 December 1948. According to Ita Keller, they traveled to Prague on the train, relying on the preparations carried out by Rabbi Herzog, see Benhaiem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 31 f.

52 In 1958, he blamed the security service for his inability to cross the border with his wife as he was “tendentiously hindered by the security service, despite the fact that at that time scores of Jews fled the country without any passport or repatriation formalities.” See USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56,” Warsaw, 15 October 1958.

53 Ibid., Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

and wrote to the Jewish Agency requesting a certificate to join his wife.<sup>54</sup> Afterwards, he inquired about the possibility of obtaining a visa for Israel.<sup>55</sup> Despite all his efforts, he was unsuccessful. Fajga, in fact, rejected the idea of living together with Tadeusz abroad in general and in Palestine in particular.<sup>56</sup> He received his last message from Ginsburg via the Jewish Agency for Palestine in December 1947.<sup>57</sup> While Fajga and the children settled in Israel, Kobyłko went on to marry a woman named Maria Słota and to raise a new family in Bytom.<sup>58</sup>

### Tadeusz's Account: The Rescue and the Betrayal

In his various letters to official Jewish and non-Jewish institutions, Kobyłko contrasted his merits of selfless assistance to Jews with a sense that he had been misled by them. What upset him most was the loss of his son. Not only was Adam taken away from his father permanently, he had been “made into a Jew” under the pressure from Jewish organizations. Defiantly, Tadeusz composed several accounts of his rescue efforts under the German occupation and his marital crisis after the war, but he obscured the precise nature

- 54 AŻIH, 301/6612, 37, Jewish Agency for Palestine's Emigration (Biuro Ldz 2557/47), Bernard Johannes and Mieczysław Wientraub to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Warsaw, 12 June 1947. This was a response to Kobyłko's letter to the Jewish Agency for Palestine's Emigration Department, 9 June 1947.
- 55 See *ibid.*, 36, Israeli Consulate (Azriel Ukhmani) in Warsaw to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 17 January 1949, where he was promised a tourist visa to Israel upon presenting a passport.
- 56 After Fajga had arrived in Palestine in the fall of 1947, all trace of her and the children was lost. Only when Tadeusz intervened with the Chief Military Rabbinate in Warsaw was he informed that his wife had rejected the idea of their living together. USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Certificate issued by the Jewish Agency's Department of Aliyah in Jerusalem, 25 July 1956. This document cites 29 October 1947 as the date of Ita's landing in Haifa. In his own account, Kobyłko stated that his wife had landed in Palestine on 20 November 1947. When he demanded an answer his wife responded by “clumsily explaining her unethical behavior [...] in order to mask and belittle the nature of the deeds, pushing the affair from the social plane to the one between two married individuals.” See USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.
- 57 AŻIH 301/6612, 38, The Jewish Agency for Palestine to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Jerusalem, 18 February 1948. See also USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.
- 58 In 1950, when Kobyłko was about to marry Maria Słota, he claimed that he had never been married before and that he was single. He acknowledged that the Jewish woman – Fani Ginsberg – who had lived with him was a “fictitious person” who hid under the name Maria Kobyłko. This very woman had given birth to a son whom he recognized. See AŻIH, 301/6612, 35, Tadeusz Kobyłko, Notarized Statement, Bytom, 16 May 1950.

of his relationship with Fajga. In a lengthy statement, most likely written in late 1948 or early 1949, he recalled hiding Fajga Ginsberg in “the bosom of my family” starting in March 1941.<sup>59</sup> In an account penned as late as 1972, he called his marriage “fictitious” and described Fajga simply as “a Jewess living with me” or as a “ward” (*podopieczna*).<sup>60</sup> This cautious wording, however, may have reflected the fact that the couple had not formally married. Later on, it could have stemmed from Kobyłko’s hope to remarry and his reluctance to harm his new family. At times, Tadeusz also blurred his and Fajga’s relationship to Adam. He explained that during the war, he had given refuge to a Jewish woman, protected and supported her, and “saved her from inevitable death.” His son was born “as a result of actual marital relations” and, “in order to keep up the pretense, he was baptized with his mother’s permission [...]”<sup>61</sup> Elsewhere, however, he stated that Fajga had already been pregnant when she had, “as fate willed it, found refuge by my side.”<sup>62</sup> He also obscured the identity of his son’s mother. In a letter to Agudath Israel’s headquarters in London, Kobyłko complained that when Fajga left Poland in August 1946, she not only took Ita with her, but also her “adopted son” Adam – Kobyłko’s biological child, born in December 1943 in Lwów – whom he now painfully missed.<sup>63</sup> In another letter he did not state explicitly that Adam was, in fact, the son of the “frightened Jewish woman.”<sup>64</sup> Rather, he noted that Ita Keller became his son’s sister after he brought her to his apartment in August 1942 and that later Fajga left Poland taking “his son” with her.<sup>65</sup>

Generally speaking, Tadeusz’s official accounts presented Fajga as frightened, weak, and utterly dependent on his resources, courage, and initiative, as a passive object in need of his help.<sup>66</sup> Notably, Kobyłko stressed that his partner had no intention of returning to her Jewish identity after the war, since after liberation and “in the process of assimilation, [...] [she] showed

59 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń. That timeframe – if recalled accurately – suggests that their relationship began already under the Soviet occupation, before the beginning of the German occupation of Lwów in the summer of 1941.

60 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 5–7.

61 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949.

62 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Bytom, 10 October 1972.

63 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to Agudath Israel World Organization London, 15 October 1958. He recalled a letter from Agudath Israel that he had received in April 1946, in which the organization had expressed interest in the fate of Fajga Ginsberg and her niece Ita Keller.

64 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958.

65 Ibid.

66 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 3.

no inclination to disclose herself to the surrounding Jewish community, but rather, she pressed for legalizing the union in the Registry Office in Lwów.<sup>67</sup>

Considering such accounts, the crucial question arises: Why did she leave him? Kobyłko blamed the “call of blood” and Fajga’s “nostalgia” for her own people, as well as the difficult conditions she faced after repatriation. This led to Tadeusz contacting Jewish institutions and Fajga’s relatives in Palestine. They, in turn, became responsible for what Kobyłko understood as the dismantling of his family.<sup>68</sup> While he received a letter of gratitude from her family, Fajga’s sister Rachela could not understand why their relationship continued after the war. Moreover, Rachela shared their address in Bytom with the Agudath Israel World Organization, which also became involved sending letters and representatives to the Kobyłkos.<sup>69</sup> Among these visitors was Rabbi Poker (Beker), who appeared in a Polish army uniform, spoke with Fajga in Yiddish in an attempt to convince her to escape from her husband together with the children, and promised her moral and material support. Moreover, a rabbi from Katowice named Gabel became involved with the family, hosting Fajga’s two aunts who had returned from the Soviet Union. Yet another rabbi – Kobyłko’s neighbor Dr. Moses Neuman – befriended their children through afterschool activities and meals shared in his apartment. Following his communications with Jewish representatives, Kobyłko was willing to consider converting to Judaism and leaving for Palestine together with Fajga and the children.<sup>70</sup>

During the war, Fajga had depended on Tadeusz for her survival, but now the power relations were reversed and the patriarchal order was threatened. In his letter, he seemed to ignore her various statements about the decisions she made independently. Tadeusz repeatedly complained that, after the war, the local Jewish community, organizations, and individuals took a keen interest in his wife, son, and adopted daughter. He even claimed to have been threatened with violence by a large group of Jews in the synagogue in Bytom if he refused to return the children to the Jewish community.<sup>71</sup> Kobyłko pointed to a number of key moments that supposedly proved an alleged Jewish “plot” against his marriage and his family. One instance of this followed his initial rejection of the offer to place Ita Keller in a Jewish orphanage. In response to his decision, the “Jewish society [...] used various Jewish organizations to exert pressure on the Jewish side of the marriage, expecting to cause the disintegration of the marriage in order to safeguard the usurper’s

67 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

68 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 13 f.

69 Ibid., 14.

70 Ibid., 14 f.

71 Ibid., 15.

rights to my wards and members of my family.”<sup>72</sup> As part of this “coordinated action,” which resulted in lengthy interventions in the “internal marital affairs of the two people,” Fajga and the children left for Palestine. He claimed that it was Jews who had convinced Fajga to “escape” with the children and promised to assist her:

“The very fact that a poor woman without any material means decided to set out for such a long and burdensome journey with two small children bears witness to the fact that my family’s emigration was financed and morally supported by some hidden powers in Jewish society.”<sup>73</sup>

Kobyłko accused “the Jews” and their “hidden international power” of “relentlessly pursuing the destruction of this mixed marriage,” thereby separating the spouses and, as a result, “obtaining two children” for the Jewish community.<sup>74</sup> His understanding of what transpired was not without historical and social context. For many relatives of child survivors and Jewish organizations, reclaiming children was vital for the sake of the Jewish people, especially following the losses suffered during the Holocaust.<sup>75</sup>

In a letter to the Jewish Committee of Katowice, dated January 1949, Kobyłko’s writing bore a particularly ominous and accusatory tone. He blamed “certain elements bound together in uniform solidarity” for breaking up his marriage by pressuring his wife to leave Poland and offering her extensive assistance to do so. He also questioned whether the “Jewish elements in the country and abroad had applied the politics of *fait accompli* with regard to the coordination of its society [*społeczeństwo*], which was justified by its higher obligation to take responsibility for harm done.”<sup>76</sup> He felt entitled to a visa so that he could visit his “children living in Israel who are Jews.” Not only did Kobyłko allude to the fact that he was eligible to obtain “moral support from the Jewish social organizations in Poland for the harm suffered”; he also demanded the matter to be investigated by a public forum.<sup>77</sup> In another account, Kobyłko requested to know who was responsible for the “artificial psychosis that led to the crisis of this mixed marriage. In whose interest did it lie to further isolate a married couple – neither of whom has filed for divorce until this very day?”<sup>78</sup> It is important to remember that Tadeusz was making these allegations during a period of worsening relations

72 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

73 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949.

74 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.

75 See Nachmany-Gafny, *Dividing Hearts*.

76 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Voivodship Committee in Katowice, Bytom, 5 January 1949.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., Opis ciągłości wydarzeń.



between Poland and Israel, which resulted in the closure of numerous Jewish organizations in the former country. His statements, then, may have been understood as a serious threat that not only used the language of the press but could easily be weaponized to attack the remaining Jewish communal organizations in Poland.<sup>79</sup> He insisted that his wife had been lured by the promise of a “peaceful existence in Israel” and had only agreed to a temporary separation. Thus, Tadeusz later felt he had been “betrayed” not only by individuals but by Jewish society as a whole.<sup>80</sup>

As part of this “powerful Jewish conspiracy” – Kobyłko claimed – Rabbi Elinson had pressured Fajga to have Adam circumcised before arriving in Palestine. “In this matter, my position as the child’s caretaker, father, and educator was utterly ignored.”<sup>81</sup> He repeated his charge of deliberate actions taken by Jewish individuals to separate him from his wife and implied that they had betrayed his trust and pressured his wife to continue on her journey with threats of withdrawing assistance. Here, he accused “the Jews” of taking Ita away from him, the Jewish orphan whose life he had saved and whom he had supported for a long time. However, the most concerning issue was him being deprived of the opportunity to raise his biological son. He went on to accuse the Jewish community of “racial antagonism” relating to his marriage:

“A male child born into a legal marriage who according to unwritten agreement was not a Jew and was not supposed to become one later, having a complete name and birth certificate, has been circumcised after all without full consent from both parents before landing in Israel and being admitted into the Jewish religious community.”<sup>82</sup>

Overall, in Tadeusz’s view, Fajga’s decision to emigrate was the result of coercion. Worried that she would be deprived of any assistance upon arrival, she gave in and permitted what he described as the “assault on the soul of a non-Jewish child.”<sup>83</sup>

79 See Bożena Szaynok, *Poland-Israel 1944–1968. In the Shadow of the Past and of the Soviet Union*, Warsaw 2012.

80 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958. He was able to establish that Ginsberg had arrived in Palestine and settled with her sister and brother-in-law. He recalled his wife’s letter of January 1949 with apologies for what had happened and assurances of her eternal gratitude for saving her life and supporting her. Ita Keller wrote in her memoir that Fajga had decided to stay with Tadeusz and promised Tadeusz that he would be joining her. See Ben-Haiem Keller, *Wall within My Heart*, 257.

81 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Consulate in Warsaw, Bytom, 21 December 1948.

82 *Ibid.*, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Voivodship Committee in Katowice, Bytom, 5 January 1949.

83 *Ibid.*, *Opis ciągłości wydarzeń*.

Born during the war and baptized a Catholic with his mother's permission, "following his father – a Pole – the child was supposed to opt for Polish citizenship."<sup>84</sup> He insisted that,

"Jewish organizations in the country and abroad supported my poor family morally and materially only in order to extract them from my influence and power and to educate the children, who constitute a sort of symbol of the Jewish nation, in the Jewish direction."<sup>85</sup>

Until the fall of 1946, Tadeusz had believed he was building a life together with Fajga and his son, but now the circumcision marked Adam as a Jew in an irreversible manner. Kobyłko recalled his wife's letter in which she expressed her feelings of being "incapacitated under pressure from her surroundings" and explaining that she was eventually forced to subject the child to circumcision before sailing to Palestine, despite the fact that she had intended to return to Poland.<sup>86</sup> Kobyłko's suspicions were confirmed when he discovered his family had stayed in Ramat Ha-Sharon with Fajga's brother-in-law, Rabbi Edelstein, who had indeed supported them morally and used his influence to bring them to Palestine. Much of Tadeusz's indignation stemmed from his helplessness in the face of the situation, namely the pressure his wife had endured and her own ambiguous feelings toward him. Ultimately, he lacked a language that avoided evoking notions of Jewish conspiracy.

By 1948, Kobyłko still felt his son's "rightful father" and, as such, demanded to see him.<sup>87</sup> In September 1949, in a desperate attempt to connect with his family, Tadeusz requested that the Polish Consulate in Israel intervene on his behalf and help him find his son, who, he suggested, had been "illegally kidnapped." He urged them to interrogate his wife, her sister Rachel, and Ita Keller.<sup>88</sup> Kobyłko wrote:

"I suspect that my son has been denationalized [*wynarodowiony*] through a name change and is being raised in an Israeli orphanage, not knowing his background, about which his mother – if she is still alive – maliciously does not inform him. I turn to the Consulate with the request to clarify the matter in Israel in order to lead me to the child, reinstate his name, and make him aware of his lineage."<sup>89</sup>

84 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949.

85 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Consulate in Warsaw, Bytom, 21 December 1948.

86 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949. The letter he mentioned was sent from Marseille on 29 July 1947.

87 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Consulate in Warsaw, Bytom, 21 December 1948.

88 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949.

89 Ibid. Curiously, he ended his letter "with a proletarian greeting." He assumed the mother may be dead, leaving the children at the mercy of fate.

Kobyłko envisioned divorcing his wife and integrating his son back into the Polish nation:

“As my son is approaching school age, I intend to make efforts to bring him back since, according to Polish law, a child older than 7 can be transferred to his father’s care. Lack of care constitutes a personal loss for the child and his father and a social loss for the Polish nation. Having given selfless service to the Jewish nation, I have the right to demand the return of my son, who was [...] abducted as a 2-year-old child from Poland, in order to not lose him to the decimated Jewish nation.”<sup>90</sup>

Ten years later, it seems that he still wanted to travel to Israel to see the children and check on their life situation and educational progress.<sup>91</sup> Beyond connecting with Adam and Ita, he wanted to ask his first wife why she had “acted like a pig” – all of this as part of the Polish authorities’ mandate to “defend the interests of Polish citizens.”<sup>92</sup> Whilst writing to the Israeli Embassy again in November 1958, Kobyłko complained that he had no chance to travel to Israel given his difficult situation, but he continued to be deeply interested in the fate of his son Adam.<sup>93</sup> He wrote in despair:

“For 12 years I have struggled with difficulties, have sought various contacts but hopelessly and in vain. With regret I concluded that I was ignominiously betrayed by those I served and for whom I wished the best, and because of whom I would voluntarily have died a martyr’s death, had the need arisen.”<sup>94</sup>

He lamented that his son and adopted daughter “live somewhere in Israel forgotten – their mother possibly dead; otherwise, it is impossible to believe that she gave no signs of life, knowing full well what and how much I sacrificed to save her.” Last but not least, Tadeusz also claimed to have heard that Adam was living under a different name and studying at a rabbinical seminary.<sup>95</sup>

Kobyłko reacted strongly to the rumors that Ita Keller, as an orphan, had been arbitrarily taken away from him, “returned to the Jewish community, and placed in the orphanage in Israel,” because she had no close relatives and nobody was claiming the child.<sup>96</sup> Kobyłko recalled with pride that he had res-

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.

92 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958. Kobyłko asked for assistance citing the same mandate he referred to when he wrote directly to the Consulate in Jerusalem. See YVA, M.31.2/5604, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the People’s Republic of Poland in Jerusalem, Bytom, 10 February 1959 (copy).

93 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Voivodship Committee in Katowice, Bytom, 5 January 1949.

cued and cared for Ita. He felt ambivalent about having been deprived by the “Jewish society in Israel” of his rights and about not having been properly reimbursed for her upkeep.<sup>97</sup> In his correspondence, Tadeusz repeatedly expressed his claim to Ita – but approached the return of his adopted daughter differently than that of his biological son. In 1949, while he did not oppose her “return to her national family,” he expected to be compensated for feeding, clothing, and supporting her for several years.<sup>98</sup> In 1958, he longed for his son and was pained by the fact that his adopted daughter did not know about her “miraculous rescue, or the man to whom she owed her life.”<sup>99</sup>

Kobyłko also wrote letters to the political arm of Orthodox Jewry, which he saw as directly involved in the breakup of his family. An influential political party in interwar Poland, Agudath Israel was not allowed to renew its activities after the war in Communist Poland. But Tadeusz wrote to the headquarters of the Agudath Israel World Organization in London hoping for information and moral recognition.<sup>100</sup> What hurt him the most, apparently, was the fact that his adopted daughter was unaware of his role in saving her life and, accordingly, could not express her gratitude. Neither did the Jewish community recognize his virtue. Instead, he encountered “shameful disappointment from the Jewish community, and this sense of wrong grows every day with my suffering, which I experience only because of my heroism and humanity with regard to wretched [Jewish] victims.”<sup>101</sup>

In the way he mentioned the intervening of rabbies, who began to separate Adam from his father and performed a Jewish religious ritual on the boy’s body, and – by extension – on his baptized soul, Kobyłko appears to be confusedly echoing the blood libel. In his accusations against Jewish organizations, individuals, and Jewish society at large, he linked their “religious and national racism” with tormenting his wife “into blind obedience with regard to the fate of her children.”<sup>102</sup> In Kobyłko’s eyes, his son, in particular, was victimized; by “changing his lineage, he was deprived of his father and motherland.”<sup>103</sup> Moreover, Tadeusz’s personal data was “falsified in order to ensure [his son’s] complete isolation from his natural father and his complete

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958.

100 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Agudath Israel World Organization in London, 15 October 1958.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, Bytom, 15 September 1949.

103 Ibid.

denationalization.”<sup>104</sup> So, while he alluded to the kidnapping of a Christian child by Jews, including by rabbis, Kobyłko was careful to phrase this action in secular and ethnic terms. Indeed, in one of his accounts he revealed that he had agreed to convert and leave for Palestine together with Fajga and the children.<sup>105</sup> In this undated testimony written in the early 1970s, Kobyłko also stated his positive attitude toward conversion before, during, and after the war.<sup>106</sup>

Tadeusz’s correspondence addressed not only his personal crisis, but also his social predicament expressed through the lack of recognition for rescuers in postwar Poland. In the period immediately following liberation, rescuers asked for their names not to be revealed for fear of retaliation from their compatriots. In his 1958 letter to the Israeli Embassy, Tadeusz despairingly detailed how, instead of respect for saving Jewish lives, he encountered humiliation and harassment:

“The surroundings in which I am forced to live do not address me differently than a nasty Jew, and it libels, persecutes, and provokes me to such a degree that, despite favorable social and political conditions in our country, I feel uncomfortable and believe my safety is at risk.”

It was not only he who was targeted, but also his new wife whom he had married after Fajga’s departure, as well as their three young children aged eight, five, and four. Kobyłko reported:

“My wife is 17 years younger, and people point out to her that she has no shame living with a Jew and so on. She cries all day long and complains about her fate; she wants to leave me because of it and head to Germany and is working toward this, and what can I do? I have nothing to do but to ask for your moral assistance.”<sup>107</sup>

In his letter to Agudath Israel, he also exclaimed that not only did “the Jews” ignore his merits, Polish society also disregarded his heroism and, indeed, scolded him for it. Living in postwar Poland, he was “accused of being a Jew,” which humiliated him because he was not a “real Jew.”<sup>108</sup>

Hoping to change his situation, Kobyłko used every channel at his disposal and, in 1958, he took his story to *Fala 56*, a popular radio program that in-

104 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Voivodship Committee in Katowice, Bytom, 5 January 1949.

105 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Kto uratował jedno życie ludzkie – uratował cały świat, 14.

106 Ibid., 14 and 20. The document ended with best wishes to Marian Fuchs, the director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, who headed the institution from 1968 to 1969 and from 1971 to 1973.

107 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Israeli Legation in Poland, Bytom, 28 November 1958.

108 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Agudath Israel World Organization in London, 15 October 1958.

tervened on behalf of its listeners.<sup>109</sup> Through this venue, he no longer hoped to locate his wife or reconnect with his son. Rather, he introduced himself as someone who had helped Jews during the war, had acted courageously, and thus deserved recognition and moral support. His emotional pain was exacerbated every day by his “suffering and life of disgrace.”<sup>110</sup> Indeed, Kobyłko’s letters during the same period focused on his experiences in Poland after the war, when he encountered contempt and derision for his association with Jews, rather than respect:

“I am called a Jew and my wife is gossiped about for shamelessly living with a Jew without a wedding, although I married her, despite being an atheist, not only in a civil but also a church wedding. My children are also persecuted for this reason. Nobody defends me, no one from Jewish society cares; quite the opposite: they injure me whenever they can.”<sup>111</sup>

Kobyłko asked the radio to notify the appropriate agencies so that his voice would finally be heard. He hoped that the popular radio program would offer him advice and help him to move to another town in Poland, where he could live a peaceful and modest life with his family. He believed that this would put a stop to the harassment, freeing him, his wife and young children from this “cruel trap.”<sup>112</sup> In his quest, Kobyłko positioned himself as a loyal citizen of the People’s Republic of Poland, arguing that he could also have written to Radio Free Europe, where the “enemies of the people” would be more than eager to help him. Furthermore, he also wanted to contact the board of the “Żegota decoration,” which was awarded for “showing humanity” and which he believed he deserved.<sup>113</sup>

Kobyłko’s final preserved letter was penned in February 1973 and addressed to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which was, by that time, recognized as the state institution dedicated to the documentation and

109 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958.  
110 Ibid.

111 Ibid. Kobyłko’s situation in Bytom likely became particularly uncomfortable around the time of the “Polish Thaw” of October 1956. See Paweł Wieczorek, “Sztuczny antysemityzm.” *Antyżydowskie wystąpienia na Dolnym Śląsku w 1956 roku* [“Artificial Antisemitism.” *Anti-Jewish Demonstrations in Lower Silesia in 1956*], in: Konrad Zieliński/Kamil Kijek (eds.), *Przemoc antyżydowska i konteksty akcji pogromowych na ziemiach polskich w XX wieku* [Anti-Jewish Violence and the Contexts of Pogroms in Poland in the Twentieth Century], Lublin 2016, 211–248.

112 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 15 October 1958.

113 Ibid., Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Polish Radio “Fala 56” in Warsaw, Bytom, 28 November 1958. He followed up on his first letter with another plea for help dated in November 1958. It is unclear what decoration Kobyłko had in mind since the newly established Righteous among the Nations Department in Yad Vashem first granted the title only in 1963.

commemoration of the Holocaust.<sup>114</sup> He attached a detailed description of his assistance to Jews during the war, which he instructed the institute to use as it saw fit. In return, Kobyłko asked for

“at least some moral assistance based on my humanitarian deeds at the time of the occupation because today, in the current milieu, I am considered an object of mockery by people who come from the postwar generation and understand nothing about these painful and difficult sacrifices made for the good of one’s neighbor.”

This letter contained an in-depth account of Tadeusz’s rescue activities in Lwów, revealing intimate aspects of his efforts while sometimes obscuring the details of others. What emerges from this account, more clearly than in any of his earlier reports, is a complex story of rescue that also hints at sexual barter under conditions of duress and his emotional attachment to his wartime family, which persisted for years thereafter.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, he declared:

“I myself have done a lot for the Jewish population in the region of Lwów-Sambor-Drohobycz, and I have substantial evidence, in particular for the entire period of the war beginning in March 1942 until 18 August 1946 [a period when he lived with Fajga]; I fed, brought up, and went through great pains with a family that was classified as Jewish according to the Nuremberg Laws.”<sup>116</sup>

Thus, Kobyłko stressed the broader context of his rescue of Fajga and saw a continuity in his protecting and taking care of his Jewish charges during and after the war.

### Fajga’s Account: From a Pragmatic Relationship to an Emotional Bond

Throughout the period of their correspondence, Tadeusz came to believe that even the letters Fajga had sent to him from Europe, in addition to those sent from Israel, were part of an elaborate plan to prevent him from chasing after the family.<sup>117</sup> Read from Fajga’s perspective, they are evidence of her emotional turmoil. With few outlets for her painful past and fear of what may come next, letter-writing provided a platform to reflect on her choices.

114 AŻIH, 301/6612, 12, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Bytom, 10 February 1973.

115 On sexual barter, see Anna Hájková, *Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide. Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto*, in: *Signs* 38 (2013), no. 3, 503–533.

116 YVA, M.31.2/5604, Tadeusz Kobyłko to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Bytom, 10 October 1972, 1.

117 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, *Opis ciągłości wydarzeń*.

In contrast to the official and, at times, very angry writings of Tadeusz, her letters reveal a drastically different side to the story. Fajga's letters to her husband place their relationship in another light, one full of ambiguity. Her heart-wrenching, emotive, and sympathetic letters to Tadeusz suggest that Fajga struggled with her decision to leave Poland. She tried desperately to reason with herself and with him, reevaluating and explaining her decision, and looking back on their difficult liaison.

In the early stage of her departure, she still identified Tadeusz's primary responsibility as a provider for the children and was angry at him for not seeking a permanent job "so that the children could have their home and father. [Instead] you only think about how to get money as recompense for the wife and children who left."<sup>118</sup> Her expectations of Tadeusz's continued role in the family are evidenced by the fact that she suggested that he ought to be sending her money. Therefore, their relationship was not over. Moreover, the couple seemed to be emotionally bound to one another: In a letter sent to Tadeusz from Schirmeck in Alsace written in November 1946, Fajga complained that he did not write often enough. She wanted to know details about his life and assured him of her faithfulness. She also asked him flirtatiously if he liked the picture she had sent, implying that she still wished to be desired by him as a romantic partner.<sup>119</sup> A few weeks later, she sent Tadeusz a picture of herself with the children, worrying that "when you see me, you will lose the desire to come here," and asked him for a picture as well, inquiring about his social life and drinking habits.<sup>120</sup> Fajga repeatedly reassured Tadeusz of her loyalty and disinterest in marrying another man.<sup>121</sup> In the midst of the emotional reckoning and the challenge of crossing borders with two small children, Fajga shared with her husband personal details about her daily life in transit, such as her plans to have her teeth fixed.<sup>122</sup>

In several of her letters, Fajga reconsidered her decision to emigrate and to leave behind the country where she had an apartment, spoke the language, and could find a decent job. Life in France proved hard and, without knowing the language, only menial jobs were available to her.<sup>123</sup> In the fall of 1946, she mentioned some Poles who had decided to return, discouraged by their current living conditions abroad; she even considered returning to Poland

118 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 10 November 1946.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947. She signed her letter "Your Manusia," wishing him health and joy, and sent him "kisses" from herself and the children.

121 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Strasbourg, January 1947. See also *ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.



together with the children in the following spring.<sup>124</sup> A few weeks later, still in Schirmeck, Fajga penned a letter full of uncertainty. In response to some news about an unfortunate incident involving Tadeusz, she went on to berate him for his lack of control over his drinking. Fajga felt depressed about their situation as a couple, having realized that no organization would help reunite them, nor would she be able to bring him over to France of her own accord. Consequently, she advised her husband to stay put, though she appeared confused as to what she should do next. Regretting her hasty departure from Poland, she still thought of returning. Settling down abroad required money and assistance, and she was not sure whether her brother Bernard, who had lived in France for thirty years, was going to be able to help. Fajga wished her family could live together in peace at long last “after harsh experiences.”<sup>125</sup> She wanted Tadeusz to pursue a career and promised to help since their son was no longer a baby. Appealing to his position as a father, she implored Tadeusz to be careful, if not for his wife, then for his son who was “worth living for.”<sup>126</sup> But she also wrote bitterly:

“From afar one sees everything in different colors. If only you knew how all of this disgusts me: the organizations, parties, propaganda, quite like in R[ussia]. I would have run away from all this mess, but I have nowhere to go. I am sure that if we had left together, you would have run away after a week to settle down on your own. Without cash it is impossible to settle; [some] people live in hotels in Paris for eight to ten months, but these are people who came from Poland with thousands of dollars.”<sup>127</sup>

At other times, Fajga congratulated Tadeusz on his decision to stay behind, describing the grimness of her life in transit.<sup>128</sup> She conveyed to Tadeusz a general feeling of displacement and temporariness concerning her life in France, where she felt she had no future and lacked the funds to legalize her status.

Fajga explained to Tadeusz her reasons for leaving Poland: She did not know how to make a living and was afraid of poverty.<sup>129</sup> Tadeusz, she believed, had been right about not wanting to leave Poland in the fall of 1946. She felt lonely, yet preferred that he was not there with her as she believed they would have argued and that he would have blamed her for their difficulties. Fajga complained of harsh conditions and conflicts with her travel com-

124 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947.

125 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 23 February 1947.

126 Ibid. She ended the letter with, “Be well, I kiss you loads, missing you, yours, Maria.”

127 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 1 April 1947.

128 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947. In another of her letters, written already in Tel Aviv, she suggested Tadeusz would be grateful to her one day for dissuading him from emigrating. See *ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Tel Aviv, 1 December 1947.

129 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 13 March 1947.

panions. In light of all this, she could not understand how a non-Jew would want to leave Poland and did not wish her return. In exile, she exclaimed, life was hard, and one could not rely on anybody's help. "In Palestine it may be easier, because one gets an apartment, one works, though I do not know what salaries are like there."<sup>130</sup> She shared with Tadeusz her sister Rachela's impressions comparing life in Poland with Palestine and concluded that "a rich uncle sending some money would be nice." She saw no other solution for herself than finding work and sending her children to school, while Tadeusz waited patiently for his certificate. While she was a legal emigrant and received assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee, an American Jewish relief organization, she also worried that her marriage to a non-Jew would not have been looked upon kindly. Although the organizational framework could not forbid it even if she was married to a "Turk," she would have to pay a price by having to leave this institutional framework behind.<sup>131</sup> Fajga insisted that she did not care about Tadeusz not being Jewish and that it played no role in their separation: "for me you could have even been a Hindu, the rest are formalities without importance. We do not need any legal formalities to dissolve our marriage, neither a priest nor a rabbi. It is our moral issue, purely personal."<sup>132</sup>

Fajga alluded to her fearing the pressures to have her son circumcised and the false assumption that she had escaped from her husband and his control. For Fajga, Adam's circumcision was clearly tied to her decision to leave Poland. When she talked about it with her brother – as she noted in one of her letters – he recommended circumcision on health grounds, but suggested that "it made no sense if she were to return to Poland."<sup>133</sup> Once Fajga had made the final decision not to return to Poland, she knew it would have to take place.<sup>134</sup>

While still in Prague, Fajga missed her husband – thinking about how hard it must be for him. She also wondered if he knew subconsciously that their separation would not be short-lived and wanted to taste freedom. In the meantime, she began working for an organization – which she did not name – where she took care of Jewish refugee children. As in her other letters, Fajga alluded to her age:

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Tel Aviv, 1 December 1947.

133 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947.

134 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.

“Often, I am angry at the fate that put me in your life; I would not taunt you today and you would be happier. I see very clearly that I am not the appropriate wife for you, because I look ten years older than you, and in a couple of years, I will look like an old lady and you will be a man in his prime, and then what would you need an old woman for? Even in Bytom you felt awkward going out with me because I look grim.”

She wanted to know the truth: whether he had a new wife, but also whether he missed her.<sup>135</sup> Surprisingly, Fajga barely mentioned their wartime experiences. Rather, she focused on their ongoing marital problems and her fears of how her husband would treat her and the children in the future if she stayed or returned to Poland. Only by reading between the lines does her agony and despair during the war, which she realized had made the marriage possible in the first place, become evident. Profoundly conflicted, Fajga went on to imagine what would have happened to her children had she died in Poland. She pondered whether a future stepmother would have mistreated them.<sup>136</sup> In her letter sent from Schirmeck in January 1947, she informed Tadeusz that she had nearly died from a bad flu and bronchitis. Teasing him, Fajga wrote that, had she died, Tadeusz “would have had to be in mourning for a year and then remarry, but the children would have been miserable.”<sup>137</sup> These contradictions speak to Fajga’s fraught position in the relationship and the trauma she had experienced.

In her letter from November 1946, she berated Tadeusz for “arguing with the whole world.”<sup>138</sup> As this letter seems to indicate, she sought to shift his attention away from the representatives of Jewish organizations and to ease his anger toward the Jewish community:

“The matter of my departure is not a matter of – as you suppose – intrigue. I am of a certain age. Even if I left without your knowledge, it would not have been the doing of some Pokers [Bekers]. Do not think I am trying to defend someone.”<sup>139</sup>

Fajga repeatedly asserted her independence in her decision to leave Poland, insisting that she had not been pressured or influenced by others. She tried to present their situation as somewhat ordinary among young couples and their separation as a common occurrence: “Are we the only married couple splitting?”<sup>140</sup> Fajga assured her husband that her conscience was clear, she was

135 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 13 March 1947. The letter ended with, “Be well and enjoy yourself. Many kisses, Maria.”

136 See *ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 10 November 1946; *ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.

137 *Ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947.

138 *Ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 10 November 1946. She opened the letter stating that his last communication had filled her with “sadness and bitterness.”

139 *Ibid.*

140 *Ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Strasbourg, January 1947.

always honest with him, and reminded him that he wanted to leave Poland as well. She even suggested that he had refused to join her at the last minute.

“I wanted to leave because I had before my eyes a specter of poverty [...]. I admit I am not very resourceful in practical terms and I did not know what to trade in order to contribute to home maintenance.”<sup>141</sup>

In the same letter, Fajga asked Tadeusz to stop blaming “the weaker one,” meaning the woman, as a habit unworthy of a man and a reason for many arguments between them. The sentence, “whenever you failed in something, you always blamed me” suggested an unequal and mismatched emotional pattern in their relationship.<sup>142</sup> In another letter written in January 1947, Fajga stressed her husband’s abusive behavior that may have put her in danger under the Nazi occupation:

“You know well that when I repeatedly heard ‘get out’ and took my coat in order to leave and never come back, I saw before my eyes the child through which I was tied to you strongly, and only because of the child did I accept this treatment. Even in France, when I was at a crossroads where the heart told me to return, the logic said to where and to whom.”<sup>143</sup>

Fajga was also quick to remind Tadeusz that he treated her “worse than a maid” and she had “no more energy to cry.” She asked him to imagine how he would have responded to a new life in Palestine, without knowledge of the language, customs and conditions, performing hard physical labor in an unsuitable climate: “My nerves are so broken already that I could not bear more nagging after working all day.” Surely, she believed, they would have divorced anyway, as many other couples in Palestine did, due to the difficult living conditions. Thus, she observed, they were saving themselves the trouble by splitting from a distance. She pleaded with him:

“If you still have some sentiment for me, tell yourself that it is what it is, it is how it has to be. You will eventually bury the past and see that you will be happy. You will get remarried and then we can be good friends. But you are quite stubborn and vengeful. You will start using lawyers and, in that case, I will not speak a word to you. I could have disappeared now as well and not given you a sign of life. I was never engaged in shenanigans even if you are of a different view.”<sup>144</sup>

Fajga alluded to her mistreatment on the eve of her journey to Palestine, reminding Tadeusz that, while she was on the train to Prague, she did not enjoy freedom but rather suffered due to her separation from him. Her emotional suffering was in plain sight: “I am very emotional and when I grow attached

141 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Schirmeck, 15 January 1947.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Strasbourg, January 1947.

144 Ibid.

to someone, I do so heart and soul.” In France, she wanted to return to Poland but believed that Tadeusz did not want it because in the end he preferred to emigrate to Palestine. That, she claimed, helped her make up her mind.<sup>145</sup>

Ginsberg returned to the question of her looks, her age, and her fears that Kobyłko was going to abandon her when she looked old or that he would only stay with her out of a sense of duty. She wrote: “Age is always a serious problem in a marriage and a woman is always as old as her looks. When I looked young and nice, I was as old as I looked.” Now, however, she had to sustain her “passing youth by dyeing [her] hair and with artificial teeth, while you are young and look 10 years younger than your age, and when your anger passes you will admit that I am right.”<sup>146</sup> Fajga’s obsession with aging testifies to the effect that the Holocaust had on women’s perceptions of their bodies. She would not have entertained these thoughts – she insisted – if he had been a few years older than her, but now she wished for him to find “a young, healthy, and resourceful girl and be happy.” In one of her last letters to Tadeusz, Fajga confessed: “If I was younger and looked the way I used to, I would have taken the risk [of staying with him] for the children’s sake.” Repeating her worries about age, she added: “You will leave me with two young children, or will bring a lover home, or will let me feel that I am your ball and chain, and my life will be unbearable.”<sup>147</sup> In her letters, Ginsberg confessed to one “sin”: not revealing that she was, in fact, older than Tadeusz, which, according to Fajga, would have led to a broken marriage anyway, had she remained in Poland.<sup>148</sup>

Facing a great deal of uncertainty as she began her life over again, Fajga was forced to make heartbreaking decisions, such as putting her son in a children’s house, an educational institution for communal child-rearing, which was not uncommon for survivors struggling to take care of and provide for their children in postwar Europe and Israel.<sup>149</sup> She tried to explain to Tadeusz that “even married couples who have been in the country for several years are both forced to work and therefore put their children there.” Last but not least, she begged Kobyłko:

145 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.

146 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 1 April 1947.

147 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.

148 Ibid., Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Strasbourg, January 1947. She further suggested that she may leave for America where her uncle was preparing for her arrival and that she was eager to avoid the heat of the Palestinian summer.

149 On the vision and practice of organizing Jewish children’s homes in France, see Daniela Doron, *Jewish Youth and Identity in Postwar France. Rebuilding Family and Nation*, Bloomington, Ind., 2015, 162–197.

“Let it all be. I know you love the child and you maybe even like me a little from a distance, but you must tell yourself that what I did must stay this way. [...] You will see everything in a new light. You will marry and be happy. When the times change and if I survive, we will come to visit you, even from America.”<sup>150</sup>

She promised her gratitude if Tadeusz left her and the child alone. In one of her last letters, written in Marseille in July 1947, on the eve of her departure for Palestine, Fajga sought again to reason with Tadeusz:

“Please try to understand me at least now, because if you understood me, you would not have treated me the way you did. I wanted to be everything to you, but I was nothing. Can you try to comprehend how a woman feels when she is at her husband’s mercy?”<sup>151</sup>

She alluded to mistreatment that caused her emotional anguish and, at the same time, assured Tadeusz that her decision had not been taken lightly but after many sleepless nights, in “tears of helplessness.”

Fajga made passing references to difficulties in their relationship that would have recurred had they been reunited: He would have used hurtful words and she would have been unable to pretend she was not in pain. Indeed, she believed Tadeusz was much better off living alone in his own country, where he knew the language, had a roof over his head, and enjoyed the company of acquaintances and friends. She, on the other hand, suffered and longed for a friend and for family warmth. She complained about the people with whom she was emigrating: “When I look at these people, I ask myself where the intelligentsia is. Only plebs remain, people without culture, but miserable and tortured in German camps.” She feared she and her companions would not be allowed into Palestine and would, like many survivors, be interned in Cyprus by the British Mandatory administration, which sought to limit illegal Jewish immigration.<sup>152</sup> Fajga insisted that she had experienced more suffering than the pain she may have inflicted on him by her abandonment. Although she regretted that her children would not be raised by their father, she worried that they would resent her should they remain in Poland.<sup>153</sup> Fajga concluded that she deserved to be loved, but that her fate was to be different. Believing that it was “mutual understanding and true feeling [...] that links people together” rather than a wedding, she advised Tadeusz: “Tell yourself that I died.” At this crucial moment, she assured Tadeusz that

150 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobylko, Strasbourg, January 1947. She signed this letter, “Your friend, Fanka Ginzberg.”

151 Ibid.

152 On the British policies impeding Jewish immigration, see Arieh J. Kochavi, *The Struggle against Jewish Immigration to Palestine*, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (1998), no. 3, 146–167.

153 USHMM, Itta Keller Ben-Haiem Collection, 2007.129.1, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobylko, Marseille, 8 July 1947.

he would have regretted emigration, just like she did, and mused that if her ship was to be blocked from disembarking in Palestine, she would emigrate to the United States where an uncle would help her settle.

In April 1947, Fajga informed Tadeusz that she had decided to continue her journey despite her fears, but appeared to be painfully aware of the price: losing a husband, her home, and being alone. She expected to have no private life in Palestine either, where “only capitalists can afford private lives, so it is *kolkhoz*, *kibbutzim*, and this kind of crap again, which make me want to vomit.” Although she thought of herself as worthy of love, she felt at the same time that her life was broken, leading her to reveal a death wish: “Today I only ask God to take me as quickly as possible; the children will grow up without me.” Revisiting the fantasy of her return to Poland, Fajga feared that if she did go back Tadeusz would question her motives after a mere week. Still, she did not want to send the children back to Poland and tried to comfort Tadeusz with the promise that he would have other children and a happy life with a new wife. She did, however, express concerns that their son would ask about his father when he grew older. For this reason, as well as for herself, she asked him for a photo as a memento.<sup>154</sup>

In her last letter, written in December 1947, Fajga described briefly her first ten days in Palestine, where she felt “unbound, disgusted, and tired.” She again tried to dissuade Tadeusz from turning their personal disappointment into a political affair: “You are stylizing yourself as the hero of a romantic novel.” She did not deny that Rabbi Neuman was against their marriage and that “racial hatred is strong.” Most importantly, though, their relationship was doomed. Fajga felt that for Tadeusz, she was “like a red cloth for a bull,” and in her presence, he “always became irritated and angry.” She continued:

“If our relationship was based on mutual understanding and if we were happy together, you would not have let me out alone into the world with two small children and I would not have been able to decide to go into exile. I never, not even for a moment, suspected that our separation was permanent. I felt deeply, I missed you and suffered, but I had to decide either to return or continue carrying the heavy weight of life. I chose the latter because I feared not you but your nagging and biting [nature] which often drove me to such despair that I was ready to commit suicide. I am 100 percent sure that in another year or two, I would have ended up at *Kulparków* [a mental asylum] or gotten tuberculosis.”<sup>155</sup>

She again referred to their age difference and his hurtful comments about it and went on to explain that when she arrived, she at first lived in a hotel. She feared she would have to do manual labor: “After the hard experiences, after

154 *Ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, 1 April 1947. The letter ended with, “I kiss you many times very dearly, Maria. The children kiss their Daddy.”

155 *Ibid.*, Fajga Ginsberg to Tadeusz Kobyłko, Tel Aviv, 1 December 1947.

such suffering, I need some rest, and here it only begins.” She concluded that Tadeusz would have found this new start “impossible,” as he would have never accepted the conditions, the labor, and he would have taken his anger out on Fajga. She denied that their son was circumcised under duress, but explained that if the ceremony had not taken place right then, Adam might have been sent back to Poland. Moreover, she claimed her right to the child as his mother: “This is how it is in the whole world: When two people split up, the child stays with the mother, and I would be very hurt if you made a general affair out of it.” She asked him not to make her life “even more difficult, because it is not too easy already. Leave Bytom if it is unpleasant for you there. You are in your home country after all.”<sup>156</sup> She wished Tadeusz happiness and luck and asked him to write and tell her that he held no grudge against her and that they were free. Making a direct reference to Tadeusz’s role during the Holocaust, she concluded: “You gave me a lot – life, but if you loved me, this was only natural. I was a sincerely devoted wife to you, I did not betray you, even in my thoughts.” Notably, she signed this final communication using only her Jewish name, “F[ajga].”<sup>157</sup>

Fajga’s letters reflect her gratitude and her sense of emotional entanglement. However, it is also possible that she expressed her emotions in a way designed to convince Tadeusz to let her go. By flattering him and appealing to his good nature, she tried to ease the tension and reduce the risk of him lashing out angrily. Even her repeated references to her age, looks, and demeanor, while suggesting her own insecurity and lack of confidence in his continued commitment and devotion in the future, may have been designed to appease him, suggesting her decisions resulted from her failure to stay young and attractive in his eyes. Ultimately, the insecurities surrounding her looks and age, and the ambivalence about staying or leaving were all part of the bigger story of her trauma and its ongoing resonance in her life.

## Conclusion

The correspondence between Fajga and Tadeusz reflects the emotional turmoil in the aftermath of the Holocaust, when survivors faced questions about their immediate future: rebuilding their personal and communal lives while coming to terms with the scale of loss, seeking relatives and justice, and reclaiming property. It reveals how people who hid others and those who were

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.



hidden carried on, what life decisions they made, and what the repercussions of that were. The documents discussed here reveal two very different sides of a relationship. The contrast between Fajga and Tadeusz's interpretations of what had transpired between them during the war and in its aftermath reflects their intended audiences. Fajga wrote intimate letters meant for her husband's eyes only, while Tadeusz's letters appealed to a number of agencies – Jewish and Polish – and thus adopted a more official format. Fajga's account reflects the emotional trauma of Jewish survivors in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Yet it is not difficult to understand Tadeusz's anger as he turned against “the Jews” to win back his wife and children. His account outlines the pressures that postwar Jewish organizations exerted on Jews emerging from hiding, which has not been discussed at length in academic discourse. Fajga's letters emphasize the tension some Jews felt during this period: being torn between obligations to their rescuer or spouse and an expectation of returning to the Jewish community. Ultimately, Tadeusz did not dwell on the struggles that Fajga and other Jewish survivors faced. However, he understood the threat of postwar antisemitism in Poland, which not only affected Jews but also those who had helped them.

These letters shed light on the intricacies of wartime relations and surrogate families, which in the Kobyłkos' case turned into a legally recognized marriage with two children.<sup>158</sup> While the exchange of letters between Fajga and Tadeusz is both rich and uniquely explicit, many more testimonies indicate that Jewish men and women faced similarly complex decisions after the war. Should they have stayed in relationships, which had been based on shared traumatic experiences and fortified by a sense of dependency and gratitude to the people who played a crucial role in their survival? These unions often defied prewar class divisions as well as religious and cultural norms in Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Although we do not have insight into their most intimate musings, we can still glean from the survivors' testimonies, diaries, memoirs, and oral interviews how they coped with the issues of their wartime relationships after liberation. Fajga often reminded Tadeusz about their age and background differences, ultimately spelling out her gratitude, but also acknowledging that it was only the war that had brought them together. Their correspondence problematizes identities, stripping away the stereotypes of a “nationalist Pole” and a “self-conscious Jew.” Both of these categories prove to be

158 On the concept of “surrogate families,” see Natalia Aleksium, *Uneasy Bonds. On Jews in Hiding and the Making of Surrogate Families*, in: Eliyana R. Adler/Kateřina Āapková (eds.), *Jewish and Romani Families in the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, New Brunswick, N. J., 2020, 85–99.

oversimplifications that fail to capture the complexity of a relationship, particularly one initiated under duress during the Holocaust.

However, in the context of coming to terms with the bonds that developed during the war, the question arises as to what degree this was a genuine marriage to begin with. Were Jewish organizations and rabbis (including Fajga's brother-in-law in Palestine) at all involved in reclaiming her and the children? Did she expect her estranged Catholic Polish husband to follow her to Palestine? Or was she fleeing an abusive or potentially abusive marriage? While some of their personal drama stemmed directly from the history of rescue and their subsequent relationship, this unique story needs to be interpreted in the context of other wartime arrangements between Jews and their non-Jewish rescuers. Before the People's Republic of Poland ostensibly lifted religious and class restrictions on "mixed marriages," Jewish attempts to survive created a platform for these unlikely unions, as demonstrated by the remarkable and thorny relationship between Fajga and Tadeusz.

Na'ama Seri-Levi

“Gypsy-Nomads”:  
The Refugeeism of Polish Jewish Repatriates  
after World War II

The majority of Poland’s Jewry, some 230,000 people,<sup>1</sup> survived World War II and the Holocaust as refugees in the Soviet Union. They had either fled Nazi occupation, suffered forced removal, or were trapped with the arrival of the Soviet occupation forces. After the war, most returned to Poland as part of repatriation agreements signed between Poland and the Soviet authorities. Many of them, however, did not stay in Poland but rather continued westwards, pushing on to displaced persons (DP) camps erected primarily in American-occupied territories in Germany and Austria, where they soon became the largest group amongst the camps’ Jewish population.

Despite the great number of Polish Jewish refugees to survive the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, historians have paid them scant attention.<sup>2</sup> This has changed in recent times, when some notable studies have substantially expanded our knowledge of the circumstances of their flight to, and fabric of lives in, the Soviet Union, as well as their return to Poland following repatriation agreements.<sup>3</sup> Relatively few of these studies have dealt with the

- 1 Yosef Litvak, Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards, in: Norman Davies/Antony Polonsky (eds.), *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*, New York 1991, 227–239, here 235; Mark Edele/Wanda Warlik, *Saved by Stalin? Trajectories and Numbers of Polish Jews in the Soviet Second World War*, in: Mark Edele/Sheila Fitzpatrick/Atina Grossmann (eds.), *Shelter from the Holocaust. Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, Detroit, Mich., 2017, 95–131, here 115 f.
- 2 Davies/Polonsky (eds.), *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*; Shlomo Kless, *Borders, Underground, and Flight. Zionist-Chalutzian Activity in U.S.S.R. and the Connection of the “Yishuv” in Eretz-Israel with Them (1941–1945)*, Tel Aviv 1989 (Heb.); Yosef Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1939–1946*, Jerusalem 1988 (Heb.).
- 3 Eliyana R. Adler, *Hrubieszów at the Crossroads. Polish Jews Navigate the German and Soviet Occupations*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28 (2014), no. 1, 1–30; Edele/Fitzpatrick/Grossmann (eds.), *Shelter from the Holocaust*; Albert Kaganovitch, *Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities during World War II*, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 38 (2010), no. 2, 85–121. It was only after the final work on this article that Nesselrodt published his study: idem, *Dem Holocaust entkommen. Polnische Juden in der Sowjetunion, 1939–1946*, Berlin/Munich/Boston, Mass., 2019. In October 2018, the POLIN Museum in Warsaw held the workshop “Deported, Exiled, Saved. History and Memory of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1940–1959),” which was organized by Katharina Friedla and Markus Nesselrodt.

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time after the refugees' departure from Poland and arrival at the DP camps.<sup>4</sup> Shedding light on their paths from the beginning of the war until the early postwar years, with a particular focus on the period spent in DP camps, this article is a contribution to filling this gap. Its principal objective is to answer the question as to how the wartime experiences of Polish Jewish refugees shaped their lives after the end of the war.

The main argument presented here is that refugeeism was one of the central defining characteristics of this group, not only during the war itself but also in subsequent years, until at least 1947. It shall be demonstrated how this trait is a key to understanding some of the weighty decisions many of them made along the way. Their unique experiences, indeed, can offer a new periodization of refugee history for that period. The uprootedness this group had endured for many years set it apart from other types of DPs whose arrival in the camps preceded their own, above all survivors of Nazi labor and concentration camps, partisans, and individuals who had spent the war in hiding. In light of the fact that refugees from the Soviet Union soon made up the majority of Jews in the camps, an examination of this group's unique attributes can advance our understanding of the realities of Jewish existence in Europe post-1945.

The assumption that refugeeism constituted a central attribute of Polish Jewish survivors in Soviet territories pertains not only to their formal legal status but also their material, societal, emotional, and cognitive states.<sup>5</sup> The escape or deportation from their homeland left those people without the physical and legal protections of their country and in constant want of food, safety, and stability.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the temporariness of their existence – waiting for the end of the war, their return to Poland, or the transition to the next stopover – shaped their state of mind. The refugees who spent the war years in the Soviet Union numbered hundreds of thousands of people, dispersed

- 4 Laura Jockusch/Tamar Lewinsky, *Paradise Lost? Postwar Memory of Polish Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 24 (2010), no. 3, 373–399; Markus Nesselrodt, “I Bled Like You, Brother, although I Was a Thousand Miles Away.” *Postwar Yiddish Sources on the Experiences of Polish Jews in Soviet Exile during World War II*, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 46 (2016), no. 1, 47–67; Na'ama Seri-Levi, “These People Are Unique.” *The Repatriates in the Displaced Persons Camps, 1945–1946*, in: *Moreshet. The Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism* 14 (2017), 49–100. On the Polish Jewish population in the DP camps, see Tamar Lewinsky, *Polish-Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Germany*, in: Feliks Tych/Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Jewish Presence in Absence. The Aftermath of the Holocaust in Poland, 1944–2010*, Jerusalem 2014, 95–124.
- 5 Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted. European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, New York/Oxford 1985, 3 f. and 10 f.; Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees, 1939–52. A Study in Forced Population Movement*, Evanston, Ill., 1956, 22 f.
- 6 Andrew E. Shacknove, *Who Is a Refugee?*, in: *Ethics* 95 (1985), no. 2, 274–284.

across enormous geographic spaces and faced with diverse circumstances to which they responded in different ways. However, seen through the prism of refugeeism, as is proposed here, we may more acutely perceive and make sense of the conduct of individuals within this larger group.

The universal legal definition of “refugee” was only adopted after the war in 1951 and, in its wake,<sup>7</sup> as the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>8</sup> According to this definition, the term applies to,

“Any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”<sup>9</sup>

While adopted only after the events concerned in this paper, this definition was formulated in direct reference to the preceding events and may therefore be used as a point of departure for the debate to follow.<sup>10</sup>

Structured chronologically, the first part of this article briefly surveys the history of Polish Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union with the aim of illuminating how and under which circumstances they became refugees, and

7 The reality of refugees was well known before World War II. Immediately after World War I, international refugee organizations were established, including the Nansen International Office for Refugees under the League of Nations, founded in the early 1920s. However, they differed from the organizations which operated after 1945. There were also some earlier definitions of “refugee” relating to specific groups, such as Russians who could not enjoy the protection of the government of the Soviet Union anymore. See Tony Kushner/Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide. Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century*, London 1999, 11. See also Marrus, *The Unwanted*.

8 Kushner/Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, 10 f.

9 The basis for the 1951 definition were explicit references to events prior to January 1951. In the ratification of this treaty in 1967, however, these references were dropped, and it is this later version which is routinely evoked in international law today. In recent years, other definitions were included by the UN, such as “internally displaced persons,” denoting those who endured similar persecution but had not crossed an international border in flight. For the history of the concept of the refugee, see Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 5–11.

10 By the end of the war, the concepts “refugee” and “displaced person” were legally ratified together with different definitions by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and later by the International Refugee Organization. See Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism. Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, Ann Arbor, Mich., 2011, 43–48; Proudfoot, *European Refugees, 1939–52*, 402–406. For a full overview of the definitions of displaced persons and refugees in Germany, see *ibid.*, Appendix B, 445–468. The term “refugees” was primarily used to denote German citizens, whereas other people who found themselves in Germany and Austria or had been brought there by the Nazi regime were defined as “displaced persons.” The Jews released by the Allied forces were indeed considered “displaced persons,” although their status was more akin to what we refer to today as “refugee.” For an extensive discussion on refugees after World War II, see Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake. Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, Oxford/New York 2011.

how refugeeism arose as a central collective experience affecting their consciousness and conduct. The second part explores the return of the refugees to Poland following the repatriation accords (in this part and onward, I will be using the term “repatriates” instead of refugees). Even though part of the Polish Jews, including the repatriates, strove to reestablish Jewish life in Poland and founded several communities, many left Poland shortly after their repatriation. This point is duly discussed in the historical literature on the subject; however, I will venture a few observations as to how the experience of life outside Poland as refugees contributed to the ultimate decision not to resettle in Poland after the war.

In order to substantiate the claim that the experience of refugeeism during the war left an imprint on the conduct and decisions made afterwards, the third and primary part of the article will focus on the DP camps. While the article makes reference to testimonies of refugees throughout, this final part is based primarily on the perspectives of two Jewish relief agencies operating in the camps at the time: the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. This is due to the external but intimate insights administrators and volunteers of these organizations had into the lives of DPs. In other words, the fact that they themselves did not belong to the group but were enlisted to provide it with care and support allowed them a vantage point from which to observe and remark upon the divisions and differences within the camp population in an informed manner.

## Refuge in the Soviet Union

The refugeeism of Polish Jews began with the outbreak of World War II and the German invasion of Poland. By the time Nazi Germany marched into Soviet-annexed Polish territories in 1941, about 300,000 Jews had fled Poland for the Soviet territories.<sup>11</sup> The eastward flight began spontaneously and was prompted by the desire to escape the war's frontlines or by the attempt to reorganize Polish defenses. Later, those who were forcibly expelled by the invaders joined them.<sup>12</sup> For a few months, prior to their removal by Soviet

11 The number of refugees from Poland who fled to the Soviet Union has been discussed extensively and estimations vary greatly. See Edele/Warlik, *Saved by Stalin? For a discussion of the survival rate, see also Albert Stankowski, How Many Polish Jews Survived the Holocaust?*, in: Tych/Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Jewish Presence in Absence*, 205–216.

12 The latest article discussing gender, family, class, and geographical questions regarding that issue is Eliyana R. Adler/Natalia Aleksin, *Seeking Relative Safety. The Flight of Polish Jews to the East in the Autumn of 1939*, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 46 (2018), no. 1, 41–71.

authorities, most Jewish refugees continued to reside within the old borders of Eastern Poland as delineated before the Russian invasion and the partition of Poland. This led to congestion and overcrowding in cities, and a prevalent view of the presence of refugees as aggravation.

As time went by, the situation of refugees steadily deteriorated. With the Polish currency losing value, shops empty, and the black markets flourishing, Jewish refugees were forced to live on the streets, depended on soup kitchens or went hungry. The impossible conditions drove some to return to German-occupied territories,<sup>13</sup> as one refugee in Lvov reveals in his testimony:

“The situation in the Soviet-occupied territories is bleak. In the first months, finding any food or supplies proved to be impossible. Work, too, beyond reach, and those lucky few who managed to find employment through ‘favoritism’ are unable to live on the wages they are given for more than a few days. Desperation has taken hold of the residents, and a sizable majority now seeks to return to the German occupation zone if only to fill their empty bellies.”<sup>14</sup>

In 1940 and 1941, tens of thousands of refugees, Jews and non-Jews alike,<sup>15</sup> were arrested and exiled to Siberia and Kazakhstan, having either rejected Soviet citizenship, registered to return to Nazi-occupied Poland, or engaged in political movements such as Zionism or Bundism or illicit commercial activity.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, due to a shortage of employment in the annexed Polish territories, some refugees left of their own accord to work in the Soviet heartland as part of the rapid industrialization project that the regime had initiated. The horrific conditions in the Soviet labor camps and special settlements to which the refugees were exiled, which provided neither adequate shelter nor food, caused high rates of morbidity and mortality. Many found their deaths succumbing to frost and epidemics in the Northern provinces and in Kazakhstan. Natan Grinboim, then a 13-year-old refugee from Katowice, described the dramatic situation in the North in his late memoirs:

13 Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1939–1946*, 64–67.

14 Drishot shalom mi-shney shite ha-kibbush be-Polin [Greetings from the Two Occupied Territories in Poland], in: Ha-Boker [The Morning], 17 May 1940, 6.

15 For more information on the deportations of non-Jews, see, e. g., Jan Tomasz Gross/Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *War through Children’s Eyes. The Soviet Occupation of Poland and the Deportations, 1939–1941*, Stanford, Calif., 1981; Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity. Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II*, Pittsburgh, Pa., 2002; Halik Kochanski, *The Eagle Unbowed. Poland and the Poles in the Second World War*, London 2012, 136–162.

16 The Soviet ideological stance on Zionism or Bundism is beyond the scope of this article. For more on Soviet persecution of refugees and Polish Jewish citizens of Eastern Poland under the Soviet occupation, see Jan Tomasz Gross, *The Sovietisation of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia*, in: Davies/Polonsky (eds.), *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*, 60–76; Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1939–1946*, 127–169.

“The bread ration, which every worker received, was negligible. Its size was linked [...] to the work quota. In the frost and snow, almost no one could even meet their quota once. Service workers and those who did not go to work received much less. Other supplies were also restricted. People had colds and pneumonia. Death from disease and starvation became an almost daily sight. It hit mostly the elderly and the children.”<sup>17</sup>

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, cooperation between the Soviet authorities and the Polish government-in-exile began. With the establishment of diplomatic relations, former Polish citizens were granted amnesty and, as a result, refugees were released from internment; many opted to migrate southwards, seeking shelter in the southern republics of the Soviet Union, particularly Uzbekistan. The journey was arduous. The refugees, most of them physically weak to begin with, were dogged by a lack of provisions and poor weather conditions. Many of those who escaped the Nazi occupation or were evacuated by the Soviets joined the mass movement southwards. Some refugees enlisted in the Anders' Army or in different units of the Red Army.

In order to be eligible for food rations, refugees were required to settle, register a new address, and find employment. As this was seldom possible, migration carried on. Provinces of the Soviet Union where Polish Jewish refugees remained, having chosen not to emigrate southwards, such as Komi, Siberia, were also riveted by food shortages, inhumane working conditions, and endemic hygiene crises. The convergent circumstances of prolonged forced migration, sporadic incarceration, and disease outbreaks dismembered many families and orphaned children and dependents. Years after, Rivka Agron-Wolf described this difficult existence:

“The hunger stings, but there is nothing to eat. The authorities allotted rice in small portions. There is no soap. Well, at least there is water. People are dying. Everyday there are less and less friends and acquaintances around us. Father is terribly ill. Twice already, he was hospitalized in Bukhara, but they have no food or medicine either. Everything goes to the army. In the hospital, you lie on a plank bed without mattress [...]. Father returned from there exhausted. He preferred to die on the floor in the privacy of his room and to receive a Jewish burial, which would be impossible were he to die in the hospital at Bukhara.”<sup>18</sup>

17 Nathan Greenboim, *Ba-drakhim u-be-zide ha-drakhim. Pirke hayim ve-zikaron* [Along the Roads and Aside the Roads. Life Chapters and Memory], Tel Yitzhak 1993, 165.

18 Rivka Agron-Wolf, *Kol Metay* [All My Dead People], Jerusalem 2009, 74.



According to Yosef Litvak, about 35 to 40 percent of all Polish Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union died of starvation, disease, and hard labor.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, many young couples got married, brought children into this grim and dangerous world, and successfully preserved their families. Some Jews were absorbed into the local Soviet socio-economic fabric and others married local Jewish women. Impermanency notwithstanding, local religious and cultural initiatives began to form. Very few of the refugees secretly took part in political activities or joined pro-Soviet Polish organizations. This distinguished their situation as refugees from prisoners: They did find opportunities to rebuild their lives in the face of hardship and omnipresent uncertainty.<sup>20</sup> Many refugees, however, would still live with a strong sense of transience, waiting for the war to end to go back to their homeland.<sup>21</sup>

The experience of refugeeness was severe, emotionally and physically, for the Polish Jews whose flight or expulsion had led them to the Soviet Union. Incertitude and uprootedness were an all-pervasive reality for the entirety of the six-year-long war, and even when death and destruction eventually wound down, life did not go back to normal.

## Return to Poland

For the refugees, the return to Poland, on the one hand, was not merely a formal act of re-enfranchisement by the political entity to which they once belonged; it also signified their aspiration to finally put an end to the tribulations of refugeeness they had been enduring throughout the war. The frustra-

- 19 An official report of the Polish Embassy to the Soviet Union mentioned that by late 1941 no less than 30 percent of Polish Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union had died. See Litvak, *Polish Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1939–1946*, 359. However, this estimation is quite problematic and it is hard to assess how many refugees really perished in the Soviet Union. See Edele/Warlik, *Saved by Stalin?*, 122 f.
- 20 The continuity of the refugees’ cultural life, their birthrate, and their marriage behavior attracted attention when they were repatriated to Poland and later continued to the DP camps, especially when comparing them to other groups at the camps (see below). It demonstrates the variety of the refugees’ lives. For more on the different aspects of their experiences, see Davies/Polonsky (eds.), *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*; Edele/Fitzpatrick/Grossmann (eds.), *Shelter from the Holocaust*; Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1939–1946*.
- 21 In some of the refugees’ memoirs, the expectation of returning to Poland was often referred to as a “dream.” See, e. g., “The dreams of homecoming were becoming more and more realistic” (Heb.), in: Yitzhak Geler, *Sipur hayaw shel Yizhak Geler*. Cheshanov, Sibir, Erez Yisra’el [The Life Story of Yitzhak Geler. Cieszanów, Siberia, Erez Yisra’el], Bnei Brak 2004, 72.

tion of this aspiration, on the other hand, was understood as contingent upon the continuation of their lives in the Soviet Union and not only as a result of their discovery of the annihilation of Poland's Jewry, and of the loss of their families, relatives, and property.

The return of refugees from the Soviet Union began as early as June 1944, in anticipation of the advancement of the Polish army – which fought alongside the Red Army – into territories formerly belonging to the Polish State, and intensified when treaties were signed with the governments of Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. The signing of a repatriation agreement in July 1945 between the Soviet government and representatives of the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, newly installed in Warsaw, started a mass repatriation. The agreement provided for the return of all Poles who had fled or had been expelled to Soviet territories during the war, including Jews, together with their families and any other dependents in their household. This also concerned Polish Jews who had taken residence in the internal provinces of the Soviet Union in Central Asia and Siberia. From 1944 to 1946, around 200,000 Jews were repatriated to Poland from the Soviet Union, the majority of whom took the journey from February to July 1946.<sup>22</sup> Rivka Agron-Wolf, whose memoirs on life in Bukhara were mentioned above, described her return to Poland as follows:

“A cattle car, which had an uncanny resemblance to the one that had taken me to Siberia, brought me back from Russian imprisonment to freedom on Polish ground. It was autumn, 1946. I arrived in the city of Legnica in Silesia. Legnica was known for its beauty, but now it looked like Sodom and Gomorrah, as did many other cities. The train cars were packed, there was not an inch to move; people flowed out of the cars, young folks and feeble elderly, leaning on the arms of their sons who had grown significantly in their time in Siberia. Two generations, sated with suffering, grown prematurely old, held their pale descendants by one hand, and their meagre possessions in the other. Teenagers, who had been raised in Polish and Russian orphanages, ran and rushed around for no apparent reason. They housed all of us in one broken-down building, a building with several floors. There were only a few apartments remaining, with doors and windows plucked out of them like rotten teeth. This was the home that our new-old homeland provided for its citizens, returning from Siberian imprisonment. I felt as sad, broken-down, and lost as the house looked.”<sup>23</sup>

In Poland, the situation of repatriates remained dire. Many wandered the streets in rags, were entirely bereft of material means, and emotionally and

22 Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards*; Stankowski, *How Many Polish Jews Survived the Holocaust?*, 209–216. Lower numbers are mentioned in Edele/Warlik, *Saved by Stalin?*, 117–122.

23 Agron-Wolf, *Kol Metay*, 88.

physically spent.<sup>24</sup> In June 1946, the advisor on Jewish affairs to the commander of US forces in Europe, Rabbi Philip Bernstein, reported to the American Jewish Conference that he had received reports that those repatriated from Russia to Poland were “returning destitute and find living conditions practically hopeless.”<sup>25</sup> The long voyage back to Poland was undertaken by the refugees, many of whom children, elderly, and disabled, in mostly overcrowded trains, suffering from shortages of water and food.<sup>26</sup>

Still, Jewish lives and Jewish communities across the country were reestablished and even flourished in the first years after the war.<sup>27</sup> Of course, not all Jews continued westwards. Some rebuilt their lives in Poland for ideological or political reasons, such as the Bundists; others also wanted to stay and took advantage of aid extended to Jews in their new quarters. Part of the new Jewish communities in Lower Silesia, such as in Wrocław/Breslau, Dzierżoniów/Reichenbach, and Wałbrzych/Waldenburg, were thriving during those years, with new schools, corporations, newspapers, and other sorts of cultural life sprouting everywhere. Those Lower Silesian communities had been founded immediately after the liberation, were increased by repatriates from the Soviet Union, reduced by the big escape following the Kielce pogrom on 4 July 1946, and then achieved a few years of stability.<sup>28</sup> Some Jews opted to remain in Poland after 1949 and even after 1968. A large

- 24 Ewa Koźmińska-Frejłak, *The Adaptation of Survivors to the Post-War Reality from 1944 to 1949*, in: Tych/Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Jewish Presence in Absence*, 125–164, here 157 f.
- 25 Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (henceforth JDC Archives), NY AR194554/4/32/6/319, Philip S. Bernstein to W. L. Kenen, 29 June 1946.
- 26 Hanna Shlomi, *The Reception and Settlement of Jewish Repatriates from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia, 1946*, in: Gal-Ed. *On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry* 17 (2000), 85–104. Kaganovitch, on the other hand, shows how the Soviet authorities helped the repatriates and gave them some supplies before their journey back to Poland. See idem, *Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities during World War II*.
- 27 David Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight. Holocaust Survivors in Poland and the Struggle for Leadership, 1944–1946*, Tel Aviv 1996 (Heb.); Eli Tsur, *Nipped in the Bud. Hashomer Hatzair in Poland, 1944–1950*, Jerusalem 2017 (Heb.). See also Tych/Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Jewish Presence in Absence*.
- 28 This article does not delve into the development of Jewish life in Lower Silesia. For more on the repatriates who chose to stay in Poland, see the current research projects of Katharina Friedla and Kamil Kijek. For the Polish Jewish life in Lower Silesia until 1950, see Kamil Kijek, *Aliens in the Lands of the Piasts. The Polonization of Lower Silesia and Its Jewish Community in the Years 1945–1950*, in: Tobias Grill (ed.), *Jews and Germans in Eastern Europe. Shared and Comparative Histories*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2018, 234–255; Andrzej Nowak, *The Jewish Settlement in Chojnów 1945–1950*, in: Marcin Wodziński/Janusz Spyra (eds.), *Jews in Silesia, Cracow 2001*, 229–238; Bożena Szaynok, *Jews in Lower Silesia 1945–1950*, in: *ibid.*, 213–228; Ewa Waszkiewicz, *The Religious Life of Lower Silesian Jews 1945–1968*, in: *ibid.*, 239–245.

percentage of Poland's returning Jewry, however, left the country before long,<sup>29</sup> some 140,000 Jews from mid-1946 until March 1947 alone.<sup>30</sup>

Scholars have offered several reasons for this mass emigration: antisemitism, the political split in Poland after the war, psychological duress following the murder of family members and relatives, the fact that Poland was soaked with Jewish blood, the dispute over the ownership of Jewish property, an ideological break with Poland following the Holocaust, and the prospering of the Zionist movement.<sup>31</sup> The Zionist westward "flight" (*ha-brichah*) is normally described as one caused primarily by a convergence of fear of antisemitism and successful Zionist canvassing efforts amongst survivors who repatriated to Poland or were liberated there by the Red Army.<sup>32</sup> Such explanations, though important, fail to account for the weight of expatriates' wartime experiences on their subsequent decisions, including to not resettle in Poland.<sup>33</sup>

The possibility that refugee life was a central factor in the decision to leave Poland was raised by Luba Levite, the emissary of the Jewish National Council (Va'ad Le'umi) to Poland and the DP camps, in 1946:

"We must not decipher this too superficially. They flee not only the scepter of physical annihilation. [...] They flee because they no longer have traction, because they have been displaced well before having arrived at the DP camps. [...] Even 200,000 Polish Jews who returned to Poland with the repatriation from the Soviet Union, even these 200,000 have not returned to their homes. In the real, straightforward sense of the word, not in its literal sense; subjectively, personally, they have not returned home [...].

29 Lewinsky, *Polish-Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Germany*, 101.

30 Lucjan Dobroszycki, *Survivors of the Holocaust in Poland. A Portrait Based on Jewish Community Records 1944–1947*, New York 1994, 27.

31 There is much research on this subject. See, e. g., Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight* (Heb.); Edyta Gawron, *Post-War Emigration of Jews from Poland. The Case of Kraków*, in: Tych/Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Jewish Presence in Absence*, 473–500; Andrzej Żbikowski, *The Post-War Wave of Pogroms and Killings*, in: *ibid.*, 67–94.

32 Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue. Brichah*, New York 1970; Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight* (Heb.); Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews in Poland after World War II*, Jerusalem 1985, 42–59.

33 Koźmińska-Frejłak makes the connection between disparate wartime experiences and the absorption of survivors in Poland after the war and discusses the repatriates from the Soviet Union at length. Amongst the subjects she focuses on are the shocking discovery of the scope of destruction and murder, the difficulty of reclaiming property, and antisemitic harassment. See Ewa Koźmińska-Frejłak, *The Adaptation of Survivors to the Post-War Reality from 1944 to 1949*.

And these scores of thousands of Polish Jews, upon returning to Poland – came back to a faraway, distant, strange land, which, even had it been awash with the love of Israel and had they been universally welcomed by all – they would have felt as if they returned to a land not their own, to a place to which they have no connection whatsoever, not only in the future or the present, but also in the past.”<sup>34</sup>

In Levite’s view, the manifestations of antisemitism were not the only reason for the repatriates to leave Poland. He believes that returnees to the political entity of “Poland” did not find anything resembling what they had previously known as their homeland,<sup>35</sup> not only because their communities had been destroyed for the most part, leaving them with no one and nothing to return to, but also due to another factor – geography.

Of the more than 200 trains arriving from the Soviet Union during the months of February to July 1946, over 70 percent were sent to what the Polish government designated as the “regained territories,” namely Lower Silesia and Szczecin, both of which regions annexed to Poland after Germany’s capitulation.<sup>36</sup>

The situation of the repatriates was so disheartening not only because they were unable to return to their former homes, as the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce) wrote in a report,<sup>37</sup> but also since most of them found themselves struggling to rebuild a life in a place they had never called “home” to begin with and which, indeed, had not even been a part of Poland before the war. In the few months spanning between the liberation of these territories, the end of the war, and the arrival of the repatriates, the Germans who inhabited the region were expelled and a Polish culture, including Jewish communities, began to form. In this regard, the designation of “repatriates” was inappropriate, as they were not repatriated to their homeland, but rather transplanted to a region foreign to them.<sup>38</sup>

34 Yad Tabenkin Archives, Ramat Efal, 2–2/1/6, Luba Levite, The 24th Council at Kibbutz Gvat, February–March 1947 (Heb.).

35 Contemporary witness Rivka Agron-Wolf did use the term “homeland,” calling it, however, the “old-new homeland.” The use of “new” supports the argument here.

36 Dobroszycki, *Survivors of the Holocaust in Poland*, 22; Shlomi, *The Reception and Settlement of Jewish Repatriates from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia*, 1946.

37 Tetikeyts-barikht fun Tsentral-komitet fun di Yidn in Poyln, fun 1 yanuar 1946 biz dem 30 juni 1946 [Activity Report of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland, 1 January 1946 until 30 June 1946], Warsaw 1946, 13.

38 There are some testimonies from that period showing that the understanding of those areas as a former part of Germany, the land of the Nazis, was also a tough fact to cope with. This issue is in need of extensive further research. On the complicated situation of the German Jews in Wrocław immediately after the war, see Katharina Friedla, *Experiences of Stigmatization, Discrimination, and Exclusion. German-Jewish Survivors in Wrocław, 1945–1947*, in: *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 62 (2017), 95–113.

The establishment of new Polish Jewish settlements in Lower Silesia at the hands of Nazi concentration and labor camp survivors coincided with the end of the war, in May 1945. A month later, on 17 June, the Jewish Lower Silesian Voivodship Committee was established. The local Jewish organizations together with the Central Committee of Jews in Poland tried to accommodate Jews in Silesia, including those new to this part of Poland, and prepared schedules aimed at enhancing productivity.

Since the area was almost vacant, its German inhabitants having fled or forcefully evacuated, leaving their relatively undamaged properties behind, many repatriates could live in proper houses and use what they found locally to make a living. Moreover, when the Polish authorities sought to establish a local administration, many Jews filled its positions. The settlement in the area came to be viewed as a success story. This led the Central Committee of Jews in Poland to conclude that settling there was the most favorable option for repatriates, and it was decided that they should be brought directly to the area upon returning from the Soviet Union. At the end of 1945, approximately 16,000 Jews lived in the area, a number that rose to over 100,000 within a short period of time. Local committees, however, were unprepared for the large influx of people. Available housing and employment, which beforehand had been plentiful, now proved insufficient to support the huge number of repatriates arriving. The Central Committee, local committees, and aid organizations like the JDC all enlisted to assist, but were unable to create stability for all settlers.<sup>39</sup>

A part of the repatriates soon left Lower Silesia and proceeded across Poland. It is hard to determine exactly how many decided to leave Poland right after their return or a short time later, and this demands further extensive research. What is clear, however, is that a large percentage, if not the majority, of repatriates continued an uprooted existence and did not settle.<sup>40</sup> Accord-

39 The Central Committee comprised a special department, the Repatriation Department (Wydział Repatriacji), which initially dealt with the repatriation of Jews from the camps and the first ones to return from the Soviet Union. At the beginning of 1946, with the mass repatriation from the Soviet Union, the Department's work intensified. Many requests for aid from local communities can be found at the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, 303/VI. See also Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight*, 112–115 and 120–124 (Heb.); Kijek, *Aliens in the Lands of the Piasts*, 234–244; Shlomi, *The Reception and Settlement of Jewish Repatriates from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia*, 1946.

40 Migration within Poland was not a fate exclusive to repatriates but also affected other Jewish Poles. Many left the villages, which had lost their Jewish population during the war, and resettled in cities or toured the country in search for relatives. See Daniel Blatman, *Nekharim be-moldatam. Yehude Polin me-Lublin (1944) ad Kielze (1946)* [Strangers in Their Own Land. Polish Jews from Lublin (1944) to Kielce (1946)] in: Shmuel Almog et al. (eds.), *The Holocaust. History and Memory. Essays Presented in Honor of Israel Gutman/Ha-sho'ah. Historia ve-zikharon. Sefer yovel le-Yisra'el Gutman*, Jerusalem 2001, 162–186, here 164–176.

ing to Engel, the “flight” movement gained ground specifically among this group, as they were greeted with fewer possibilities in Poland compared to the Jews who had settled there earlier, right at the end of the war and before the mass repatriation. The Jewish committees could not give them proper aid, and many were unemployed; generally speaking, the program to settle them in Lower Silesia was a failure.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from resettling in a strange environment, many repatriates grappled with new and exceptional hardships. While other Jews experienced a state commensurate to refugeeism, as well,<sup>42</sup> the repatriates were refugees in the stricter sense of the word: They had fled their country during the war and endured a life in exile for the duration of hostilities. Repatriates were also disadvantaged by the timing of their return to Poland, the fact that aid agencies and Jewish communities were overwhelmed with the resettlement of so many people – and by their past in the Soviet Union.<sup>43</sup> At the time, the relationship between the new Polish regime and the Soviet Union was fueling a highly politicized debate, in which Jewish repatriates, as suspected Soviet agents, were often made a scapegoat. Rumors that the transfer of the Jews from the Soviet Union came at the expense of non-Jewish repatriates led to assaults against Jews. The large number of elderly and children amongst them were a common and easy target, especially during the early months of acclimatizing to their new environment.<sup>44</sup> On 3 June 1946, for example, a train carrying new Jewish arrivals was attacked during a short stop in Katowice and many were killed or injured, particularly women, children, and elderly.<sup>45</sup>

Alongside the many reasons given consideration in the literature for the mass exodus of Jews from Poland, one might therefore point to additional push factors that were unique to repatriates: their vulnerability stemming from poor physical health after years of exile, antisemitic and other hostile

41 Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight*, 122, 150, and 244, fn. 24 (Heb.).

42 Blatman described the situation of all Polish Jews after the war as that of refugees, although they did not meet the criteria of living outside their country’s internationally recognized border. See *idem*, *Nekharim be-moldatam*, esp. 173.

43 Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight*, 119–125 (Heb.); Shlomi, *The Reception and Settlement of Jewish Repatriates from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia*, 1946.

44 Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight*, 128–130 and 150 (Heb.); *idem*, *Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946*, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998), 43–85; Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards*, 237 f. For other difficulties with the repatriates’ return to Poland, see Alina Skibińska, *The Return of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and the Reaction of the Polish Population*, in: *Tych/Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), Jewish Presence in Absence*, 25–65, here 31–42. For more about antisemitism in Poland after the war, see Jan Tomasz Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, New York 2006.

45 Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight*, 129 (Heb.); *idem*, *Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946*, 74.

stereotypes connected directly to their past in the Soviet Union (*Zydokomuna*, or Judeo-Communism), as well as the fact that they arrived in territories entirely alien to them.<sup>46</sup> All these were results of their wartime experiences and, contrary to their expectation, their long years of uprootedness did not stop with the end of the war.

### Life in DP Camps

After their failed attempt to settle in Poland, many refugees resumed their journey. They arrived at DP camps, mainly in Germany and Austria, and hoped to continue from there to Erez Yisra'el/Mandatory Palestine,<sup>47</sup> the USA, South America, or other parts of the world, depending on existing political agreements with destination countries and immigration laws. The expectation that their stay would be short was widely shared amongst the aid agencies charged with their resettlement. As we shall see, this optimistic assessment would prove wrong, as repatriates were forced to – or, in light of a lack of options, chose to – stay in the DP camps longer than expected.

The large majority of repatriates from Poland made their way to American-controlled areas, which, unlike the British, upheld a policy of free movement of refugees. The American decision to keep the eastern borders open despite the mass influx of Polish Jews resulted from the efforts of an enormous lobby of American Jewry and an examination by the government of different solutions to reduce the number of newcomers. Still, only Jews who were present in American-controlled areas in February 1946 were granted official recognition as DPs, a status enabling their access to free shelter, clothing, and food. The later arriving Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union, on the other hand, were classified as “persecuted persons.” This different classification assured and officialized the uniquely precarious circumstances of their existence. Unofficially, they were termed “infiltrators,” persons secretly and

46 Gross, Fear, 192–243; Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards*, 237.

47 The perception that most newcomers from Poland wanted to continue to Mandatory Palestine was very common among Zionist emissaries and non-Zionist activists alike. For example, Loe Schwartz, the JDC U.S. zone director, wrote in his *Report on Influx of Jews into U.S. Zone of Occupation in Germany in August, 1946*, addressed to the UNRRA U.S. zone director, that “[t]he greatest number of these refugees desire to find a haven and peace and freedom in Palestine.” See JDC Archives, NY AR194554/4/32/6/318, Leo W. Schwartz to J. H. Withing. Re: Report on Influx of Jews into U.S. Zone of Occupation in Germany in August, 1946, 1 September 1946.



deceitfully stealing the border.<sup>48</sup> Still, in practice, the Americans tolerated repatriates entering territories under their control and provided them with similar rights and aid as extended to DPs.<sup>49</sup> The JDC, one of the central aid agencies in the DP camps, referred to the repatriates as “refugees,” using the term in several of its reports.<sup>50</sup>

By definition, all those who resided in the DP camps were homeless and uprooted. Nevertheless, the repatriates were deemed to have somewhat chosen this state, having fled their homeland after due repatriation. This was to become one of the main characteristics by which they were distinguished from Jews liberated on German and Austrian soil.<sup>51</sup>

The registration of these Polish Jewish refugees in DP camps stood in opposition to an overarching repatriation policy of returning refugees and prisoners of war to their countries of origin, a process that begun as early as mid-1945.<sup>52</sup> By the time the repatriates arrived in the camps from Poland, most prisoners had already been released by the Allied forces and returned to their homes.<sup>53</sup> The influx of new immigrants to the camps led to their being

- 48 See, e. g., Central Zionist Archives (henceforth CZA), S86/283-112, S. Adler-Rudel to the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Re: Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone, Germany, 17 April 1947; Koppel S. Pinson, *Jewish Life in Liberated Germany. A Study of the Jewish DP's*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (1947), no. 2, 101–126, here 104.
- 49 Arieh J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics. Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948*, Chapel Hill, N. C., 2001, 43–51 and 138–146; Angelika Königseder/Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope. Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany*, transl. by John A. Broadwin, Evanston, Ill., 2001, 49. The American military authorities, the War Department, the State Department, and the president held different opinions on whether to keep the borders open or not. This was linked to several other matters, such as the cooperation with British and Soviet military authorities and the ability to help the new arrivals. A shift in this policy occurred in April 1947, when it was determined that, although the borders would not be closed, any persons crossing into American-occupied territory of their own volition would not be admitted to DP camps and would not be offered aid. This shift affected the Jews of Romania and Hungary more than those of Poland, since most had already been admitted to the camps by that time.
- 50 JDC Archives, NY AR194554/4/32/6/318, Leo W. Schwartz to J. H. Withing. Re: Report on Influx of Jews into U.S. Zone of Occupation in Germany in August, 1946, 1 September 1946; *ibid.*, NY AR194554/4/17/8/112, Report no. 386. Report of Salzburg Area, Feb. 1946 – Dec. 1946, 10 December 1946. The UNRRA used a different legal definition of refugee. See Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 43.
- 51 There was a small group of former camp prisoners who returned to Poland after the war and later moved to the DP camps.
- 52 Proudfoot, *European Refugees, 1939–52*, 189–229.
- 53 There were, admittedly, groups of Eastern Europeans who were unwilling to return to their homes, particularly due to their fears of the new regimes in their countries. This also included Jewish repatriates from Poland.

refilled at a time when the number of DPs was already in decline,<sup>54</sup> straining the resources of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The enormous task of absorbing and providing elementary support to thousands of additional refugees, who were originally slated to be repatriated to Poland and dealt with there, caused an administrative and financial ripple effect that proved detrimental to all repatriation efforts of UNRRA across the continent. Polish Jews were ostensibly a group provided for by repatriation to Polish-controlled territories and they were therefore not scheduled for assistance by UNRRA. The massive exodus and continued displacement of Polish Jews caught international aid agencies poorly prepared, as Leon D. Fisher, the field director of the JDC in the Salzburg area in Austria, declared in one of his reports for the period from 1 July to 15 September 1946:

“This two-and-a-half months’ interval can be called the crisis in the history of the A.J.D.C. activities in Austria [...]. Because the influx was so completely unpredicted and sudden, there were not even minimum quantities of food and clothing to meet elementary needs on an emergency basis.”<sup>55</sup>

This impression was shared also by JDC activists in Germany<sup>56</sup> and Zionist emissaries in Germany and Austria.<sup>57</sup>

When repatriates arrived at the DP camps, they encountered other displaced Jews who had been residing in the camps since the end of the war. The camp administrators clearly distinguished between these newcomers and older camp inhabitants.<sup>58</sup> Thus, for instance, Koppel S. Pinson, the educational director of the JDC in the DP camps in Germany and Austria from October 1945 until September 1946, described the DP camps’ population as consisting of three distinct groups: The first and most veteran group were survivors of concentration and labor camps liberated by Allied forces, some 60,000 Jews, men and women aged 18 to 48. The second group included partisans who had joined the first group in the camps in the fall of 1945. He describes them as young men and women in better psychological condition than those held in the camps. A few children also belonged to this group. The

54 George Woodbridge, UNRRA. *The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, 3 vols., New York 1950, here vol. 3, 422 f.

55 JDC Archives, NY AR194554/1/17/8/112, Report no. 386. Report of Salzburg Area, Feb. 1946 – Dec. 1946, 10 December 1946.

56 *Ibid.*, NY AR194554/4/32/6/318, American Joint Distribution Committee to Mr. Levitt, 23 August 1946.

57 CZA A382/49, Hayim Yahil to Leni Yahil, 23 October 1946, 226 f. (Heb.).

58 The primary differences between the groups were demographic and related to health, culture, education, and employment. Their late arrival at the DP camps caused a decline in material conditions at the camps. For a full description of these differences, see Seri-Levi, “These People Are Unique.”

third group contained the “infiltrates” or “persecutees”: persons who had not resided in Germany at all. They had sought refuge in the Soviet Union after the Nazi invasion and returned to Poland, but were unable to settle there and pushed on westward.

The repatriates, whose situation conformed to Pinson’s third group, were considered the mentally healthiest of all groups, due to the fact that they had maintained social relations and cultural activities throughout the war and included a substantial portion of children and elderly. This set them apart from the survivors of concentration and labor camps, who consisted primarily of men and women of working age.<sup>59</sup> The Zionist emissaries from Palestine, too, considered this group healthier and more vivacious, and communicated their intention to extract them quickly from the DP camps for permanent resettlement.<sup>60</sup>

Beside the fact that repatriates were seen to possess many positive qualities that would facilitate their resettlement, it was evident that they had endured many hardships due to their prolonged exile and uprootedness. By the end of 1946, a few months after the mass arrival of repatriates in the DP camps, Hayim Avni, one of the Zionist emissaries operating in the camps, commented:

“It has been three or four months since the first repatriates arrived here, on German soil. Seven years of uprootedness and meandering under their belts. Exodus from Poland to the depths of Russia and back – and still no end in sight. These are the offspring of the remainders, discovered only after the borders were redrawn. Clasp their bundles in their hands, their backs bent from the weight of the burden, deep furrows riveting their faces. A trope of vagabonds. With them young and old children, whose speech is Russian or Ukrainian, and place of birth far away, in distant Asia. [...] Behind them years of separation from the land, of a life of misery and cruel fight for survival in the Asian steppes and the Russian deserts, an ocean of indentured labor. The lives of flocks and transit camps.”<sup>61</sup>

59 Koppel S. Pinson, *Jewish Life in Liberated Germany*, 103–105. The numbers of children increased with the arrival of the repatriates at the DP camps. At the end of 1946, infants under the age of one accounted for 4.5 percent of the Jewish DP population, children between the ages of one and five for 4 percent, and those between the ages of six and seventeen for almost 12 percent. Not only did the population of children grow, but so did the middle-aged and older adult population, which had been almost absent in the DP camps before. After the arrival of the repatriates, it increased at least fourfold. See Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope. The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Cambridge 2002, 19; Irit Keynan, *Holocaust Survivors and the Emissaries from Eretz-Israel, Germany 1945–1948*, Tel Aviv 1996, 80 (Heb.).

60 The main goal was to settle those people in Mandate Palestine or pre-state Israel. However, as time passed and there was no change in their conditions, some Zionist emissaries thought that maybe this objective needed adjustment for the benefit of other immediate permanent settlement solutions. See Seri-Levi, “These People Are Unique,” 81–88.

61 Hayim Avni, *With Jews in the DP Camps*, Sede Nahum 1981, 36 (Heb.).

Later, Avni explicitly refers to the refugeeism as a defining factor of the repatriates, acknowledging the duality of their situation:

“The concept of ‘refugee’ we envisage as something transitory, unstable, and passing. Every Jew was once a refugee, if not himself, then his father, and if not literally then allegorically. This essence of the refugee is close and understandable to us all, but never as a phenomenon of multiple years. And here are Jews in the camps who have been meandering here and there for six or seven years. First from Poland to Russia, then receding into Asia and back to American Germany – a permanent migration. And these Jews have confidence enough even in such circumstances to build families, raise children.”<sup>62</sup>

As mentioned before, the Jewish population in the DP camps in Germany and Austria greatly increased with the arrival of repatriates from Poland, accounting for two-thirds thereof by the end of 1946. In the American zone in Germany, the number of Jewish DPs increased almost four times in less than a year, from 40,000 at the beginning of 1946 to about 145,000 at the end of the same year.<sup>63</sup> In the American zone in Austria, their numbers increased five times between the end of 1945 and the end of 1946, to around 28,000.<sup>64</sup> This massive influx changed life in the camps considerably, overwhelming the operating aid organizations and causing dramatic material scarcity.<sup>65</sup>

The Polish Jewish repatriates entered the DP camps in Germany and Austria after years of wandering, hunger, and illness. They were exhausted, starving, and in some cases also ill, and they had few, if any, possessions. A letter sent to the secretary of the JDC in New York described their arrival:

“This morning about 1,200 men, women and children, arrived in the new camp of Mikelsdorf. What they found is a tent city build on an air field. About three hundred tents were put up and each contains six army cots. Each person was issued two blankets and nothing else. There is no running water and a rowe [sic] of latrines was built in the middle of the camp. Field kitchens are used to feed the people. The group which came today is just a part of the 5,000 expected in this installation which is to be run by the army. [...]

We found hundreds of people walking around the field tired and with no spirit. They had been brought here on box cars from Puch, Austria. Many of them had been travelling for weeks, coming from Russia and Poland. All of them were poorly dressed and had few belongings; many were too exhausted, and asleep on the cots.

62 Ibid., 56.

63 Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland. Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Detroit, Mich., 2009, 210.

64 Ada Schein, *Health in Temporary Conditions. Health Care Services for Holocaust Survivors in Austria, 1945–1953*, Jerusalem 2010, 23 f. and 136 (Heb.).

65 For further discussion regarding those changes, see Keynan, *Holocaust Survivors and the Emissaries from Eretz-Israel, Germany 1945–1948*, 60–64 (Heb.); Pinson, *Jewish Life in Liberated Germany*, 104 f., 108, and 111 f.; Seri-Levi, “These People Are Unique,” 54–60.

There are a little more than 200 children in this group and the army had no special food for them. We saw long lines of people standing in the rain for their food. There were not enough mess kits and the people got their food in tin cans. Young and old, sick and healthy, they had all been herded in the box cars and not until they got to Mikelsdorf were many examined and sent to the local hospital.”<sup>66</sup>

Some Polish Jews who arrived in the summer of 1946 in the American occupation zone in Germany were housed in already operating camps, such as Bad Reichenhall, Ulm, Pocking Pine City (also Waldstadt, Bamberg district), Bensheim, and the Hessisch Lichtenau complex. Since the existing camps were unable to accommodate all incoming DPs, some makeshift shelters, intended to house DPs in transit for a few nights, were converted into permanent camps, such as Hof and Ainring. The expansion of existing camps, however, could not match the pace of the population increase, and this led to the quick establishment of new camps in August 1946, including Ziegenhain, Hofgeismar, and Hasenecke (Kassel district). When even those proved insufficient, the US Army set up two transient tent centers, Cham and Landshut.<sup>67</sup>

Hayim Yahil (then named Hayim Hoffman) was the director of the Relief Units (*Plugot ha-Sa'ad*), the official delegation of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish Yishuv in Mandatory Palestine operating under the auspices of UNRRA. In October, after visiting camps in Austria and Germany, he sent a letter to his wife Leni, later one of the very influential Holocaust historians living in Israel. He wrote,

“The new camps in Austria are in a horrible state. I saw one camp that consisted of dilapidated shacks housing 700 people [...] with 3 to 5 families living in a single room. Later, I saw a military base in Salzburg with large rooms and bunkbeds, with forty to sixty people in each room – men, women, and children. In the infirmary, a man suffering from a throat infection, a baby, and an elderly woman were lying beside one another.

[...] I later observed a similar situation in two new camps near Frankfurt. [...] It is truly appalling. If we do not rectify the situation quickly, the winter can be expected to bring many illnesses, and I am concerned about the possible death of babies and toddlers.

The opening of the gates of the American zone to the Jews of Poland is a great thing and has enabled almost 100,000 Jews to leave Poland. It was paid for, however, with much suffering. Many children are wearing out clothes and are barefoot.”<sup>68</sup>

66 JDC Archives, NY AR194554/4/32/6/318, American Joint Distribution Committee to Mr. Levitt, 23 August 1946.

67 Ibid., NY AR194554/4/32/6/318, Leo W. Schwartz to J. H. Withing. Re: Report on Influx of Jews into U.S. Zone of Occupation in Germany in August, 1946, 1 September 1946. For more information on each one of the camps, see Königseder/Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*, 215–250.

68 CZA, A382/49, Hayim Yahil to Leni Yahil, 23 October 1946, 226 f. (Heb.).

Not only had the relief organizations noticed the severe conditions in the camps, so had the veteran DPs and the Central Committee – the chief organization of *She'erit ha-Pletah* (The Surviving Remnant) in the American zone. In the *Undzer Veg* (Our Way) newspaper of 6 September 1946, the Central Committee published an appeal stressing the urgency to help the newly arriving refugees from Poland because of the harsh conditions in the new camps and transit camps.<sup>69</sup> Another article described the appalling situation of children, claiming the conditions in Russian orphanages during the siege of Leningrad had, ironically, been “much better” than what they endured in one of the DP camps for children in August 1946.<sup>70</sup>

Since the liberation of the Nazi concentration and labor camps, a cooperative effort of relief organizations and the American military authorities had managed to improve the physical health of the concentration camp survivors. Therefore, by the time they arrived in the DP camps one year later, repatriates were in comparatively worse condition. The authorities addressed this, for instance, by spending more money per day on their food, clothing, supplies, shelter, and medicine than they did for veteran DPs. In Austria, the War Department spent some 43 cents a day in care per repatriate, while spending only 32 cents a day per veteran DP.<sup>71</sup> According to one noteworthy report, even a year after the arrival of the repatriates in the camps, children born in Russia and repatriated with their parents suffered, on aggregate, from worse health than children born in the DP camps.<sup>72</sup> The bad living conditions during years of wandering, poverty, and malnutrition were still reflected in the children's health even after a year of rehabilitation attempts by camp personnel. It is important to emphasize again that, in contrast, the mental state of repatriates was considered quite good. This tension was a repercussion of their wartime experiences as refugees – the ability to continue some aspects of their former life, such as family relations, alongside the challenges of constant travel and instability.

The repatriates were supposed to spend a short period of time in the DP camps before their permanent resettlement in Palestine, the USA, or other countries. Immigration to Palestine and the USA, however, was almost impossible at the time. The British Mandate provided only few immigration certificates for Palestine, and the USA limited the ability of DPs, in general, and of repatriates, in particular, to enter. This state of affairs changed only

69 Komunikat fun TsK [Message from the Central Committee (of the Liberated Jews in the American Zone of Germany)], in: *Undzer Veg* [Our Way], 6 September 1946, 1.

70 In di naye yidishe lagern [In the New Jewish (DP) Camps], in: *ibid.*, 4.

71 JDC Archives, NY AR194554/4/17/8/112, Report no. 389, 2 February 1947.

72 CZA, S86/284, S. Ben-Yehuda to the Jewish Agency, 22 August 1947 (Heb.).

in the second half of 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel and amendments to the immigration law in the US Congress.<sup>73</sup>

Both the repatriates and the DPs preceding them faced restrictions on immigration and shared a sense of helplessness. However, their timing to access the camps did make a difference for either group. In the DP camps, 1946 began on an optimistic note, in part because of a recommendation by the Anglo-American Committee to permit 100,000 Jews to immigrate to Palestine. When the repatriates arrived in the summer of 1946, this hope was dashed, and it became clear that their stay in the camps would be longer than anticipated.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile, repatriates had the option to leave the camps and search individually for more comfortable interim housing. Many still chose to remain despite the poor conditions. There were a number of reasons for this decision: the fact that the transit camps provided maximum protection and comprehensive care, and that they brought back together friends and acquaintances, who did not want to lose each other again. Moreover, having uprooted their families for seven or eight consecutive years – travelling from Poland across the vast Soviet Union, back to Poland, and from Poland to Germany or Austria – many repatriates were simply too tired to keep moving. For now, they preferred the stability of the camps to the difficulty of seeking short-term comfort elsewhere.<sup>75</sup> And as the camps were, by definition, an intermediate station on the way to other destinations, many saw no point in making yet another temporary move.<sup>76</sup> This is a prime example of how wartime experience informed the decisions of Polish Jewish repatriates, and how temporariness and refugeism stayed with them beyond the war.

As time passed, conditions improved in the DP camps. There were efforts to find work and professional training for the DPs, and children began

73 The Displaced Persons Act from 1948 provided for the legal framework of migratory options only for those who had registered in the DP camps prior to 22 December 1945, thus effectively leaving the repatriates beyond the pale of the law. This changed in 1950, when the US Congress lifted the geographical and chronological limitations, which had curtailed the immigration of repatriates. See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. United States Immigration and Refugee Law, 1921–1980, <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/united-states-immigration-and-refugee-law-1921-1980>> (14 July 2022).

74 Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope*, 263–284 and 291 f.

75 Keynan, *Holocaust Survivors and the Emissaries from Eretz-Israel, Germany 1945–1948*, 62–64 (Heb.).

76 JDC Archives, NY AR194554/4/32/6/317, American Joint Distribution Committee. Confidential Report Signed by M. S. G., 21 April 1947; Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope*, 270–276.

attending school.<sup>77</sup> The long wait still took a toll on all camp residents, particularly those who had not known stability in a long time, such as the repatriates. This is reflected in the testimony of Yitzhak Kaminski, an emissary sent by the Relief Units, written in Bavaria on 21 August 1947:

“I spoke with a number of camp residents. Practically all of them are Jews who fled to Russia at the beginning of the war, returned to Poland at the end of the war, and broke into flight to Germany. Like many others living in the camps, these people are unique in character in comparison to the groups of Jews currently living in Germany. [...] The unique aspect that strikes you most when you meet Jews who have returned from Russia is the fact that they are gypsy-nomads. Individuals and families have wandered thousands of kilometers. For years on end, they could not find a roof to put over their heads. [...]

In the eyes of the child who was born on the road, of the young man and woman who have prematurely grown old, and the middle-aged uncle whose wrinkles have prematurely deepened and multiplied – our suffering, our tragedy stares back at us.”<sup>78</sup>

Visiting about two years after the end of World War II, Kaminski still ascribes a “unique character” to the Polish refugees from the Soviet Union. Remarkably, in reference to their long years of wandering, he calls them “Gypsy-nomads.”

## Conclusion

One of the most salient characteristics of Polish Jews who spent the war years in the Soviet Union was their existence as refugees. They had left their homes early, at the beginning of the war, and escaped to the Soviet Union, where they travelled the country before temporarily returning to Poland and moving on to DP camps. These long years of experience as refugees left their indelible mark on them mentally and physically, shaped their decision-making in later life, and set them apart from other war survivors in the camps.

77 Among many other studies on DPs, see Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton, N. J., 2007, 131–235; idem/Tamar Lewinsky, *An Autonomous Society*, in: Michael Brenner (ed.), *A History of Jews in Germany since 1945. Politics, Culture, and Society*, transl. by Kenneth Kronenberg, Bloomington, Ind., 2018, 85–111; Ada Schein, *Educational Systems in the Jewish DP Camps of Germany and Austria (1945–1951)* (unpubl. PhD thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000) (Heb.).

78 Yitzhak Kaminsky, *Bi-shliḥut ha-yishuv le-maḥanot ha-akurim be-Germania, 1946–1947* [On the Yishuv Mission to the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1946–1947], Haifa 1985, 68.



The consideration of this particular feature of refugeeism when discussing push-and-pull factors in the migration of Polish Jewish repatriates, can complement already existing research and deepen our understanding of the choices they made, such as to leave Poland after repatriation and to remain in the DP camp system. In addition, it sheds light on the changes that took place in the DP camps following their arrival. Life in the DP camps was challenging for Jews on many levels, although it saw improvements from the end of the war. The arrival of large numbers of repatriates in mid-1946, whose physical exhaustion and poverty required greater material investments and personal care, had a substantial impact on their situation. The importance of research on this group becomes evident when realizing that, from the end of 1946, these repatriates made up the majority of Jews in the DP camps in Germany and Austria.

Although the entry of Polish expatriates to DP camps finds mention in existing research, their uniqueness is often concealed in discussions of a homogenous group of “Holocaust survivors” subsuming the entire Jewish camp population. An important part of the delicate fabric of Jewish life in Europe after the Holocaust is thus overlooked.

As was shown in this article, the existence of this distinct group was conspicuous to other residents, as well as to aid organizations operating in DP camps. Over the years, however, it seems this group has been forgotten and denied their worthy place in research and memory. Scholars have noted several reasons for its fall into oblivion: the Cold War and disputed place of the Soviet Union in the memory of World War II, the Holocaust, and the years that followed; the absence of documentation and testimonies on refugees’ experience in the Soviet Union immediately after the Holocaust and in later years; and the silence of repatriates themselves out of respect for the experiences of those who survived Nazi occupation.<sup>79</sup> Recently, Markus Nesselrodt showed that, contrary to common belief, repatriates have put their experiences into writing immediately after the Holocaust, even from their bunkbeds in DP camps. Some of them placed what they endured into the greater context of Jewish suffering at the time.<sup>80</sup> This, too, deserves our attention.

Throughout the war, the repatriates remained outside the center of Holocaust history, only to return to an experience of displacement common to all Jews residing in DP camps after the fall of Nazi Germany. It is possible

79 John Goldlust, *A Different Silence. The Survival of More than 200,000 Polish Jews in the Soviet Union during World War II as a Case Study in Cultural Amnesia*, in: Edele/Fitzpatrick/Grossmann (eds.), *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 29–94; Jockusch/Lewinsky, *Paradise Lost?*; Nesselrodt, “I Bled Like You, Brother, although I Was a Thousand Miles Away.”

80 Ibid.

that in this time, when the two groups presumably began to mingle, lies the reason for modern research to abandon this group of DPs. The recognition of their profound experience of displacement, which continued to characterize them even during this period, may therefore contribute to restoring Jewish Polish repatriates to our historical memory.<sup>81</sup>

81 This article is based on my MA thesis, written under the supervision of Prof. Yfaat Weiss, and is a part of my dissertation, written under the supervision of Prof. Yfaat Weiss and Prof. Eli Lederhendler. I would like to thank them both for their support. I would also like to thank Dr. Boaz Cohen, Dr. Michał Szulc, and Dr. Rachel Frish for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article, as well as Dr. Yael Levy and Dr. Binyamin Hunyadi for their help with the Yiddish translations.

Borbála Klacsmann

## After the Storm: The Long-Term Consequences of the Holocaust and Compensation in Hungary

“After the liberation, the Russians took us to Bromberg [Bydgoszcz] where they left us completely alone. We set off, naturally as free people already, to Lublin, where we were disinfected and after forming transports the Russians took us along to Chernovitz [Chernivtsi]. From there they took us with another transport to Szluck [Slutsk]; we came home, to Budapest, from there through Poland on 5th September.”<sup>1</sup>

This is how the testimonies or recollections of Holocaust survivors regularly end. Yet, this is far from being the end of the story. One of the characteristics of the Holocaust is that it had long-term consequences for the lives of the people it affected, consequences that are rarely discussed in historical research or popular history in Hungary.

The long-term effects of the Holocaust were manifold: Most survivors returned emaciated, sick, and weak, carrying a trauma that prevented many from maintaining healthy relationships or re-entering society. Due to their health issues, they could start working only after first being hospitalized, and they had to rebuild their lives from scratch, often with no relatives or friends left alive.

This paper focuses on the case studies of three women who submitted claims for West German compensation in the 1960s. Their stories highlight certain aspects of the lasting impact of the Holocaust, particularly the specificities of women’s experiences. It is debatable whether men and women should be considered and studied as two distinct groups when it comes to the Holocaust. After all, as some researchers argue, that the victims all died in very similar ways.<sup>2</sup> However, as Zoë Waxman has emphasized, the Holocaust was a gendered process, because it targeted women as sexual beings, as humans, who are biologically capable of bearing children.<sup>3</sup> One obvious example of this was the forced sterilization of Jewish women in the Nazi

- 1 Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság (National Committee for Attending Deportees, henceforth DEGOB), H. P. (= name initials of the witness H. Paula; see <http://degob.org/?showjk=3241>), Protocol no. 3241.
- 2 Janet Liebman Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust. Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory*, London/New York 2010, 11.
- 3 Zoë Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust. A Feminist History*, Oxford 2017, 113.

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camps. Through sterilization, women were deprived of one of their “fundamental functions”<sup>4</sup> both symbolically and physically. Yet, sterilization also had lifelong effects, such as (temporary or permanent) infertility, trauma, emotional pain and physical injury, and added difficulties when it came to reintegration into society.

After the Holocaust, due to the tremendous losses of the Jewish community, many survivors felt that securing the continuation of Jewish existence was a fundamental duty. Moreover, having a partner and babies meant a “re-entry into the ‘normal’ life that had seemed lost forever.”<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it created a situation that was the complete opposite of existence in the camps, where the prisoners had been deprived of all features that made them human.

Marriage and establishing a family were naturally connected to having children – therefore women who were incapable of becoming pregnant suffered additionally. Infertility caused a feeling of worthlessness and humiliation and most of the time undermined further relationships.<sup>6</sup> Frequently, women who had been sterilized remained single either by choice or because their relationships could not withstand this burden.

Ellen Ben-Sefer, moreover, has called attention to the psychological aftereffects of sterilization, which in turn has influenced research on this topic since women were reluctant to disclose sexual abuse, as it was too painful to discuss. Often, the victims of Nazi experiments blamed themselves and kept their experiences secret, also because sexual abuse counted as a taboo. This resulted in “ignored” memories,<sup>7</sup> issues which thus became more complicated to reveal and to touch upon in scholarly research.

The micro-historical analysis of case studies applied in this paper will address these topics and attempt to connect the immediate impact of antisemitic persecution on the survivors’ lives to the postwar consequences of the Holocaust and the compensation process. Through this investigation, I aim to find the answer to the following questions: How did the damages suffered during the Holocaust affect the postwar lives of survivors – particularly damages to the female body – and how were these injuries and harm addressed in the available compensation programs?

In the course of analysis, when it comes to the damages caused during the Holocaust, the categorization of Stephen J. Roth will be used. Roth divided damages into two main categories: material damage, such as the confiscation

4 Ellen Ben-Sefer, *Forced Sterilization and Abortion as Sexual Abuse*, in: Sonja M. Hedgepeth/Rochelle G. Saidel (eds.), *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, Waltham, Mass., 2010, 156–174, here 157.

5 Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 134 and 136.

6 *Ibid.*, 139.

7 Ben-Sefer, *Forced Sterilization and Abortion as Sexual Abuse*, 156 f.

of real estate, business enterprises, agricultural estates, bank accounts, jewelry, and art pieces; and damages to the person, such as the loss of life, health, liberty, profession, social security, and violations of rights.<sup>8</sup>

The three survivors analyzed here lived in Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun (from 1950, Pest) County before and after the war. For the purpose of this research, survivors were chosen whose life stories can be reconstructed based on multiple sources. Questionnaires sent out to Jewish families by the German authorities after the occupation of Hungary contain basic data on the economic circumstances of the Jews in Hungary and the confiscations; these documents are held at the Archives of Pest County, among the documents of the Financial Directorate (Pénzügyigazgatóság). Testimonies collected by DEGOB (Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság, i. e. National Committee for Attending Deportees)<sup>9</sup> and the USC Visual History Archive are also used, as well as the documents of the Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration (Pénzintézeti Központ, Kártalanítási Osztály), which contain the compensation claims of Hungarian Jews sent to West Germany.

## Historical Background – The Holocaust in Hungary and the Restitution Process

In 1941, 725,000 Jews and around 61,000 Jews who had converted lived in the territory of Hungary.<sup>10</sup> This Jewish population remained relatively intact until 1944; it was the largest surviving Jewish community in Europe at that time. However, they could not avoid various restrictions and atrocities, which took place both before and during the war.

8 Stephen J. Roth, *Indemnification of Hungarian Victims of Nazism*, in: Randolph L. Braham/Attila Pók (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary. Fifty Years Later*, New York 1997, 733–757, here 736 f.

9 DEGOB was a Jewish relief organization which collected the testimonies of survivors who returned home in 1945. The testimonies are kept at the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives and are available online at <<http://degob.org/>> (8 June 2022).

10 József Kepecs (ed.), *A zsidó népesség száma településenként (1840–1941)* [Jewish Population by Townships (1840–1941)], Budapest 1993, 32 and 47. The territory of Hungary changed significantly from 1938: As a result of the two Vienna Awards (1938 and 1940), arbitrated by Germany and Italy, Hungary regained Upper Hungary (Felvidék, today part of Slovakia) and Northern Transylvania. In 1939, Hungarian troops occupied Carpatho-Ruthenia and in 1941 part of the former Southern regions. The above data applies to the country with the expanded territory. The bulk of the Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish population lived in Northeastern Hungary, in Carpatho-Ruthenia, whereas Budapest was the center of converted and Neolog Jews, who supported assimilation.

The first major limitations on the rights of Jews, which rendered them second-class citizens, came with the anti-Jewish laws at the end of the 1930s. The first and second anti-Jewish laws in 1938 and 1939 restricted the participation of Jews in intellectual, artistic, and economic occupations, first to 20 then to 6 percent<sup>11</sup> respectively, which resulted in approximately 90,000 Jews losing their employment.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the second anti-Jewish law stipulated that a Jew was anyone who belonged to the Israelite faith, or whose parents or at least two of their grandparents belonged to the Israelite faith. Thus, people who had converted or even whose parents had converted were considered Jewish.

In 1939, the government established unarmed military labor service, originally intended for those unable to fulfil regular military service. Later, this institution was used as a punishment for people deemed “unreliable” (such as communists and members of ethnic minorities), which in 1940 was expanded to include Jews. At first, military laborers were obliged to do physical labor in communal works in Hungary, but from June 1941, when Hungary joined World War II, approximately 50,000 Jewish military laborers were taken to the Eastern front, wearing their own civilian clothes and yellow armbands.<sup>13</sup>

The “Aryanization” proceeded with the introduction of the fourth anti-Jewish law in 1942, which banned Jews from obtaining agricultural or forest estates.<sup>14</sup> Life for those categorized as Jews was embittered also with regard to various rights: In 1941, the third anti-Jewish law banned “mixed” marriages and relationships between Jews and non-Jews.<sup>15</sup>

11 See the repository of legal texts on the page “Jogtár”, here 1938. évi XV. törvénycikk a társadalmi és a gazdasági élet egyensúlyának hatályosabb biztosításáról [1938. 15th Act on Ensuring the Balance of Social and Economic Life], <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93800015.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fkeyword%3D1938>> (8 June 2022); and 1939. évi IV. törvénycikk a zsidók közéleti és gazdasági térfoglalásának korlátozásáról [1939. 4th Act on Restrictions of Jewish Occupation of Public Life and Economy], <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93900004.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fkeyword%3D1939>> (8 June 2022).

12 Gábor Kádár/Zoltán Vági, *Aranyvonat. Fejezetek a zsidó vagyon történetéből* [Gold Train. Chapters from the History of Jewish Wealth], Budapest 2001, 23.

13 On the military labor service in Hungary, see Elek Karsai (ed.), “Fegyvertelen álltak az aknamezőkön ...” *Dokumentumok a munkaszolgálat történetéhez Magyarországon* [“They Stood Weaponless on the Minefields ...” Documents on the History of Labor Service in Hungary], Budapest 1962, xvii and xxvii.

14 See the legal text, 1942. évi XV. törvénycikk a zsidók mező- és erdőgazdasági ingatlanairól [1942. 15th Act on Agricultural and Forestry Property of Jews], <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=94200015.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D42>> (8 June 2022).

15 See the legal text: 1941. XV. törvénycikk a házassági jogról [1941. 15th Act on Marital Right], <<http://regi.sofar.hu/book/zsidotorvenyek-1790-1946-teljes-szoveg/1941-08-08-harmadik-zsidotorveny-nemzsidonak-zsidoval-hazassagot-kotni-tilos/>> (8 June 2022).

After 19 March 1944, the date of the German occupation of Hungary, this process peaked when within only four months Hungarian Jews were deprived of their freedom, property, human dignity, and finally, of their lives too. The newly appointed puppet government of Döme Sztójay<sup>16</sup> obliged Jews to put a yellow star on their clothes from 5 April. Ghettoization started in mid-April; Jews were allowed to bring only 50 kilograms of personal belongings to the ghettos.<sup>17</sup> Thus, they were segregated from majority society both in a psychological and physical sense. Finally, between 14 May and 20 July 1944, more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported mainly to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where most were killed immediately upon arrival.<sup>18</sup>

By the time the deportations were stopped, only the 200,000 Jews of Budapest remained in Hungary. Instead of a fenced-off ghetto, the government designated 2,400 so-called yellow star houses on 21 June 1944. The Jews were forced to move in on 24 June. The houses were dispersed throughout the entire city, holding the Jews as hostages, as the government believed that the situation would keep the Allies from bombing Budapest.<sup>19</sup>

In August, Regent Miklós Horthy appointed a new prime minister, Géza Lakatos, who attempted to negotiate with the Soviet Union. On 8 October, conditions for peace were decided and three days later a ceasefire agreement was signed. Horthy ordered all military forces to give up fighting on the side of Germany on 15 October. However, that same day a group of SS officers forced him to resign and the Nazis helped the antisemitic Arrow Cross party to take power. The new prime minister, Ferenc Szálasi, titled himself “Leader of the Nation” and continued fighting on the side of Germany.<sup>20</sup>

Szálasi’s plan was to force the remaining Jews to work for the country and thus he nationalized all Jewish wealth. On German demands, he handed over 35,000 Jewish men to the Nazis. The remaining Budapest Jews were exposed to atrocities and killings by the Arrow Cross members. The Arrow Cross Party also built two ghettos in Budapest. The largest ghetto was in the

16 Döme Sztójay (1883–1946) was a Hungarian diplomat who served as Hungary’s ambassador to Berlin from 1936 and as prime minister of Hungary from 22 March 1944 to 29 August 1944.

17 See the text of Confidential Decree no. 6163 of 1944, in: Ilona Benoschofsky/Elek Karsai (eds.), *Vádirat a náciizmus ellen. Dokumentumok a magyarországi zsidóüldözés történetéhez* [Indictment against Nazism. Documents on the Persecution of the Jews in Hungary], 3 vols., Budapest 1958–1967, here vol. 1 (1958), 124–127 (document no. 59).

18 The data of the 137 deportation trains that passed through Kassa (Košice) were registered by István Vrancsik, who served at the train station. The list contains the station of departure, the date the trains passed through Kassa, and the number of deportees. See Randolph L. Braham, *A népirtás politikája. A Holocaust Magyarországon* [The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary], 2 vols., Budapest 1997, here vol. 2, 1357–1359.

19 On the fate of the Jews of Budapest, see *ibid.*, 810–817.

20 *Ibid.*, 904 f.

seventh district (a district traditionally inhabited by Jews): 70,000 Jews were moved in and the ghetto was closed off on 10 December. The so-called international ghetto was created in the thirteenth district, along the Danube. The 50,000 Jews who moved in there had *Schutzpässe*, meaning the protection of a neutral state. During the winter, members of the Arrow Cross shot several thousand Jews on the banks of the Danube and dumped them into the river. At the same time, many Jews died in the ghettos due to starvation, disease, and during the siege of Budapest.<sup>21</sup>

After the war, the Hungarian government faced an enormous and unprecedented social problem: the reintegration of destitute Holocaust survivors into society. The number of survivors is estimated at approximately 200,000<sup>22</sup> and, due to “Aryanization,” looting, and war damages, most of them had lost their property and personal belongings. At the same time, they had also lost their families and friends, who could have provided a safety net emotionally, financially, and socially. They had also suffered a trauma that proved to be determining for the rest of their lives.

The first step towards the reintegration of survivors was the creation of an inclusive legal framework, which made restitutions possible. The Provisional National Government annulled the anti-Jewish laws on 20 January 1945, when the ceasefire agreement with the Soviet Union was enacted.<sup>23</sup> The following year, the Paris Peace Treaty prescribed that the Hungarian government had to provide all Hungarian citizens with basic human rights regardless of their ethnic background, sex, language, or religion. It also obliged the government to hand back property confiscated after 1 September 1939 due to the owner’s religion or origins or, if that was not possible, to pay compensation instead.<sup>24</sup>

21 On the Arrow Cross era and the ghettos, see *ibid.*, 927 f.

22 Tamás Stark, *Zsidóság a vészorszakban és a felszabadulás után 1939–1955* [Jewry during the Shoah and after the Liberation 1939–1955], Budapest 1995, 76; János Botos, *A magyarországi zsidóság vagyonának sorsa 1938–1949* [The Fate of the Wealth of the Jews of Hungary 1938–1949], Budapest 2015, 64; and Braham, *A népiértés politikája*, vol. 2, 1247.

23 See the legal text: 1945. évi V. törvénycikk a Moszkvában az 1945. évi január hó 20. napján kötött fegyverszüneti egyezmény becikkelyezéséről [1945. 5th Act on the Implementation of the Ceasefire Convention Signed in Moscow on 20 January 1945], <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=94500005.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fkey-word%3D1945>> (8 June 2022).

24 See the legal text: 1947. évi XVIII. törvény a Párizsban 1947. évi február hó 10. napján kelt békeszerződés becikkelyezése tárgyában [1947. 18th Act on the Registration of the Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947 in Paris], <[https://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy\\_doc.cgi?docid=94700018.TV](https://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=94700018.TV)> (8 June 2022). This did not concern property lost due to the first and second anti-Jewish laws, as both were implemented before World War II broke out.



Previously, the Hungarian government had set up a major institution whose task was to handle “abandoned” or heirless property. The Government Commission for Abandoned Property (Elhagyott Javak Kormánybiztossága), founded in 1945, was also assigned the task of helping people who had lost their livelihood, bringing back the deported, and providing survivors with partial restitution.<sup>25</sup> However, during the three years of its existence, the institution did very little to fulfil these responsibilities.<sup>26</sup>

As the reformed Jewish community voiced heavy criticism concerning the Government Commission, in 1947, the commission’s task was taken over by the National Jewish Restitution Fund (Országos Zsidó Helyreállítási Alap), which functioned independently until 1954. This organization took care of the property and estates of heirless Holocaust victims and, through the acquired property, provided financial support for Jewish self-aid organizations. In January 1955, it was merged with the State Office for Church Affairs (Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal), following whereupon its operations were reduced to mere formalities.<sup>27</sup>

All in all, the restitution of Jewish property was downplayed by the government for various reasons: First of all, “Aryanized” property had been redistributed to non-Jews, who considered it their own property, had made improvements to it, or sold it, therefore it was extremely hard to make just decisions concerning these assets. Moreover, after the war and the looting committed by the Wehrmacht and then the Red Army, the economic circumstances of the Hungarian state did not allow for an extensive financial aid operation as inflation grew to a historic peak. The Hungarian government was therefore unable to meet the needs of all of its citizens. A political will to ensure restitution was also lacking, as politicians were afraid that it would incite antisemitism.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in August 1946, at a discussion of the Ministerial Council about the establishment of an institution which would handle heirless Jewish property, Mátyás Rákosi,<sup>29</sup> leader of the Hungarian

25 See Decree no. 727 of 1945, in: Magyarországi rendeletek tára 1945 [Collection of Hungarian Regulations 1945], Budapest 1946, 54, <[https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK\\_RT\\_1945/?pg=91&layout=s](https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK_RT_1945/?pg=91&layout=s)> (8 June 2022).

26 For more information on the Commission’s functioning, see Kálmán Kardos, Az Elhagyott Javak Kormánybiztossága (1945–1949) [The Government Commission of Abandoned Property (1945–1949)], in: Levéltári Híradó [Archival Bulletin] 10 (1960), no. 2, 53–64.

27 Gergő Bendegúz Cseh, Az Országos Zsidó Helyreállítási Alap létrehozásának körülményei és működése (1947–1989) [Circumstances of the Establishment of the National Jewish Reconstruction Fund and Its Activities (1947–1989)], in: Levéltári Közlemények [Archival Bulletins] 65 (1994), no. 1–2, 119–127, here 124–126.

28 Braham, *A népiértés politikája*, vol. 2, 1255 f.

29 Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971) was a communist politician who from 1945 to 1956 served as general secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, later the Hungarian Working People’s Party. After the communist takeover, he was the de facto ruler of Hungary.

Communist Party, expressed his concerns that the magnitude of such a fund would strengthen anti-Jewish sentiments in society.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, Hungarian Jews largely relied on international and self-aid organizations, such as the International Red Cross, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the World Jewish Congress. The Joint distributed several million dollars to the survivors annually until 1953.<sup>31</sup> Instead of the government, the Joint operated a network of social services, such as soup kitchens, healthcare institutions, as well as training centers.<sup>32</sup> This reintegration project can be considered successful as the majority of Hungarian Jews remained in the country, unlike in many other communist countries.

The Hungarian Jewish community also maintained a self-aid organization, the National Jewish Aid Committee (Országos Zsidó Segítő Bizottság), which was financed by the Joint. The committee brought back home the deported and helped the survivors. Hungarian Jews had high hopes for restitution and compensation provided by the state, which would have facilitated the reintegration of the survivors into society. This, however, did not happen: Property was only partially returned and, even though their rights were restored, the survivors did not get any compensation for what Stephen J. Roth defined as damages to the person: neither symbolic gestures for lost relatives, deprivation of freedom, dignity, and so forth, nor guarantees for non-repetition.

During the years of socialism, restitution was withheld and there was no talk of compensation whatsoever. However, in the 1960s, within the framework of the *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz* (BEG)<sup>33</sup> and *Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz* (BRÜG) Acts,<sup>34</sup> the Federal Republic of Germany paid com-

30 Botos, A magyarországi zsidóság vagyonának sorsa 1938–1949, 71.

31 In 1945, Hungary received 23 percent of all aid that the Joint distributed in Europe (altogether almost 4 million US dollars), this figure rose to 27 percent in 1948 (amounting to 8.5 million US dollars). Hungarian Jews thus received the largest amount of funding from the Joint in Europe, this being the most expensive project in the history of the Joint until then. See Kinga Frojimovics, *Different Interpretations of Reconstruction. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress in Hungary after the Holocaust*, in: David Bankier (ed.), *The Jews Are Coming Back. The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin after WW II*, Jerusalem 2005, 277–292, here 280.

32 On the provided assistance offered by the Joint to Hungarian Jews, see Magyar Zsidó Levéltár [Hungarian Jewish Archives], XXXIII-4-A, Documents of the Hungarian Committee of the American Joint Distribution Committee, 46.

33 The BEG was an act passed in 1953 that unified a range of earlier laws regulating restitution. This law allowed several Jewish victims who had suffered harm to their physical integrity, health, and professional interests as a result of antisemitic persecution to receive annuities. In 1965, the circle of beneficiaries was widened and the deadline for submitting claims was extended to 1969.

34 The BRÜG was a restitution law enacted in 1957. It regulated the restitution of property and companies confiscated from Jews. Heirless property was given to the Claims Conference.

pensation to the victims of Nazi medical experiments in certain communist countries, including Hungary.<sup>35</sup> This compensation is considered a diplomatic success as, at this time, due to the Hallstein Doctrine, the Federal Republic did not have diplomatic relations with socialist countries, which acknowledged the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>36</sup> The one-time payment from Germany was a symbolic act toward the survivors who had suffered permanent health damage.

The following three case studies concern women who submitted claims for compensation from West Germany. With the mediation and help of the Red Cross and the National Committee of Persons Persecuted by Nazism, the claimants filled out a long form in German, which asked for basic data about their current life situation as well as about their experiences during and after the Holocaust. However, the claimants were also asked to give detailed testimonies on what had happened to them: how they had been deported and experimented on, which camps they had been kept in, how they had been treated after the war, and how the experiments had affected their lives. Based on these testimonies, staff of the two organizations filled out the forms. The claimants were cross-examined and every contradiction was checked; in case it was needed, witnesses were invited to testify about what had happen to the claimant.

The nature of the claiming process implies that even though the claimants told their stories in their own words, in many cases these stories focused on specific problems and were adjusted (either by the claimants themselves or by the staff of the two organizations) in order to make the claim even more justified and to create a greater chance of getting compensation. This also means that certain elements of the stories might have been omitted, altered, or over-emphasized.

On the other hand, the claimants had to talk about painful memories in front of strangers, go into the details of the humiliating circumstances of the experiments, which often proved to be complicated and led to false or blurred details. In addition, since the claiming process happened twenty years after the events, the researcher must also take into consideration that human memory is fallible and some of the descriptions might be incorrect. Nevertheless, the cases and the life stories analyzed here will illuminate how the damages that these women suffered affected their post-war lives, as well as how the system of compensations worked.

35 Herbert Küpper, *A zsidóknak járó kárpótlás, jóvátétel Magyarországon és Németországban* [Restitution and Compensation of the Jews in Hungary and Germany], in: *Magyar jog* [Hungarian Law] 44 (1997), no. 7, 385–397, here 389.

36 Gábor Kádár/Zoltán Vági, *Hullarablás. A Magyar zsidók gazdasági megsemmisítése* [Robbing the Dead. The Economic Annihilation of the Hungarian Jews], Budapest 2005, 388.

“During the *Appell* We Were Called Out of the Ranks” –  
The Case of Paula F.

Paula F. was born in Nagyvárad (Oradea) in 1911.<sup>37</sup> She later moved to Kispest, a suburb of Budapest, where she worked as a clerk. Her husband Pál H. was a mechanical engineer; the couple lived in Hunyadi Street. They were members of a Jewish community comprising approximately 3,250 people.<sup>38</sup> Most probably, both Paula and her husband lost their jobs due to the anti-Jewish laws in the late 1930s. After the German occupation, the couple was then robbed of their property, which had not been confiscated before.<sup>39</sup>

Ghettoization started in mid-May 1944 in Kispest and the ghetto was set up in separate blocks of houses.<sup>40</sup> In late June, the second phase of concentration took place, when the entire population of the ghetto was taken to a transit camp set up in the brick factory of Monor. Like many other inmates, Paula found the conditions there humiliating and inhumane: “About 10,000 of us may have been there, we slept on the ground in the open air. We were exposed to the continuous abuse of the gendarmerie. [...] This meant that they were always beating us without the smallest reason.”<sup>41</sup> The prisoners of the camp were deported on three trains on 6 and 8 July.<sup>42</sup> In Kassa (Košice), members of the SS took over the train, which arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of 11 July.

Auschwitz was the first stage of Paula’s ordeals in the Nazi camp system. Upon arrival, her last property was confiscated and she experienced the humiliating act of being inducted into the camp system.

37 Due to privacy rights and the sensitivity of the topic, persons in this article are referred to by their given name and the first initial of their surname only.

38 In 1941, this was 5 percent of the local population. The number included 578 Christian Jews, who were defined as Jews by the antisemitic laws. This data is cited in Kepecs (ed.), *A zsidó népesség száma településenként (1840–1941)*, 230 f.

39 On the couple’s economic situation, see Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Pest Megyei Levéltára (Hungarian National Archives, Pest County Archives – henceforth MNL PML), VI.101 C/1/B, Financial Directorate, 22. 1338/1944, Declaration of Pál H.’s Properties.

40 Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *A magyarországi holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája [The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary]*, 3 vols., Budapest 2007, here vol. 2, 860. See also Paula’s testimony in DEGOB, Protocol No. 3241.

41 On the conditions in the Monor brick factory, see Borbála Klacsmann, *Ten Days in the Brick Factory. The Monor Transit Camp*, in: Karoline Georg/Verena Meier/Paula A. Oppermann (eds.), *Between Collaboration and Resistance. Papers from the 21st Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Extermination Sites*, Berlin 2020.

42 See the Kassa list in Braham, *A népirtás politikája*, vol. 2, 1358 f.

“They took us to the bathhouse where they cut our hair, they depilated us, then they gave us a single dress instead of our own clothes. We were lining up for roll call in that single thin dress. It was raining all night long, we were wet and cold and it was only the beginning!”<sup>43</sup>

The majority of the Hungarian deportees experienced similar events in the process of the deportations. Previously, when they were excluded from Hungarian society, obliged to wear the yellow star, and were then segregated in ghettos and camps, where their guards abused them, their human dignity quickly vanished. The violation of their physical integrity, however, did not end there: During the process of shaving in Auschwitz, women and men alike were exposed in front of the barbers. This was more humiliating for women who were often shaved by male barbers, and who experienced it as a form of sexual violation.<sup>44</sup>

A month later, Paula was taken together with 1,800 other women to Stutthof, from where her journey continued to Argenau, a sub-camp of Stutthof. She worked there during September. According to her testimony,

“they put us in wooden barracks, sixty women in each. We lay on the ground there too, and we had no blankets either. They assigned me to dig trenches, we worked from 6 o’clock in the morning to 5 o’clock in the afternoon. Lithuanian guards were watching over us when we worked; they treated the women as badly as possible, they always beat them, and there was nobody to turn to for protection.”<sup>45</sup>

When the work was completed, the women were transported to Korben, part of the camp complex of Thorn. Conditions there were even worse than in the previous camp. Accommodation was provided in tents; clothing and provisions were extremely poor.

“Our task was again to dig trenches and anti-tank ditches and the guards were also Lithuanian, but these were even worse than the former ones. They beat us so cruelly that it happened that somebody had to be taken to the infirmary with a broken rib after such a beating. [...] There was no crematorium there; the cadavers were buried in mass graves in the forest. About twenty deaths occurred a day.”<sup>46</sup>

The experiences of these women in the Nazi camp system is a complex of physical abuse: Not only did they have to perform forced labor without any

43 DEGOB, Protocol No. 3241.

44 Pascale Rachel Bos, *Women and the Holocaust. Analyzing Gender Difference*, in: Elizabeth R. Baer/Myrna Goldenberg (eds.), *Experience and Expression. Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, Detroit, Mich., 2003, 23–50, here 33.

45 DEGOB, Protocol no. 3241. Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági researched the fate of the female prisoners and the conditions in the sub-camp in Gábor Kádár/Zoltán Vági, *Táborok könyve. Magyarok a náci koncentrációs táborokban* [The Book of Camps. Hungarians in the Nazi Concentration Camps], Budapest 2017, 601–605.

46 DEGOB, Protocol No. 3241.

benefits, but they were beaten by the guards and were kept like slaves, without personal space or hygiene and under dehumanizing circumstances. Exhaustion, malnutrition, and the aggression of the guards ultimately led to the death of many.

In late January 1945, the camp was evacuated. Paula found herself on a death march with her comrades, which led towards the West as the Red Army was approaching from the East. “We started on foot, of course, we covered 30 kilometers a day without eating and drinking. [...] Many people stumbled and fell behind, and the Lithuanian guards shot all of them down. The number of those people shot down during the march was around 80–100.”<sup>47</sup> The group eventually reached Krone, where they had to stay in the prison building with the promise that the next day they would continue the march. However, during the night the Soviet forces arrived and, on 26 January, the women were liberated. Approximately 1,000 of them survived the hardships.<sup>48</sup>

This is where Paula’s testimony ends. It was recorded by DEGOB on 20 September 1945, fifteen days after her arrival back home. At that time, she already knew that her husband had died in Auschwitz, which she also mentioned in her testimony. Her narrative reveals that aside from dispossession, she also experienced almost all forms of harm that Roth classifies as damages to the person: She was deprived of her human dignity and rights, she lost her liberty, profession, and social security, and she was used as a slave worker and mistreated by the guards.

However, there were other things she did not talk about in her testimony, and if it was not for the later compensation arriving from the Federal Republic of Germany, several pieces of the puzzle would still be missing. On 20 October 1961, Paula issued a claim for compensation. The corresponding file contains further information both on her circumstances during the years of persecution as well as on her postwar life and living conditions at the time.<sup>49</sup> According to a form she completed, in 1961 Paula was still working as a clerk, earning 2,100 forints<sup>50</sup> – an above-average salary at that time, with which she also supported her sister, Júlia W. She had lost her other siblings during the Holocaust: One of her brothers, Zoltán, died in Mauthausen, and

47 Ibid.

48 Paula stated in her testimony that the liberation happened on 26 January, while others from the same group remembered 28 January. See Kádár/Vági, *Táborok könyve*, 604.

49 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [Hungarian National Archives] (henceforth MNL OL), XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 864. 4-200.084, File of Paula F.

50 In the 1960s, the average salary was between 800 and 1,200 forints. For more information, see Rudolf Andorka/István Harcsa, *A lakosság jövedelme* [The Income of the Population], in: Rudolf Andorka/Tamás Kolosi/György Vukovich (eds.), *Társadalmi riport 1990* [Social Report 1990], Budapest 1990, 97–117, here 99.

the other brother, Ernő, was killed in Dachau. This was, obviously, not a unique phenomenon: Upon their return, many survivors found themselves alone or with only few or distant relatives still alive, and the lack of a stable social network rendered it even more difficult to restart their lives. In such a situation, the traditional roles in the family shifted and the result was that, just like in the case of Paula, siblings often supported each other – taking up roles that were normally assigned to the head of the family (father or husband).

Moreover, medical experiments had a major impact on Paula's life. According to her account, while in Auschwitz-Birkenau, she was called out of the ranks during an *Appell* and was taken to Josef Mengele's office. She received injections into her womb by an unknown physician, a procedure that was repeated twice later. Some days later, they took blood from her in order to test the result of the experiment.<sup>51</sup>

When Paula returned home, she was sick due to the experiments; therefore, she was hospitalized in 1945, then again in 1953 and again in 1961, and she underwent a long-term hormonal therapy.<sup>52</sup> In 1949, she suffered a spontaneous abortion. Thus, the experiments that she had had to endure during her deportation affected multiple aspects of her life. First, her private life was influenced gravely not only because she could no longer have children, but also because being deprived of her fertility, her womanhood was destroyed. Her chances of marriage and establishing a family decreased significantly. Second, the experiments and her experiences during the Holocaust must have had a strong impact on her psychologically as well. Finally, the consequences of the Holocaust prevented her from going back to work immediately after the war, which hampered her fresh start to a life and career.

Not only did she have to cope with the trauma of having been abused and forced to work in the camps and to bear the loss of her family when she returned, she also had to endure the memory of the experiments, which acted like a stigma: Years after the Holocaust, she still suffered from its effects and relived its memories, especially during hospitalizations, when she told doctors her story over and over again.

Paula never married again. This was not uncommon among women with a similar fate: The reasons for remaining single mentioned in their files included their ruined health or that men did not want to marry women who could not bear children. Sometimes, however, the women themselves decided to remain alone. At the time of issuing her claim, Paula was officially still a widow.

51 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 864. 4-200.084, File of Paula F.

52 As stated in Dr. Sándor Füredi's medical certificate, which is attached to Paula's file.

In October 1962, Paula received 40,000 deutschmarks in compensation, which translated to 233,040 forints. The German compensation was a symbolic apology for the suffering endured in the camps, especially the experiments and their long-term impact on Paula's life. Even though financially and professionally, Paula managed to recover, the Holocaust overshadowed her social life and her health for decades after the war.

“Then We Received Some Money, which Did Not Make Us Happy” –  
The Case of Magdolna V.

The case of Magdolna (Magda) V. is better documented than Paula F.'s, as an almost four-hour-long interview with her is kept at the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive,<sup>53</sup> and her compensation claim file is more detailed.<sup>54</sup>

Magdolna was born in Pestszenterzsébet in 1925, where she lived with her family: her parents, Sándor and Adél, and her sisters, Éva and Klára. The family had a porcelain and glassware shop in Kossuth Lajos Street, which was the inheritance of her mother, and, in Magdolna's words, “everything was inherited on the distaff side; my grandmother, my mother, my sister and me, we all worked in the glass and porcelain business and in this issue there is pragmatic sanction: Men do not [work there], only women.”<sup>55</sup>

From Magdolna's interview, it transpires that the family was an integral part of the local community: Their shop was popular and her mother frequently lent dishes and plates for events. This situation changed slightly when the anti-Jewish laws were introduced. Even though most of their customers remained faithful, it became ever harder to purchase products.

Life changed more radically for Magdolna herself though. In 1939, after having finished secondary school, her parents decided that she should continue with vocational training, so she was sent to a seamstress to learn sewing. As Magda remembered:

53 The interview was conducted in Budapest on 6 February 2001. See University of Southern California Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive (henceforth USC Shoah Foundation, VHA), Interview 51403.

54 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 884. 4-200323, File of Magdolna V.

55 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.



“I terribly hated this whole thing, I wanted to keep on studying, but I was told that it must be this way. Those friends who used to be kind, nice, with whom I went home together from school, they did not even greet me; then, in my yellow star period, they even turned their heads away.”<sup>56</sup>

These were the first effects of persecution on Magda’s life, which also had long-term consequences, as instead of choosing an academic career, probably with a better salary, she was limited to manual work. Besides, being marked as a Jew, both through her educational options and the yellow star she was forced to wear, her social exclusion also began.

Instead of buying stocks or bonds, the parents invested their money in merchandise. According to Magda, “the attic was full of products, the basement was full of products, and they kept them all to turn them into money; they invested their money in them.”<sup>57</sup> This is also demonstrated by the family’s declaration form from April 1944, which cited the sum of 48,970 pengő, the value of the stored porcelain and glassware.<sup>58</sup> At the time of the ghettoization, the shop, together with the merchandise, was locked up by the authorities, who took the keys from Sándor V.<sup>59</sup> The family was taken to the ghetto in June. In Pestszenterzsébet, there was no fenced off area serving as a ghetto, but “yellow star houses” were assigned from among buildings damaged by the war.<sup>60</sup> Klára, Magda, and Hédi K., Magda’s friend, started working in the Lehr Ernő textile factory, where they remained until the beginning of winter. The girls lived under conditions similar to those of the slave workers in Nazi camps, as after the deportation of the local Jews to the Monor transit camp and from there to Auschwitz-Birkenau,<sup>61</sup> they remained without their families and supplies, working in their summer clothes, lacked sufficient hygiene and personal space, and were isolated from society.<sup>62</sup>

On 1 December, the girls were taken to the train station in Józsefváros and from there to Ravensbrück.<sup>63</sup> They went through the horrors of the Nazi camp system together. In Ravensbrück, Magda lost her last possession: “The most horrible thing for me was that as a neat girl from a good house, on the first day I put my last pair of shoes in front of the bed; I lived on the third

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 MNL PML, VI.101 C/1/B, Financial Directorate, 37. 6552/1944, Declaration of Sándor V.’s Properties.

59 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

60 Braham (ed.), *A magyarországi holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája*, vol. 2, 871.

61 Ibid.

62 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

63 On the deportations from the train station of Józsefváros, see János Pelle, *A holokauszt utolsó felvonása a Józsefvárosban [The Last Act of the Holocaust in Józsefváros]*, in: *Valóság [Reality]* 59 (2016), no. 9, 30–63. See also Kádár/Vági, *Táborok könyve*, 478.

bunk and I was left without shoes.”<sup>64</sup> With this act, Magda was deprived of the last symbol of her social status and former life and was forced to face the harsh reality and the entirely different social hierarchy of inmates in the camp. As she explained in her interview, someone took pity on her and gave her a pair of broken rubber boots – she wore these until she returned home.

Medical experiments were conducted in the camp under the control of Dr. Karl Gebhardt, who was testing new types of medicines.<sup>65</sup> Magda and Klára were both subjected to these experiments. According to Magda, after being shaved, she and her sister looked alike, therefore they were mistaken for twins and were selected and taken to the *Revier*, where they were narcotized and then given injections into their wombs.<sup>66</sup> For the two girls, still adolescents and virgins, this experience was confusing, painful, and horrible at the same time, so much so that, according to Magda, they never talked about it, not even amongst themselves,<sup>67</sup> which indicates that they felt ashamed of it even years later.

In late January, the girls were brought to Freiberg, a sub-camp of Flossenbürg, where they had to work at the Arado Flugzeugwerke factory.<sup>68</sup> Provisions as well as working and living conditions were much better there than in Ravensbrück: For the first time in a while, the girls could wash and sleep in beds. Despite their hope that they could stay there until the end of the war, due to the approaching front, a death march was sent from the factory to Flossenbürg, and then through several sub-camps. They finally arrived in Theresienstadt, where they were liberated by Soviet troops on 8 May 1945. As an additional stigma of the Holocaust, Magda was again shaved in the Russian hospital against her will in order to rid her of lice, which infected her with typhus. As she recalled, “I arrived in Pest when everyone had hair, but I had no hair.”<sup>69</sup>

Magda and Klára were hospitalized as soon as they arrived in Hungary in June. When they finally returned to Pestszenterzsébet, they found their home had been looted: “[W]hen we came home, due to the looting the broken glass and porcelain in the basement reached above our ankles. Whatever they could not take, they broke. [...] As I said, my parents did not save money, they did not have insurance, so it all became nothing,” remembered Magda.<sup>70</sup>

64 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

65 Kádár/Vági, *Táborok könyve*, 472.

66 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

67 *Ibid.*

68 For more information on the Freiberg camp and its Hungarian prisoners, see Kádár/Vági, *Táborok könyve*, 223 f.

69 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

70 *Ibid.*

As both of their parents and their older sister together with her little son had perished in Auschwitz, the two sisters now refurbished and reopened the family shop by themselves. Their widowed brother-in-law and his mother helped them in this endeavor: “[T]hey sold everything they had in order to feed us,” recalled Magda.<sup>71</sup> The persecution and the family’s losses resulted in a shift in the relevance of relations: Soon, their in-laws left and the only remaining kin, a cousin, began to assist the girls. As was the case with Paula F., in the surrounding social void, connections with other, sometimes distant relatives became more important.

Magda’s cousin arranged for Jenő R., a middle-aged Orthodox Jewish man, to marry Magda, as she considered this the only solution for the sisters. It is revealing how Magda described her relationship to Jenő: “Even though I knew that I was entering into a spiritual *mésalliance*, I had no other choice. There was my sister, who also did not work; we had to make a living somehow.”<sup>72</sup> This marriage embittered Magda’s life, as her husband abused her physically and caused major tensions in the family. Later on, the couple separated.

Afterwards, in order to earn a living, Magda decided to go back to school: She studied food science and accounting and finally found work. This was, however, still insufficient to care for her family, which had even grown since Klára married László F., who had served as a military laborer and due to frostbite had lost both of his legs.

In her interview, Magda did not mention any state restitution or help from outside in restarting their lives. However, concerning her circumstances and decisions, it seems that even if they received any aid from the state, it did not change much. Magda described the issue of restitution as follows:

“[I]f in [Pestszent]erzsébet someone wanted to get compensation in some case, he visited Kláríka; she wrote all the documents; the V. girls always testified that this person had possessed that, I had met him there, this or that happened. There was a very nice woman at the municipality, she always wrote the letters so many can be grateful to Kláríka.”<sup>73</sup>

Thus, even though they had lost almost everything, the two girls helped everyone who turned to them to receive restitution for their “Aryanized” or stolen property. Magda’s account depicts a local self-aid method (specifically witnessing for others) and the self-organization of the survivors, who took each other’s needs and interests into consideration when it came to reclaiming their property. As is clear from the description, a helpful local civil servant or clerk was also needed to bring these procedures to a successful

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

conclusion. This was quite common in postwar Hungary: In many cases, the survivors, out of empathy and solidarity, helped each other in the restitution process.

Magda and her sister's story demonstrate that during the Holocaust they had endured physical and psychological abuse, lost several family members and most of their prewar property, and suffered permanent damage to their health. From the moment the anti-Jewish laws were proclaimed, they had faced "choiceless choices"<sup>74</sup> – situations where they were not in control and thus could not decide their own fate according to their own free will. Such situations included when Magda had to stop studying, when the girls were working in the factory, and everything that happened after their deportation. However, not even the liberation restored their prewar freedom: As a long-term consequence of the Holocaust, the lootings and the anti-Jewish persecution, they still faced hardships, which had a major impact on their lives and decisions; therefore, their "choiceless choices" accompanied them for years after the war. Magda's first marriage, for instance, was the result of such limited scope of action, the outcome of an economic situation caused by two major factors: the previous confiscations and the restrictions of the anti-Jewish laws, which did not allow her to continue her studies.

The experiments that the two girls had suffered in Ravensbrück also gravely shaped the trajectory of their lives. Many of the survivors who submitted compensation claims in the 1960s had been sterilized or permanently mutilated in other ways, which resulted in a limited or no capability to work. From this perspective, Magda and Klára were among the more fortunate ones as, after their initial hospitalization, they could reintegrate into society. They had not suffered such permanent health damage that would have prevented them from working.

Most often the experiments continued to affect the social and private life of the survivors. In the case of the V. girls, this meant that neither of them could bear children as they had been sterilized. This caused additional suffering especially to Klára, whose marriage was based on emotions and not on economic considerations: According to Magda, Klára did everything to be able to conceive, but in vain.<sup>75</sup> Infertility worked as an ever-remaining sign of Jewishness left behind by the persecution; a stamp left by the perpetrators, whose initial aim was to annihilate Jews, in this case through preventing them from reproducing.

74 This term was coined by Lawrence Langer to describe the disintegration of moral reality and the limited scopes of action during the Holocaust. See Lawrence Langer, *Versions of Survival. The Holocaust and the Human Spirit*, Albany, N. Y., 1982, 72.

75 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

Magda's physician took her case to the International Red Cross and encouraged her to apply for compensation, which she did in May 1964, both for herself and for her sister. Magda had rather bad memories of the application process; in her testimony, she drew a parallel between her experiences and the attitude of Hungarian society towards Holocaust survivors, stating that both were hostile towards survivors. She recalled that the coordinator of the applications threatened that if they did not show up for the hearing at the International Red Cross, the case would be brought to court.<sup>76</sup>

Magda's file contains the notes of the specialists who dealt with her case, which besides independent physicians also included members of the Red Cross, the National Committee of Persons Persecuted by Nazism in Hungary, and lawyers. As stated in one document, the case of the sisters was not like other sterilization experiments that occurred in Ravensbrück; however, the fact that their menses were absent for years after the war and that they remained infertile – both facts being supported by medical certificates – convinced the experts that Magda had said the truth.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, Magda's file contains a short description of the impact the experiments had on her life: As she had also said in her interview, she could only start working in 1949 due to her health issues and lack of education; until then her husband had supported them. The case file suggests that her first marriage ended because she could not bear children – and most probably this narrative helped her case. Her file states:

“After the divorce, she had a relationship in which she was strongly involved emotionally, but which ended because of her health and infertility. She got married again in the summer of 1956, but her husband left her in early 1957, as nothing bound him to her. The fact that married life goes with strong pain also contributed to the dissolution of the two marriages and the relationship.”<sup>78</sup>

The depiction of Magda's private life in her file – even though slightly distorted in order to facilitate her case – provides additional details of her story. In the interview, for instance, she did not mention the relationship after her divorce, nor that sexual activity was accompanied by pain. The latter issue, however, coupled with her infertility, was a severe obstacle to any sort of relationship, as the physical attributes, which are fundamental to establishing a family, were missing.

As a result of her application, Magda received 40,000 deutschmarks in compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany in 1966, which trans-

76 Ibid.

77 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 884. 4-200323, File of Magdolna V.

78 Ibid.

lated to 299,700 forints.<sup>79</sup> She commented in her interview: “[T]hen we received some money, which did not make us happy,”<sup>80</sup> meaning that this money could not bring back their lost family members. At the end of the interview, an official letter is shown, which she received from J. P. Maunoir, a representative of the International Red Cross. The letter explains that in 1963 the distribution of compensation for the victims of experiments had to be suspended due to the West German government’s investigation into whether sterilization procedures still took place in the camps after June 1943. However, the Red Cross and the International Tracing Service provided evidence that experiments had been conducted even in 1944, so the German government decided to keep paying compensation.<sup>81</sup>

The case of Magdolna and her sister Klára is a good example of how a series of anti-Jewish measures, persecution, and the violation of human rights resulted in long-term disadvantages in their lives economically, emotionally, and physically. Magda’s testimony also provides a glimpse into the difficulties of the restitution process and how survivors assessed compensation. The fact that she did not even mention state restitution in the immediate postwar years suggests that the responsible institutions’ efficacy was negligible and that Hungarian survivors had to rely on their own social networks if they wanted to restart their lives. The compensation arriving from West Germany, even though it meant financial relief, did not have a major impact on Magda’s life: In her interview, she concluded that without her family, “this life has not turned out as it would have [with them].”<sup>82</sup>

### “They Took Me to the ‘House with Geraniums’” – The Case of Ilona W.

Before the war, Ilona lived in the small town of Pilis with her parents. In 1941, Pilis had 73 Jewish and 20 converted Jewish inhabitants,<sup>83</sup> which dropped to 25 persons and some exempted Jews in 1944. In late May 1944, the majority of the Jewish population was brought to the ghetto of Monor, then in early July to the transit camp of the same town.<sup>84</sup> Ilona and her family, however, had a different fate.

79 Ibid.

80 USC Shoah Foundation, VHA, Interview 51403.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Kepecs (ed.), *A zsidó népesség száma településenként (1840–1941)*, 228 f.

84 Braham (ed.), *A magyarországi holokauszt földrajzi enciklopédiája*, vol. 2, 872 f.

The family was not rich: Ilona's father was a retired carpenter and they owned real estate property worth 30,000 pengő, with a house under construction.<sup>85</sup> After the German occupation, Ilona's father was arrested and taken away from Pilis, as demonstrated by the fact that the form in which the family declared their properties in late April was signed by his wife instead of him. At this time, Ilona, a 25-year-old woman, was at home following surgery. In her testimony, she described:

“As I got home from hospital only a couple of days earlier [before the arrest], still with an open wound from an appendix operation, they could not deport me, so I stayed in Pilis until April 1944. The local gendarmerie brought me to the district doctor for another examination in April 1944. Although my wound was still open, they deported me to the internment camp of Kistarcsa, then from there to Auschwitz-Birkenau.”<sup>86</sup>

Ilona was kept in Auschwitz-Birkenau until the liberation. When she returned to Hungary in April 1945, she discovered that she was the only survivor from her family: Her parents, sister, and nephew had all been murdered in Auschwitz, while her brother had died as a military laborer. The three-room family house had been plundered. Having no other kin alive, Ilona was supported by her friends in the village, as she could not work at first due to her damaged health.<sup>87</sup> As the previous cases showed, this was a common phenomenon among Holocaust survivors, who had to rely mostly on Jewish self-aid organizations or their own social networks.

Ilona got married in 1950 and her only son Csaba was born that year. The couple got divorced ten years later. At the time, Ilona was working as a superintendent in Budapest, with a salary of 1,300 forints, which counted as an average salary.

In late 1962, Ilona applied for compensation. More information about her imprisonment and her postwar life emerges from her file. In a testimony, she had to describe her experiences in Auschwitz, which had been fundamentally influenced by her health issues from the moment she arrived there.

85 MNL PML, VI.101 C/1/B, Financial Directorate, 42. 1379/1944, Declaration of Vilmos W.'s Properties.

86 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 893. 4-200413, File of Ilona W. The Kistarcsa internment camp was set up in the late 1920s and, after the German occupation, mostly Jews arrested in *Einzelaktionen* were brought there. Besides them, prominent Jews (such as politicians and industrialists) were kept as hostages. Kistarcsa was the location from which the first deportation train departed on 28 April 1944 – most probably, also Ilona was deported on this train. For more information, see Braham, *A népirtás politikája*, vol. 2, 849 f.

87 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 893. 4-200413, File of Ilona W.

“My wound scarred over from time to time, other times it was oozing. During a selection, they took me along with other young women to the ‘house with geraniums,’ which was a brothel. In this house, my appendix wound opened again. Therefore, I was examined, and I got various colored injections in my buttocks and my genitalia. Then they took me back to my original barrack; then, after being selected by Mengele, I was taken to the experiments barrack. They operated on me again, put something in the wound, and then it was bandaged.”<sup>88</sup>

From her original application letter, it also emerges that due to being forced to work as a sex slave, she contracted syphilis, which was another reason why she was removed from the brothel.

The medical certificates attached to Ilona’s file prove that she was in treatment from the moment she returned to Hungary: In 1945, she received antiluetic therapy, and in August 1961, she was operated at Róbert Károly hospital, when the implant that had been put into her appendix wound in 1944 was taken out. According to her epicrisis, Ilona frequently had diarrhea and indigestion symptoms after 1956, as well as pain in her abdomen and anemia, which led to her being placed under constant medical supervision. Her fragile health also contributed to the deterioration of her relationship with her husband and, as her application reveals, the “suffering she endured during the deportation influenced her entire life tragically; her future is insecure, which is further aggravated by the fact that she has to raise her son.”<sup>89</sup>

Ilona’s case is an example of how Holocaust survivors supported their compensation claims with false statements to make their experiences seem even more severe. Of the approximately seventy women working in the camp brothels of Auschwitz-Birkenau, none were Hungarians; moreover, the SS did not pick Jewish women for sex work.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, it is unlikely that Ilona was forced to work in the brothel. Rather, she most probably made up this element of her story in order to underline the cruel reality of the camp. As the testimony is unreliable, it is also unclear whether she was experimented on or not. Ilona’s tactic was not uncommon: Other cases can also be found among the compensation claim files where the claimants invented stories

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Robert Sommer, *Forced Prostitution in National Socialist Concentration Camps. The Example of Auschwitz*, in: Barbara Drinck/Chung-noh Gross (eds.), *Forced Prostitution in Times of War and Peace. Sexual Violence against Women and Girls*, Bielefeld 2007, 123–135, here 127. I am grateful for the help of Mirjam Schnorr and Robert Sommer. According to Robert Sommer, who identified almost all sex slaves working in Auschwitz, sex slaves, who got infected with venereal diseases, were treated and then assigned to lower-level work, such as field work, but they were not experimented on. Robert Sommer, email to the author, 24 August 2018.



of experiments in order to receive indemnification.<sup>91</sup> Since many Holocaust survivors did not get restitution or compensation after the war, some felt entitled to the compensation provided by West Germany, even if they had not undergone any medical experiments.

Nevertheless, it is evident that Ilona already had health issues when she was deported and also that due to her experiences in the camp, these health problems became even more serious, which is proven by her medical reports and certificates. Having gone through the Holocaust, losing her entire family, property, and health, Ilona also faced raising her child alone after her divorce.

A letter written by Ilona's son, Csaba K., in February 1971 is attached to the woman's file, in which Csaba wrote the following:

"Recently, I found documents among the estate of my late mother (Mrs. Mihály K., née Ilona W., died in 1966), which prove that in 1944 she had been deported to Auschwitz as a Jew and that the deceased had been in touch with you concerning the compensation of her indemnification demands.

At the time of my mother's death I was underage, thus I did not know about the above facts. I ask the comrades to inform me, as the only successor of the deceased, on the possible developments or the closing of the case."<sup>92</sup>

Ilona's file does not contain the answer sent to her son, so the outcome of her case is not known, but it seems that she did not receive compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany while she was alive. It is telling that she died in 1966, five years after the operation, at the age of 47. Thus, after the Holocaust, which resulted in both personal and material losses, and which defined the course of her life until the end, she remains one of those survivors who never saw justice done in their case.

## Conclusion

When Jewish survivors returned to Hungary at the end of World War II, they found themselves in a void both in an economic and a social sense. Their homes had been looted, their property stolen or redistributed by the state, and their family members killed. Most Holocaust survivors experienced a

91 See, e. g., the cases of Magda E. (MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, 887. 4-200348) and Magdolna K. (MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, 901. 4-200655), who were both reported to the International Red Cross by Rózsi K. because they had allegedly invented their stories about being experimented on. Magdolna K. officially admitted that this was true at a hearing at the Red Cross.

92 MNL OL, XIX-L-20-o, Department of Indemnification at the Financial Institutions Administration, 893. 4-200413, File of Ilona W.

great variety of damages: They lost their freedom, social security and health; their employment options were limited, they were exploited as slave laborers in the camps, who had to endure various types of torture, and their estates, businesses, savings, as well as movable belongings were confiscated.<sup>93</sup> Repossessing their family houses or other properties required long and often difficult legal processes, and in many cases restored businesses were nationalized again during the socialist era, which led to the continuation of expropriation.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, they faced hardships due to their lost social networks, the trauma of the Holocaust, and the “choiceless choices” that accompanied them from the end of the 1930s onward.

Restitution in Hungary was limited for various economic, political, and historical reasons; rehabilitation was developed by international and Jewish aid organizations, which helped the survivors get back on their feet in the postwar years. Then, in 1948, democracy transformed into socialism, which washed away any possibility for compensation. In the 1960s, a limited number of survivors was compensated with contributions sent from the Federal Republic of Germany, but this was restricted to those whose health had demonstrably been permanently damaged in the camps through experiments – which concerned mostly women. The necessity to compensate Holocaust survivors for other types of damages (called “damages to the person” by Roth), the idea of a public apology and commemoration, as well as the guarantee of non-repetition was not even considered until the fall of socialism.

Connecting anti-Jewish persecution and its postwar consequences at a micro-historical level sheds light on the experiences of survivors and how they evaluated the compensation process. The Holocaust had a long-term impact on their lives not only in an economic, but also emotional, social, and physical sense, and the anti-Jewish persecution affected and limited their choices and possibilities even decades after the war.

The case studies of the three women in this paper reveal, above all, how forced sterilization and damage to health could change the course of the lives of female survivors. First of all, the private and family lives of these women were obviously greatly influenced as they could not bear children or could do so only after long-term therapy. Their chances of a healthy relationship or marriage decreased significantly, especially in cases where sexual activity became painful due to the experiments. This of course meant that most of the time they remained in an emotionally difficult situation. Second, their health issues prevented them from resuming work and thus affected their economic

93 Stephen J. Roth, *Indemnification of Hungarian Victims of Nazism*, 736 f.

94 Michael Berenbaum, *Confronting History. Restitution and the Historians*, in: Michael J. Bazyler/Roger P. Alford (eds.), *Holocaust Restitution. Perspectives on the Litigation and Its Legacy*, New York/London 2006, 43–49, here 44.

situation as well. Both of these effects limited their scope of action, too. The experiments also resulted in psychological damage, as the victims suffered the consequences for the rest of their lives and in the course of therapy and hospitalization had to go over and revive their stories again and again.

These three cases also shed light on one of the aspects of how women's experiences differed from men's, as well as how the persecution haunted them for decades after the war and hindered them from returning to a "normal" life. The first installment of compensation to arrive from West Germany was directed specifically at Jews who had been experimented on. During the application process, the applicants emphasized first and foremost the immediate and subsequent effects of forced sterilization, namely the private/emotional and economic elements. None of them wrote about the psychological consequences, even though some of the stories make subtle references to these. However, the application sheet and the entire process focused on the more immediate issues. It seems that applicants who had solid medical proof of their health problems and whose stories were confirmed by other evidence – such as the contemporary research of the International Tracing Service – received a certain sum in compensation.

The one-off compensation for victims of experiments that arrived from West Germany was a desired asset, a generous sum, enough to travel abroad or receive better health care. Of course, the purpose of this compensation was to symbolically apologize for the damage done in the Nazi camps. Even though this was a progressive step forward on the long and rocky road that eventually led to more elaborate forms of compensation and reparations, as Magda V. put it, life could never be the same for the survivors after the Holocaust.



Irit Chen

## The Israeli Consulate in Munich, 1948–1953: Conflicting Policies towards German-Jewish Communities

This article focuses on the attitudes of the Israeli consulate in Munich towards the surviving German Jews who opted to renew Jewish communities in West Germany (henceforth German-Jewish communities) in light of Israel's boycott policy of Jewish life in Germany and its economic interests in reparations from the government in Bonn.<sup>1</sup> The consulate was established in October 1948, accredited to the Western occupation authorities in postwar Germany, in order to facilitate the immigration of Jewish Holocaust survivors to the newly established State of Israel.<sup>2</sup> When commencing its operations, the consulate refrained from any contacts with the rebuilt local Jewish communities. It also did not get involved in the restitution of Jewish property in Germany, pursued by Jewish organizations since the end of World War II.<sup>3</sup> From the second half of 1949, due to internal changes in the consulate itself and political-economic developments in Germany and Israel, it became active in the service of Israel's demand for material compensation from Germany. The consulate shut its doors in 1953 following the implementation of the Reparations Agreement, signed in September 1952. In this agreement, West Germany pledged to pay Israel approximately 700 million dollars as an indemnity to the Jewish survivors who had settled in the country. The present article claims, that, in order to do both, heed the call of the Israeli public to boycott Jewish life in Germany and advance Israel's interests in reparations,

- 1 This article is based on a chapter of the author's MA thesis: "Contact but no Established Relations." The Israeli Consulate in Munich between Israel and Germany 1948–1953 (unpublished MA thesis, University of Haifa, 2016; Heb.).
- 2 On the consulate in Munich, see Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, Like an Oasis in the Desert. The Israeli Consulate in Munich, 1948–1953, in: *Studies in Zionism* 9 (1988), no. 1, 81–98; Chen, "Contact but no Established Relations."
- 3 Efforts to save Jewish property in Europe following the rise of the National Socialists to power were already made by Jewish organizations in the 1930s, e. g. by the signing of the Transfer Agreement with the authorities of the Nazi Ministry of Economy. On this topic, see Yfaat Weiss, *The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Movement. A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust*, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998), 129–171 (Heb.); Irit Chen, *Kontakt – aber keine offiziellen Beziehungen. Das Israelische Konsulat in München zwischen Israel und Deutschland, 1948–1953*, in: *Münchener Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 15 (2021), no. 1, 47–65.

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the consulate would have to consolidate a policy towards the German-Jewish communities revolving around the duality of exclusion and inclusion, of avoidance and outreach. The consulate adopted banning measures against German-Jewish communal life in Germany but remained involved in its political affairs for Israeli utilitarian purposes.

The revival of Jewish life in Germany from the end of World War II and the beginning of the 1950s was shaped around two central ideas: first, a transit station, and second, reconstruction. For about 50,000 people of *She'erit ha-Pletah* (the Surviving Remnant), Jewish survivors who had been liberated on Nazi-German soil and now resided in displaced persons (DP) camps, post-war Germany was a temporary station on their way to immigration, mainly to Israel.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, about 15,000 German Jews, who had survived due to mixed marriages or in hiding, rebuilt their destroyed communities out of a commitment to rehabilitate Jewish life after years of persecution and for the purpose of meeting the health needs of survivors. Eastern European survivors who had left the overcrowded DP camps also moved into German cities and joined the existing communities of surviving German Jewry.<sup>5</sup>

The renewal of Jewish life in Germany aroused fierce opposition by world Jewry. In 1948, the World Jewish Congress announced that Jewish life could not be accepted on the “bloodstained soil of Germany” and any such endeavor precipitated a moral disgrace.<sup>6</sup>

From the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948 and throughout the first decade of its existence, Israeli politicians and the public expressed strong objection to the revival of Jewish life in Germany. From an Israeli point of view, the establishment of a state for the Jewish people did not only facilitate their complete and final departure from Germany but required it. A continued presence, however, appeared to undermine the responsibility of the German people for the events of the Holocaust and to strengthen antisemitic movements. Jews who did remain were perceived as a mark of degradation and condemned in the strongest of terms in newspapers and Knesset meetings: as “inferior of inferiors” suffering from “moral degeneration,”

- 4 See Juliane Wetzel, *Jüdisches Leben in München 1945–1951. Durchgangsstation oder Wiederaufbau?*, Munich 1987, x f. Between 1945 and 1947 the number of DPs grew due to mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe, known as “Habricha.” For more information about the “surviving remnants” at the DP camps from the early 1940s to the 1950s, see Atina Grossmann/Tamar Lewinsky, *Erster Teil: 1945–1949. Zwischenstation*, in: Michael Brenner (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart. Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft*, Munich 2012, 67–152.
- 5 See Michael Brenner/Norbert Frei, *Zweiter Teil: 1950–1967. Konsolidierung*, in: Brenner (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, 153–294.
- 6 On the attitude of the World Jewish Congress, see Tamara Anthony, *Ins Land der Väter oder der Täter? Israel und die Juden in Deutschland nach der Schoah*, Berlin 2004, 119–130.

“weakening the value and honor of our people in their historical account with the Germans,” and as “traitors returning to the bloody land.”<sup>7</sup> An expression of fierce resistance could be seen on the pages of the *Haaretz* newspaper in September 1949, when its editor, Gershon Schocken, born 1912 in Germany, proposed the State of Israel should take three measures to hinder Jews from staying in Germany: first, preventing Israeli citizens from obtaining permanent residence; second, stipulating a date after which the right of Jews in Germany to immigrate to Israel would be forfeited; and third, enacting a law that prevented interaction between Israeli and German citizens.<sup>8</sup> The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) widely shared this stance against the renewal of Jewish life in Germany. This is reflected in a statement made, in autumn 1949, by the director of the West European Section (WES), Gershon Avner (1919–1991), who had been born in Berlin by the name Gunter Hirsch and immigrated with his family to Palestine in 1933. Had it not been for the pursuit of compensation from Germany, he said, Israel would have adopted a more hardline approach to the Jews remaining there. However, the fear of harming its own interests prevented Israel from doing so. Yet, Avner asserted, Israel’s firm opposition to the continuation of Jewish life in Germany should have been made sufficiently clear to the remaining Jews. In other words, Israel should have not created the illusion of supporting their choice.<sup>9</sup> Owing to this fierce position, and perhaps in an attempt to pressure the Jews in Germany to immigrate to Israel, the Jewish Agency offices were closed in September 1950. The closing announcement read that the gates of the homeland were open to both the healthy and the sick, and that the exiting of Germany must occur – an unambiguous message to the Jews in Germany, that Zionist officialdom would no longer support them.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the fifties and up to the mid-sixties, Israeli and world Jewry continued to officially reject Jewish life in Germany.

This stance was part of a broader policy pursued throughout the late forties and mid-fifties by the State of Israel, which understood itself as representative of the Jewish people vis-à-vis West Germany – perceived, in turn, as the successor to the Third Reich. The policy did not differentiate between political and cultural spheres but urged an all-encompassing boycott of Germany, from diplomatic relations over language to the arts. Thus, for example, German newspapers were refused import licenses and public performances in

7 Neima Barzel, *Jews in Post-War Germany? The Jewish Agency, the State of Israel, and the Renewal of the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945–1953*, in: *Yahadut Zemanenu [Contemporary Jewry]* 8 (1993), 99–134, here 126 f. (Heb.).

8 See Meron Mendel, *The Policy for the Past in West Germany and Israel. The Case of Jewish Remigration*, in: *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 49 (2004), 121–136, here 127 f.

9 See Barzel, *Jews in Post-War Germany?*, 118 (Heb.).

10 See *ibid.*, 123.

the German language were prohibited. However, simultaneously to Israel's boycott of Germany, the difficult economic reality and burden of immigration absorption led the Israeli government to adopt a more pragmatic approach to Germany. Bilateral relations between the two countries thus began to develop with regard to the matter of material compensation for the catastrophic losses inflicted on the Jewish people in the Holocaust.<sup>11</sup> In the eye of the German establishment, this compensation was a gesture of reconciliation and, at the same time, a necessary condition to return into the bosom of the nations. These contacts commenced in the summer of 1949 with the decision of the Israeli government to espouse the transfer principle for the restitution of Jewish property. Active measures to seek reparations were taken from 1951 onwards. In April, a secret meeting was held between Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Israeli representatives, resulting in a public announcement by the Chancellor at the Bundestag about the readiness of the German government to reach an agreement with Israel on behalf of the Jewish people. In March 1952, direct negotiations began between the two sides. Half a year later, on 10 September 1952, the Reparations Agreement was signed.<sup>12</sup>

In the thicket of this ambivalent relationship between Israel and Germany stood the Israeli consulate in Munich. Unlike an embassy, an institution of highest diplomatic importance responsible for handling the political, military, and cultural affairs of the sending country in the host country, the role of a consulate is to protect commercial and legal interests. Its presence does not indicate diplomatic recognition of one state by another. Israeli consulates have an additional role of arranging immigration to Israel – and maintaining contacts with local Jewry.<sup>13</sup> Against the background of the Israeli boycott policy, then, this function as a locally liaising body raises the question of how the Israeli consulate in Munich was able to satisfy such opposing expectations. It is important to note that in the late forties and early fifties one can distinguish two Jewish groups in Germany: One group of “Goers” – Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe who stayed in DP camps awaiting im-

11 See Dan Diner, *Rituelle Distanz. Israels deutsche Frage*, Munich 2015; Neima Barzel, *Isra'el ve-Germaniah, 1945–1956. Hitpathut yahas ha-havera ve-ha-medina be-Isra'el le-Germaniah be-ikvot ha-shoah* [Israel and Germany, 1945–1956. Development of the Attitude of Israeli Society and State to Germany following the Holocaust] (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Haifa, 1990), 5–70; Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million. The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York 1994, 187–252.

12 On the road towards the Reparations Agreement, see, e. g. Nana Sagi, *German Reparations. A History of the Negotiations*, Jerusalem 1980; Yeshayahu Jelinek (ed.), *Zwischen Moral und Realpolitik. Deutsch-israelische Beziehungen 1945–1965. Eine Dokumentensammlung*, Gerlingen 1997.

13 See Geoff R. Berridge, *Diplomacy. Theory and Practice*, London 1995, 115–149; Gabriel Sheffer, Moshe Sharett, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jewish Diaspora, in: *Israel Studies* 15 (2010), no. 3, 27–46, here 32.



migration, mainly to Israel; the second of “Stayers” – Eastern European and German-Jewish Holocaust survivors who lived alongside in reestablished Jewish communities.<sup>14</sup> While the Israeli representatives perceived the Goers as Zionists, the Stayers, most notably German Jews, were seen as assimilated and devoid of Zionist values.<sup>15</sup>

This article will focus on the attitude of the consulate staff towards the German Jewry who opted to stay and rebuild their communities. It will examine how the first contacts between the Israeli consulate in Munich and German-Jewish communities were shaped in view of the Israeli objection to the renewal of Jewish Life in Germany and its quest for reparations from Germany. This article argues that the ambivalent policy of the State of Israel towards West Germany was mirrored, as well, in its relationship with the German-Jewish communities, which was characterized by measures of exclusion and dismissal of Jewish communal life and of inclusion and active political involvement alike.

### The Israeli Consulate in Munich

The roots of the Israeli consulate in Munich are found in the activities of *Ha-mishlahat ha-Erez Yisra'elit le-she'erit ha-pletah* (Palestinian Delegation to the Surviving Remnant) which arrived in the American zone of occupied Germany in December 1945 on behalf of the Jewish Agency. The delegation's aim was to organize the immigration of Jewish survivors to Israel and assist them in their everyday life in DP camps. Upon its arrival, the delegation was affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which had been established for the relief of refugees of World War II. As of June 1948, it was directly subordinate to the US Army, while most displaced Jews were concentrated in its area of authority.<sup>16</sup> Chaim Yahil (Hoffmann), born 1905 in Moravia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to a Viennese family, headed the delegation. Yahil had become inter-

14 I thank the anonymous reviewer for this nominal definition.

15 The consulate assumed that the Eastern European Jewish survivors who resided in the communities would immigrate to Israel after settling their personal compensation cases with Germany. See Chen, “Contact but no Established Relations,” 69–73.

16 See Chaim Yahil, *Pe'ulot ha-mishlahat ha-Erez Yisra'elit le-she'erit ha-pletah* (Alef), 1945–1949 [Report of the Palestinian Delegation to She'erit ha-Pletah (A), 1945–1949], in: *Yalkut Moreshet* [Heritage Collection] 30 (1980), 7–40, here 9–19; Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, *A Lasting Reward. Memoirs of an Israeli Diplomat*, Jerusalem 2012, 53–55; Israel State Archives (henceforth ISA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (henceforth MFA) 2382/11, Chaim Hoffmann to Moshe Sharett, 2 June 1948.

ested in Zionism in his adolescence and, in 1929, immigrated to Palestine. In the first half of the thirties, Yahil returned to Europe to study for a doctorate at the University of Vienna. He became a significant figure in the Jewish community in Prague, where he helped German Jews who had fled Nazi Germany to immigrate to Palestine. With the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, Yahil returned to Palestine, but was once again active in Europe at the end of World War II, when he helped organizing the immigration of the Surviving Remnant to the Land of Israel.<sup>17</sup> After the foundation of the State of Israel in May 1948 and upon the advice of the US Army, Yahil urged the heads of the newly established MFA to open consulates in Germany and Austria in order to facilitate immigration to Israel. He recommended the main consulate to be in Munich, since it was the “center of the Jews”<sup>18</sup> and close to most DP camps.<sup>19</sup> In the summer of 1948, the MFA decided to open an Israeli consulate in Munich with accreditation to the Western occupation authorities in Germany: the United States, Britain, and France. In other words, the Israeli consulate was established under the authority of the Western occupation powers and did not need to engage with local German authorities. From the moment of its opening, the consulate’s activities were aimed to end the temporary stay of the Surviving Remnant in DP camps in Germany and assist in their immigration to Israel.<sup>20</sup>

The spring of 1949 brought a significant change in the objectives of the consulate in Munich. In April, Chaim Yahil resigned due to his “feeling that his duty was essentially completed.”<sup>21</sup> The sharp decline in the number of displaced Jews remaining in camps raised the question of their continued necessity. In late 1948, American Military Governor General Lucius D. Clay and Consul Yahil had decided on behalf of the US Army and the Jewish institutions, spearheaded by the Israeli consulate and the Jewish Agency, that they would either close or merge remaining DP camps. This plan was initiated in late December 1948 and fulfilled for the most part by the first half of

17 See Dan Diner, *Im Zeichen des Banns*, in: Brenner (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, 15–66, here 15 f.

18 ISA, MFA 2382/11, Chaim Hoffmann to Moshe Sharett, 2 June 1948.

19 Wetzels, *Jüdisches Leben in München 1945–1951*, 215 f.

20 See Walter Eytan, *The First Ten Years. A Diplomatic History of Israel*, New York 1958, 210 f.; ISA, MFA 2385/22, Thomas L. Harrold to Chaim Yahil, 8 July 1948; *ibid.*, Memorandum, 10 October 1948; ISA, MFA, 2383/11, Walter Eytan to James McDonald, 12 October 1948; Central Zionist Archives (henceforth CZA), A382/51, Chaim Yahil to Leni Yahil, 8 August 1948; *ibid.*, Chaim Yahil to Leni Yahil, 18 August 1948.

21 Chaim Yahil, *Pe’ulot ha-mishlahat ha-Erez Yisra’elit le-she’erit ha-pletah* (Bet), 1945–1949 [Report of the Palestinian Delegation to She’erit ha-Pletah (B), 1945–1949], in: *Yalkut Moreshet* 31 (1981), 133–176, here 168 f.

1949 with the immigration of most of the Surviving Remnant to Israel.<sup>22</sup> In April 1949, which was also the last month of Yahil's service in Munich, the number of émigrés from Germany reached a record high of over 9,000 people. In Yahil's view, the relocation of the Surviving Remnant to Israel was the essence of his service. Therefore, with the number and size of DP camps so significantly minimized, he saw his task as complete.<sup>23</sup> Upon Yahil's departure, Eliahu Livneh (Liebstein), born 1906 in Prague, was appointed the new consul.<sup>24</sup> He had studied law in Prague and Vienna and immigrated to Palestine in the spring of 1939. After World War II, he joined the ranks of the Palestinian Delegation to the Surviving Remnant and became a representative of the Jewish Agency in Berlin, where he assisted residents of the nearby DPs camp.<sup>25</sup> Livneh believed it erroneous that the consulate's scope of operations should be limited to matters of immigration to Israel. In his view, the consulate was the only body that could safeguard the economic interests of the State of Israel in West Germany, which, in May 1949, was declared an independent state, the Federal Republic of Germany, due to the deepening of the Cold War. He considered it a key responsibility of the consulate to act in the matter of reparations for the Jewish people.<sup>26</sup> Thus, from spring 1949, the consulate deviated from its narrow consular tasks and began advancing Israel's economic interests in compensation from Germany. One of the manifestations of this development was the changing attitude of the consulate toward the renewed German-Jewish communities and especially towards its leadership.

- 22 The last Jewish DP camp, Föhrenwald, was closed in 1957. See Isaac Willner, *Föhrenwald. The Last Jewish DP Camp in Germany 1951–1957* (unpublished PhD thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1988; Heb.).
- 23 See Yahil, *Pe'ulot ha-mishlahot ha-Erez Yisra'elit le-she'erit ha-pletah* (Bet) [Report of the Palestinian Delegation (B)], 168 f.
- 24 Ben-Yaacov, *A Lasting Reward*, 67.
- 25 Yechiam Weitz, *Die Rolle der Einwanderer aus Mitteleuropa bei der politischen Entscheidung über die "Wiedergutmachung"*, in: Moshe Zimmermann/Yotam Hotam (eds.), *Zweimal Heimat. Die Jekkes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nahost*, transl. from the Hebrew and English by Elisheva Moatti, Frankfurt a. M. 2005, 295–302, here 298.
- 26 See ISA, MFA 2519/4, Eliahu Livneh to the Department of Economics, 23 October 1949; *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to WES, 20 November 1949; *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to the Consular Department and Legal Department, 4 June 1952; ISA, MFA 533/7, Eliahu Livneh to the Director of WES, 14 November 1949.

## Attitudes towards the German-Jewish Communities

The engagement with the German-Jewish communities was not part of the consulate's agenda during the first year of its operation under the tenure of Chaim Yahil as consul. The reason for this was the demographic profile of the survivors, many of whom were elderly or in mixed marriages.<sup>27</sup> In the early stages of the reestablishment of the communities, it was not clear whether they would continue to develop and grow or be merely a platform of assistance to the elderly and sick. The community in Berlin, for example, where the average age of survivors was forty-five and the percentage of mixed marriages seventy-six, was called a *Liquidationsgemeinde* (ghost community).<sup>28</sup> Most German-Jewish leaders also viewed the communities as a means of rehabilitating the survivors and organizing their immigration to different countries. Thus, in October 1946, for example, Curt Epstein (1898–1976), the commissioner for Jewish affairs in the State of Hesse, declared that only the elderly and sick with no choice but to remain would stay in Germany.<sup>29</sup>

In Consul Yahil's eyes, the group of German Jews with the intention to remain in Germany lacked Jewish values and had no desire to build a new life. In this manner he described the communities:

“The propensity of the remnants of the German Jews to Judaism is weak; their treasure of Jewish values is very slim. They usually do not have a rabbi, a Zionist, or a high-ranking Jew. The years of the Holocaust, the persecution of the Jews, and their condemnation have slightly strengthened the Jewish consciousness of these remnants, and this recognition was further reinforced by the generous assistance they received by the Jewish aid institutions, mainly by the Joint.”<sup>30</sup>

Yahil offered an anecdote from his service in the Palestinian delegation in Germany at the end of the war to visualize his argument. He talked about a Jewish boy, son to parents of a mixed marriage, who was asked if he was a Jew. To this, the boy answers, “Sure, we are getting food packages from the Joint!”<sup>31</sup> In this story about a child of mixed parentage and with only weak ties to Judaism, based on utilitarian motives, lies also an allusion to the future of this Judaism – it would disappear. Indeed, in Yahil's view, local German

27 See Yahil, *Pe'ulot ha-mishlahat ha-Erez Yisra'elit le-she'erit ha-pletah* (Alef) [Report of the Palestinian Delegation (A)], 24.

28 For statistics, see Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings. Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone in Germany, 1945–1950*, Detroit, Mich., 2002, 30.

29 See Ruth Schreiber, *The New Organization of the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945–1952* (unpublished PhD thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1995), 53 f. (Heb.).

30 Chaim Yahil, *Yahadut Ashkenaz. Makor Tar'ela* [Ashkenazi Jewry. Source of Poison], in: *Molad* [Birth] 34 (1951), 217–221, here 217.

31 *Ibid.*

Jewry was not a problem. The issue of their presence in Germany would solve itself naturally through the demise of the elderly and the sick and the increasing assimilation of Jews in mixed marriages until complete abandonment of Judaism.<sup>32</sup> If so, the consulate had no interest in the remnants of this Jewry.

The second half of 1949 was a formative period in relation to the consulate's handling of the German-Jewish communities, for three reasons. First of all, the change in leadership from Yahil to Livneh, as mentioned before, reshaped the scope of the consulate's activities in Germany to encompass the advancement of Israeli compensation claims. The second reason stemmed from political changes to which the consulate was forced to adapt: the end of the Allies' military rule due to the deepening of the Cold War, which led to the formation of an independent West German state seeking to promote its own interests – integration into the Western nations. Between West Germany and the Allies, under whose control German foreign and trade relations remained, there was an understanding that the recognition of this new state and its future acceptance into the family of Western nations was conditional on its attitude towards the Jews on its territory. The third reason, as well, derived from a political development, namely the decision of the Israeli government, in the summer of 1949, to take measures to restore Jewish property from Germany. This decision cracked the wall of total boycott against Germany and paved the way for further Israeli involvement in the matter of compensation. These developments aroused Livneh's concern. He feared that the new German government and German Jewry, assisted by the Allies, were setting about on their own path of reconciliation in the form of compensation – which, in turn, would endanger the Israeli claims for compensation from Germany. Therefore, Livneh argued, “we need political control over the Jewry that remains in Germany for the time being” and should not allow German-Jewish leaders to “inherit” this power.<sup>33</sup> He made these remarks in view of a landscape of German-Jewish communities which, as early as the mid-1940s, organized themselves around state associations in order to strengthen their position when dealing with local authorities. These associations were

32 See *ibid.*

33 ISA, MFA 533/7, Eliahu Livneh to the Director of WES, 14 November 1949.

mainly headed by German-Jewish personalities, such as Philipp Auerbach (1906–1952), chair of the Bavarian Association of Jewish Communities.<sup>34</sup>

In a classified report written by Livneh in November 1949 to his superiors at the MFA, he described the goals he had set for his service in Munich. One of them was to create a situation in which German Jewry would be a purely social entity lacking political significance.<sup>35</sup> He explained,

“We can define our role as a negative political task, that is to say, our job is to interfere with any political action that may harm our interests among the Jewry still in Germany. If there had been no matters of property in Germany, I would have joined those calls to leave Germany immediately. But we have not yet reached such a position that we can afford to create a political void, which the remaining Jewry would exploit for its own benefit. Our presence interferes with their domination. [...] This Jewry is liable to be the ‘cheap’ partner willing to sacrifice the interests of our country by reconciling with Germany, which will enable it to declare in all the diaspora that it has reached reconciliation with all Judaism. *Our goal should be to achieve such a rejection that German Jewry would be a purely social problem without any political content [...].*”<sup>36</sup>

Consul Livneh, unlike his predecessor, did not see the point in limiting the consulate’s activities to the immigration of the Goers to Israel, but sought to exert influence through the German-Jewish Stayers. He described this group as follows:

“*The assimilated German Jewry, with its strange ambitions, is a dangerous political factor to our interests [...].* At work, every day we encounter negative social behaviors of the local Jewry. Most of those with consciousness and Zionists left Germany, the ‘waste’ remained, and it is very difficult to gird oneself with the needed patience.”<sup>37</sup>

34 See Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust. Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Princeton, N. J., 1997, 74 f. Philipp Auerbach was an influential figure in the Jewish community in the mid-1940s and early 1950s. His power derived from his dual role in political life in West Germany: as Bavarian State Commissioner for those Persecuted for Racial, Religious, or Political Reasons and as President of the Jewish Community of Bavaria. In 1951, Auerbach was arrested on the suspicion of fraud and embezzlement of funds. On 16 April 1952, a few days after his conviction, he committed suicide. On Auerbach, see Constantin Goschler, *Der Fall Philipp Auerbach. Wiedergutmachung in Bayern*, in: Ludolf Herbst/Constantin Goschler (eds.), *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Munich 1989, 77–98. On the relations between the consulate and Auerbach, see Chen, “Contact but no Established Relations,” 80–84.

35 An additional goal was to facilitate the immigration of Eastern European Holocaust survivors to Israel while honoring a moral commitment to the disabled, sick, and elderly who had to remain in Germany because of their health. Another aim was to transfer Jewish property out of Germany after the emigration of the Jews. See ISA, MFA 533/7, Eliahu Livneh to the Director of WES, 14 November 1949.

36 *Ibid.* (emphasis by the author).

37 *Ibid.* (emphasis by the author).

Livneh distinguishes between a Jewish-Zionist identity that builds a home in the Land of Israel and a Jewish-German identity. Not being one for euphemisms, he describes German Jewry in severe terms, as greedy and devoid of Zionist values. Needless to say, Livneh's attitude towards the renewed German-Jewish communities is of great importance to understanding the consulate's change of direction.

The policy outlined by Livneh appears at first glance to be a continuation of Israel's policy of boycott, rejection, and disengagement from Jewish life in Germany. In research literature, the consulate's dissociation from the communities has been explained with the continuing indecision as to who would represent Israel vis-à-vis Germany in the matter of reparations. Some researchers have pointed to the economic aspect of the question – the debate over who would inherit the property and the money.<sup>38</sup> Others have emphasized the ideological aspect – Israel's fear of losing the right to represent Holocaust survivors and, thus, undermining the Zionist conception of the State of Israel as a home for the Jewish people.<sup>39</sup> However, the question of representation in the matter would not have been a reason for disengagement from the communities, but rather for careful intervention of the consular staff in communal affairs. A close reading of Livneh's remarks indicates that he drew a connection between the issue of compensation, German Jewry, and economic interests. In so doing, he emphasized the vital need for a vigilant intercession of the consular staff in the affairs of the communities, in order to prevent harming Israel's interests in Germany.

This raises the question of where the line was drawn between proportional and undue intervention. In other words, in what cases did the consul and his staff refrain from contacting the communities and which issues elicited their engagement? It is assumed that Livneh's goal – eliminating the communities' political strength and reducing it to a solely social entity – served as a guideline for the intervention in community matters. Generally speaking, the consulate had no interest in Jewish communal affairs and, therefore, adhered to the policy of exclusion and disregard. The exception, however, were political matters that were relevant to Israel's claims for compensation.

38 See Barzel, *Jews in Post-War Germany?*, 116 f. (Heb.).

39 See Mendel, *The Policy for the Past in West Germany and Israel*, 130.

## Attitudes towards Jewish Communal Life

With Livneh assuming office in spring 1949, correspondence began between the German-Jewish community committees and the consulate upon initiative of the former. The change in leadership at the consulate may have sparked the hopes of the communities that new life be breathed into their relations with the consul and thus the Jewish state. Although the appearance of such correspondence gives the initial impression of interaction, its analysis indicates otherwise. While the German-Jewish representatives approached the consulate in German, Consul Livneh, who was born and educated in a German speaking environment, responded in Hebrew and sometimes in English. Albeit possible that Livneh's eschewal of the German language stemmed from his personal disconnection from the German tradition, it is almost certain that his role as Israeli representative in Germany obliged him to act in compliance with the boycott policy, indiscriminately applied to the German language. However, with German not only being the language of the German people but a Jewish language, and the language of the Enlightenment and the roots of the Zionist enterprise, Livneh's linguistic boycott seemed to entail a certain uprooting of Zionism from the essence of its tradition. This was also true for the exclusion of the stayers in Germany from the Jewish Zionist collective, which established a sovereign state in Israel.<sup>40</sup> A remarkable change occurred in May 1951, when Livneh began responding to their letters in German; this coincided with the MFA's realization that the existence of Jewish communities in Germany was an official and undeniable fact.<sup>41</sup> The Ministry had woken to the fact that the boycott policy had not borne fruit and prevented the restoration of Jewish life in Germany. Perhaps this enabled Livneh to adopt a more moderate attitude towards the use of the German language, maybe also reflecting characteristics of his own affiliation to the language of his place of birth. Another possibility is that, following the intensive Israeli reparation efforts, Livneh could not continue with a practice of separating Jewish-German identity from Jewish-Zionist identity. He had to mitigate the protest measures against the German-Jewish communities in order to recruit them in the service of Israel's interests.

40 On the status of the German language as a central element of the relationship between Judaism and Zionism, and between diaspora and sovereignty, see Yfaat Weiss, *Back to the Ivory Tower. The German Language at the Hebrew University*, in: Arndt Engelhardt/Susanne Zepp (eds.), *Sprache, Erkenntnis und Bedeutung. Deutsch in der jüdischen Wissenskultur*, Leipzig 2015, 247–264, here 258 f.

41 See ISA, MFA 553/1, Gershon Avner to Eliahu Livneh, 16 May 1951.



The initial correspondence between Livneh and community leaders concerned aspects of Jewish life in the renewed communities. Livneh was invited to synagogue services, for example to the synagogue on Reichenbachstraße in Munich, but he refrained from attending;<sup>42</sup> neither did he follow their invitation to the mass prayer in honor of President Chaim Weizmann's 75th birthday in December 1949.<sup>43</sup> He avoided attending the reopening or inauguration of newly built synagogues in Germany, since his presence could have been interpreted as the State of Israel's public recognition of the Jewish communities. His absence from such ceremonies, on the other hand, emphasized Israel's lack of agreement with and support of the restoration of Jewish life in Germany.

The inauguration of the synagogue in Saarbrücken in the Saar region sheds additional light on this policy. This synagogue was one of the first two synagogues to be built outside the territory of West Germany, as the Saar region fell under French occupation at the end of the war and then became an autonomous region.<sup>44</sup> The community council in Saarbrücken invited Livneh to attend the dedication of the new synagogue and participate in a festive dinner.<sup>45</sup> In response, Livneh sent an urgent letter to the Israeli legation in Paris suggesting that they may want to consider their own participation in lieu of the consulate. When Livneh received a positive answer, he informed the council that Israeli representatives to Paris had accepted the invitation in his place.<sup>46</sup> In a letter to the synagogue of Saarbrücken, Livneh expressed his regret over his inability to attend and expressed his hope that the community would soon return to Zion.<sup>47</sup> This case reveals a degree of flexibility in the interpretation of the boycott policy towards German Jewry among Israeli representatives: The legation in Paris saw Saarbrücken as part of an autonomous region with a French connection and therefore excluded from the boycott, while the consulate in Munich considered Saarbrücken German land.

42 The synagogue was restored as a Conservative synagogue, just as it had been in the former community of Munich. See Wetzel, *Jüdisches Leben in München 1945–1951*, 18 f.

43 See ISA, MFA 533/14, Jewish Community in Munich to Eliahu Livneh, 6 December 1949.

44 Brenner (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, 182.

45 See ISA, MFA 522/1, Saarbrücken Jewish Community to the Israeli Consul in Munich, 27 December 1950.

46 See *ibid.*, Israeli Consulate in Munich to the Paris Legation, 4 January 1951; *ibid.*, Paris Legation to the Israeli Consulate in Munich, 8 January 1951; *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to the Saarbrücken Jewish Community, 11 January 1951.

47 See *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to the Saarbrücken Synagogue, 12 January 1951. On the inauguration of the synagogue, see Anne Gemeinhardt, *Der Saarländische Sonderweg. Die Synagogengemeinde Saar 1947–1955*, in: *Münchner Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 4 (2010), no. 1, 26–41, here 38 f.

As part of the renewal of Jewish-German communal life, ceremonies were held and memorials erected in remembrance of the destroyed communities. The consul was invited to participate in prayers and unveil memorials for those who perished but refrained from attending. Livneh's laconic refusal to each invitation included a few words in memory of the former community. For example, in his regrets to the Hamburg community, Livneh praised the former community, its Zionist core, and role as a center of Jewish tradition. He added that "those hundreds of families of former Hamburg Jews who had immigrated to Israel in advance, built their home, and given their best to build the country" were the only comfort to be found in such a disaster.<sup>48</sup> Thus, in words wrapped in respect and appreciation for the former community whose men and women had contributed to the Zionist cause, he criticized its heirs for having deviated from the Zionist path outlined by their predecessors. Livneh's conduct, both in his actions and remarks, illuminated the importance assigned to the boycott measures against Jewish life in Germany, even if they kept him from being an active part in preserving the memory of murdered communities.

Nevertheless, the boycott policy implemented by the consulate in Munich regarding German-Jewish communal life neither reflected a complete detachment nor an explicit expression of disinterest in the communities. Consulate staff responded to requests from the communities and were, in fact, aware of their ceremonies and events. Boycott measures were symbolic gestures, such as the refusal to use German, non-attendance of prayers, synagogue dedications, and memorial ceremonies, or the emphasis of the strong Zionist character of the former communities as opposed to the new ones. However, in political affairs, as will be seen below, the consulate increased its engagement.

### Negotiations with the Zentralrat

On 31 July 1949, the advisor on Jewish affairs to the American military administration, Harry Greenstein, convened a conference attended by representatives of Jewish communities in Germany, representatives of world Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, and by Consul Eliahu Livneh. Its purpose was to discuss the future of the Jews in the newly established West German state, as by that time the Jewish communities were making great strides in their restoration and consolidation.

48 ISA, MFA 533/14, Eliahu Livneh to the Hamburg Jewish Community, 20 June 1951.

Following heated debates over the continuous Jewish existence in Germany, a decision was made to establish an umbrella organization for all Jewish institutions and communities in Germany to represent the Jewish voice in the country. With this aim, it was agreed to create a committee, chaired by Consul Livneh, whose task it would be to establish this organization.<sup>49</sup> About one year later, on 19 July 1950, this organization was founded by the name Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland. The political significance of the establishment of this organization lay in the fact that it officially marked the end of the communities' transient era and the beginning of its permanent settlement.<sup>50</sup>

In January 1951, the first meeting of the Zentralrat was held, and Livneh was the first to speak at the festive gathering. After reviewing the situation of the Goers and the Stayers in Germany, he concluded his speech by saying, “[T]he State of Israel does not forget her children, wherever they are.”<sup>51</sup> Given the support of the Israeli consul in the founding of the Zentralrat, a symbolic concession to the permanence of Jewish life in Germany, which was reinforced once more in his cordial words at the Zentralrat meeting, the question arises whether his actions were not in violation of Israel's policy – and, moreover, in conflict with his own conviction that German Jewry should remain a political nonentity.

In general, the answer to this question lies in Livneh's intention for the consulate to be actively involved in Israel's efforts to receive reparations from Germany. As mentioned before, Livneh's correspondence revealed a view of German Jewry as “cheap partner” and “dangerous political factor,” whose influence he sought to undermine. However, the future of Jews in Germany was by then an undeniable fact and Livneh may have assumed that a public expression of support for an umbrella organization would win him the trust of a centralized Jewish body headed by German-Jewish personalities, which he could then try to influence in its decisions and deeds to the benefit of Israeli interests. This seems confirmed in Livneh's resolute opposition to the intervention of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in the establishment of the umbrella organization. Livneh feared that a significant involvement of the WJC would narrow Israel's influence on the organization. Therefore, he refused to participate in the preparatory committee organized by the WJC

49 See Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 75 f.

50 See Andrea A. Sinn, *Going Public. Reviving Jewish Life in Post-War Germany*, in: *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 13 (2014), no. 1, 23–36, here 25; Schreiber, *The New Organization of the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945–1952*, 83.

51 ISA, MFA 533/3, Meeting Protocol of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, 7 January 1950.

and sharply criticized its activities.<sup>52</sup> Another indication can be found in a letter sent by the consul to the MFA in August 1949, a short time after he had been appointed chair of the establishing committee. Livneh explained that the consulate had taken an active role in conferences concerning the policies of the different Jewish organizations and served as an arbitrator. Through this vivacious engagement, so he claimed, he was able to shape their policies. He further emphasized that “these institutions appeal to us as the highest authority, there is a possibility to reach positive results with our help.”<sup>53</sup> While Livneh admitted that this political intervention deviated from the formal framework of consular activity and entailed a not inconsiderable risk, he expected that his participation in the founding committee of the umbrella organization would enable him to attend its meetings as a founding father and thus alleviate the tension of this involvement. It also could have helped him oversee the “cheap partner,” the German-Jewish leadership. It should be added that, with its establishment, the Zentralrat’s directorate mainly consisted of German Jews and was headed by General Secretary Hendrik George van Dam (1906–1973).<sup>54</sup> For Livneh, the Zentralrat presented the German-Jewish voice in Germany, which is reflected in his translation of its name: as the council of German Jews and not the council of the Jews in Germany.<sup>55</sup>

Consul Livneh participated in the meetings of the Zentralrat discussing matters which, from the State of Israel’s perspective, could have been detrimental to its interests, mainly the demand for compensation vis-a-vis the German government. At this point, it is important to emphasize that Livneh was not interested in making his involvement public. If this ever happened, he warned the Zentralrat, he would have to curb cooperation.<sup>56</sup> It may be assumed that Livneh’s demand for secrecy stemmed from his fear of public opinion – in his own country and abroad. In Israel, the exposure of direct ties between an Israeli representative and the Jewish diaspora in Germany would have risked the outrage of the public, which was still very much in favor of the – by now much less vigorously implemented – national boycott policy and the pursuit of compensation for the crimes committed by Germa-

52 See Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953*, Cambridge 2005, 83; Schreiber, *The New Organization of the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945–1952*, 77 f.

53 ISA, MFA 533/1, Eliahu Livneh to the Israeli Consular Department, 11 August 1949.

54 See Andrea A. Sinn, *Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, Göttingen 2014, 174.

55 See, e. g., ISA, MFA 533/3, Eliahu Livneh to WES, 11 October 1951; *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to WES, 4 December 1951.

56 See *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to the Central Council of Jews in Germany, 13 March 1951. This will be discussed further below.

ny against the Jewish people.<sup>57</sup> Internationally, Israel's attempt to shape the internal affairs of German-Jewish communities would have drawn the criticism of world Jewry. Finally, in Germany, the interference of Israel in events and discussions taking place in its territory would have strained the already difficult relationship between the two countries even more.

The effect of Livneh's presence in meetings relating to Israel's demand for compensation from Germany was tangible a few weeks later, on 27 September 1951, in Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's declaration on the willingness of the German government to resolve the issue of compensation vis-a-vis Israel and world Jewry. In his speech, Adenauer proclaimed that the crimes committed in the name of the German people against the Jews in Germany and occupied countries would call for material and moral indemnity.<sup>58</sup> Adenauer's declaration was the result of a secret first meeting between him and the emissaries of the State of Israel, David Horowitz, general director of the Ministry of Finance, and Maurice Fischer, the Israeli ambassador to France, in Paris in April 1951. The Israeli representatives demanded a public statement from the chancellor regarding the collective responsibility of the German people for the atrocities of the Holocaust in order to prepare the Israeli public for direct negotiations. Although Adenauer's declaration not only failed in its mission, but caused turmoil in Israel for lacking an explicit expression of responsibility, it did pave the way for direct negotiations between the two states.<sup>59</sup>

For the leaders of the Jewish community, Adenauer's declaration gave rise to two hopes: first, that local Jewry in Germany would become the representative of the Jewish people in the matter of reparations; second, that their negotiations on this matter will serve as an expression of loyalty to the Jewish people and would lead to their recognition and legitimization. These hopes were shattered when, on 25 October 1951, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany was established. In this institution, the Jews in Germany were not given representation. For the Zentralrat, this meant

57 In October 1951, the MFA established an information department in order to prepare the Israeli public for progress in the negotiations on reparations. See Jacob Tovv, *Ha-ḥurban ve-ha-ḥeshbon. Medinat Yisra'el ve-ha-shilumim mi-Germaniah, 1949–1953* [Destruction and Accounting. The State of Israel and the Reparations from Germany, 1949–1953], Ramat Gan 2015, 240.

58 See Deutscher Bundestag. 165. Sitzung, Bonn, Donnerstag, den 27. September 1951, 6697 f., <<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/01/01165.pdf>> (14 July 2022).

59 See David Horowitz, In the Heart of Events, Ramat Gan 1975, 86–88 (Heb.); Yechiam Weitz, The Road to Wassenaar. How the Decision on Direct Negotiations between Israel and Germany Was Approved, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (2000), 311–350, here 312 f. On the involvement of the consulate in arranging the meeting and the declaration, see Chen, "Contact but no Established Relations," 119–127.

they would have little to no influence on the negotiations between Israel and Germany.<sup>60</sup>

On 7 and 8 October 1951, a few days after Adenauer's public appearance, leading figures of the Zentralrat met in Hamburg to discuss the organization's response to the declaration, a meeting which was attended by the Israeli consul. While Livneh demanded unconditional support for Israel's claim for reparations, there were voices of protest in the Zentralrat. For example, Julius Dreifuss, representative of the Düsseldorf community, demanded that before the Zentralrat fully supported Israel, it should recognize the Jewish communities in Germany.<sup>61</sup> When Zentralrat members expressed their hope for direct discussions between the organization and the Bonn government, Livneh clarified that "the Israeli government would not look favorably upon them if they tried to 'compete' with our plans,"<sup>62</sup> and declared that, when the time came, the consulate would coordinate with the Zentralrat.<sup>63</sup> Israel's concern was that the German government would compensate the Jews in Germany by the virtue of their presence in Germany, which would then decrease reparation payments to Israel. The declaration of the Zentralrat's directorate in October 1951 regarding its support for the collective claim of the State of Israel won Livneh the praise of the MFA. Gershon Avner, the director of the West European Division, applauded him for the satisfactory response he had "arranged"<sup>64</sup> and congratulated him on this achievement.<sup>65</sup>

At the same council meeting in Hamburg in early October 1951, the Zentralrat's directorate realized the necessity to clarify its relations with the world Jewish organizations and the State of Israel. A few days later, the organization's secretary general, Hendrik George van Dam, addressed Consul Livneh in a personal letter detailing the importance of cooperation between the Zentralrat and Israel. He noted that the Zentralrat members recognized that only mutual support would yield results beneficial to the interests of both parties. Van Dam therefore asked Livneh to convey to his superiors at the MFA a request for exchange and cooperation with the Zentralrat in all matters relating to compensation and Jewish-German relations. This request, he emphasized, concerned these issues alone and not matters of diplomacy between Israel and Germany.<sup>66</sup>

Livneh conveyed van Dam's request to the MFA and shared his opinion that Israel should express its gratitude to the Zentralrat for its support of the

60 See Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953*, 229.

61 See *ibid.*

62 ISA, MFA 533/3, Eliahu Livneh to WES, 11 October 1951.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*, Director of WES to Eliahu Livneh, 19 October 1951.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*, Hendrik George van Dam to Eliahu Livneh, 14 October 1951.

Israeli claim for reparations. He did, however, not refer to the root of the problem – the existence of a political representation of the boycotted Jewry in Germany. A positive response by the MFA would have helped Livneh to expand his cooperation with the Zentralrat and to safeguard Israeli interests; but the Israeli authorities hesitated to send a message that effectively read official recognition of the communities and their political leadership. Nevertheless, the MFA recognized the necessity of cooperation and, a few days later, Livneh's proposal was accepted.<sup>67</sup> Hence, Livneh sent a letter on behalf of the MFA to the Zentralrat, which said,

“With great pleasure we noted the decision of the Central Council of Jews in Germany to guarantee its moral and practical support for the Israeli claim from Germany. With great satisfaction we have also taken note of the solidarity that you have displayed so far, and the desire of the Council, which has already been expressed in words and deeds, to cooperate with the State of Israel and the Jewish organizations outside Germany in all political areas, especially with respect to compensation and restitution of property. We hope that in the future, as well, our cooperation will guarantee the success desired by all involved.”<sup>68</sup>

In an attempt to blur any impression of official recognition, the letter was composed on a blank page without the emblem of the State of Israel, signed and sent by Consul Livneh, instead of a senior official from the Ministry in Tel Aviv. In other words, in this practice of the MFA in general, and of Consul Livneh in particular, it is possible to identify a twofold policy in relation to the Zentralrat's leadership. On the one hand, there was an effort to preserve the appearance of a boycott policy in line with the popular discourse in Israel; and, on the other hand, an attempt to strengthen a common identity and cohesion in favor of safeguarding the Israeli interest in reparations.

### The Contacts Hendrik George van Dam and Karl Marx

Livneh's contacts with prominent German-Jewish communal leaders were also used as a means to protect Israel's interests. In fact, the cooperation of Consul Livneh with the Zentralrat can be attributed to his contact with Secretary General Hendrik George van Dam. Van Dam was from a family of nineteenth century Dutch immigrants to Germany. He studied law at the Humboldt University in Berlin and, with the rise of the National Socialists

67 Ibid., WES to the Israeli Consul in Munich, 12 December 1951.

68 Ibid., Eliahu Livneh to the Central Council of Jews in Germany, 30 December 1951. In the Hebrew version of this letter, Livneh referred to the Zentralrat as the Central Council of German Jews.

to power in 1933, he fled to Holland, Switzerland, and finally England. Van Dam returned to Germany in 1945 in the ranks of the Dutch Brigade and, at the end of 1946, he was appointed legal adviser to the Jewish Relief Unit, a British-Jewish support organization for Jewish DPs in the British zone of occupation. Van Dam was the general secretary of the Zentralrat from its establishment in 1950 until 1973.<sup>69</sup>

According to the historian Michael Brenner, the “era of van Dam” as general secretary of the Zentralrat was characterized by quiet diplomacy and politics behind closed doors. During these two decades, the Zentralrat spoke with one voice for the Jews in Germany, but it was the voice and opinion of the Secretary General van Dam and not the directorate.<sup>70</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, it was van Dam who shaped the organization’s policies, mainly because his expertise as a lawyer enabled him to deal competently with legal questions related to compensation claims. In fact, his legal abilities were not overlooked by the Israeli government, which asked him for a comprehensive report on the issue of reparations. This is of great importance since it is evident that Israel chose to use the German-Jewish leadership when it found it useful to do so. Van Dam, thanks to his legal knowledge, was a competent and effective partner and Livneh supported his candidacy.<sup>71</sup>

Livneh’s warm words assuring the Zentralrat that Israel would not forget her scattered children raised his status in the eyes of the organization’s members, in general, and in van Dam’s eyes, in particular. In 1951 van Dam described his relationship with Livneh as excellent and the presence of the Israeli consul in Munich as significant “moral reserve” to the Jews who remained in Germany.<sup>72</sup> Presumably, van Dam greatly appreciated the fact that Livneh did not publicly condemn the Jews in Germany like other Jewish leaders and even his predecessor, Chaim Yahil, had done.<sup>73</sup> With the closing of the consulate in the summer of 1953, the Zentralrat held a farewell party for Livneh, testament to the good relationship they had built.<sup>74</sup>

Van Dam’s support of Livneh was reflected in regular updates he sent to the consul: notes on personal meetings with journalists, agendas of Zentralrat meetings, and sometimes entire protocols. Noteworthy is also van

69 For more information on van Dam, see Sinn, *Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, 84–115.

70 See Michael Brenner, *Von den Hintertüren der Diplomatie auf die Bühne der Öffentlichkeit. Der Wandel in der Repräsentation des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland*, in: Fritz Backhaus/Raphael Gross/Michael Lenarz (eds.), *Ignatz Bubis. Ein jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a. M. 2007, 124–133, here 126–128.

71 See Sinn, *Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, 165.

72 Schreiber, *The New Organization of the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945–1952*, 131.

73 See *ibid.*

74 See Ben-Yaacov, *A Lasting Reward*, 69.



Dam's response to an incident in the winter of 1951, when a report leaked to the press by Philipp Auerbach exposed Livneh's attendance of a Zentralrat meeting, claiming he had forcefully intervened in its decision-making process. The consul sent a strongly worded letter to the Zentralrat condemning the publication of his name and activities in the local press and warning of the prospect of a severely restricted cooperation in the future. Van Dam thus sent a clarification letter to the Jewish community in Munich, which included many corrections to details mentioned in the article and stressed that Livneh had attended the meeting in a strictly diplomatic capacity and not as decision-maker. He further justified Livneh's request to refrain from publicizing his name. Later, van Dam shared the details of the clarification letter with Livneh.<sup>75</sup>

Another personal letter, sent by van Dam to Livneh about a week after the decisive debate of June 1952 between representatives of Israel and Germany resulting in the Reparations Agreement, gives more insights into their relationship and joint activities.<sup>76</sup> In the letter, van Dam congratulated Livneh on his diplomatic effort and progress in the matter, citing his toughness combined with restraint and modesty as qualities that had helped yielding positive results. In addition, van Dam addressed the conduct of the Zentralrat in relation to Israel's demand for reparations from Germany. He wrote that the organization avoided the "cheap partner" policy ("eine Politik des 'billigen Partners'"),<sup>77</sup> the same policy of the German-Jewish leadership of which Consul Livneh had warned the Israeli MFA. He explained that the Zentralrat worked with restraint, discipline, and moderation in order to avoid this path, despite the lack of appreciation endured from world Jewry.<sup>78</sup>

One may ask why van Dam chose to use the term "cheap partner," which Consul Livneh assigned to the German-Jewish leadership, implying betrayal and greed. It is possible that he wanted to emphasize the assistance and help provided by him and the Zentralrat in advancing the Israeli demand for compensation, despite the consul's initial understanding of the character of German Jews. However, given these assumptions, could we suspect van Dam was actually making a more poignant statement to the consul as one who criticizes but does so by his own faults? In other words, did he allege that Israel had taken the same actions for which it condemned the German-Jewish leadership: abandoning the other side for the sake of financial compensation from Germany? Was Israel, in his eyes, the "cheap partner"?

75 See ISA, MFA 533/3, Van Dam to the Jewish Community in Munich, 6 March 1951.

76 On the negotiations in Wassenaar, see Jelinek (ed.), *Zwischen Moral und Realpolitik*, 25–30.

77 ISA, MFA 532/11, Hendrik George van Dam to Eliahu Livneh, 17 June 1952.

78 Ibid.

After all, Israel had been willing to compromise in its demands for compensation for Jewish property remaining in Europe, the worth of which Israeli experts estimated at six billion dollars. After initially demanding 1.5 billion dollars from Germany, the two sides had settled at just about half of that, approximately 700 million dollars, during the negotiations in Wassenaar.<sup>79</sup>

The consul's relationship with van Dam led to the establishment of contact with another important figure of Jewish political life in Germany in the 1950s, the journalist Karl Marx, editor of the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, the mouthpiece of the Zentralrat until the mid-1960s.<sup>80</sup> However, unlike with van Dam, Livneh was more hesitant to engage with Karl Marx, carefully considering the journalist's statements and actions.<sup>81</sup> A distinction made by sociologist Michal Bodemann between these two German-Jewish figures helps understand the different kinds of contact Livneh had with them: While van Dam represented the institution of the Jewish communities in Germany, Karl Marx sought to present to the world its *raison d'être*. Unlike van Dam, he symbolized the ideology behind the renewal of Jewish life in Germany after the war,<sup>82</sup> which contradicted the Israeli-Zionist rejection of these communities and undermined the perception of Israel as home for the Jewish people.

For Consul Livneh, Marx' personal past, activities, and connections were consistent with the image of the German Jew that one had to be wary of – the assimilated Jew, the “cheap partner,” who strove for reconciliation with the German government at any cost. There are two possible reasons for this. First, Marx' personal history. Having grown up in the days of the German Empire, Marx was educated in a Jewish family whose roots in Germany went back more than 600 years. During World War I he volunteered to fight in the German army. Following the rise of the Nazis to power and the Reichstag fire in February 1933, he fled to France, Italy, and Britain, but returned to the British occupation zone in postwar Germany in 1946. A comfort and pleasant feeling accompanied his return, thus his wife recounted, since he belonged to a generation that had fully integrated into German society.<sup>83</sup> Even the British occupation forces that observed Marx' activity declared that he

79 See Felix Elieser Shinnar, Bericht eines Beauftragten. Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen 1951–1966, Tübingen 1967, here 46–49; Tovy, Ha-hurban ve-ha-heshbon, 121 f.

80 See Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 127 f.; Sinn, *Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, 271 f.

81 See ISA, MFA 533/7, Eliahu Livneh to the Israeli Consular Department, 28 November 1949.

82 See Y. Michal Bodemann, *Gedächtnistheater. Die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung*, Hamburg 1996, 33–35.

83 See Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 128.

was German-Jewish in his essence.<sup>84</sup> Second, as early as the 1940s, Karl Marx discussed in his paper the issue of reparations for Jewish victims. In his writings, he called for building a democratic Germany that respected the Jewish claim for restitution as well as minority rights. Marx himself sought to mediate between German Jewry and the German government with regard to compensation and established many contacts with German politicians. It was Marx who proposed to Chancellor Adenauer the appointment of an advisor on Jewish affairs to the German government. Marx also interviewed him for an article published in November 1949, in which the chancellor proposed to export ten million Deutsche Mark worth of goods to Israel.<sup>85</sup>

While Livneh's perception of Marx suggests he would have rather stayed away from the German-Jewish journalist, it seems the opposite was the case. The consul sought his assistance to promote Israeli interests. Despite the irony that a German Jew who was otherwise considered a risk to those same interests aided the Israeli consul, the collaboration is not surprising.

Marx' contacts among senior officials in the federal government and in German industry circles were numerous. Therefore, he was able to transmit messages from the consulate to German politicians. An example is a meeting between Karl Marx and Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler, on 30 August 1951, to discuss Chancellor Adenauer's aforementioned declaration on reparations in the Bundestag. In a confidential and urgent report, Livneh informed the MFA about preparatory talks he had held with Marx, prior to the meeting with Dehler. The consul emphasized his great reluctance to cooperate with Marx, but also the fact that he had not given the journalist any instructions but rather suggested that "it would not hurt if, during the conversation, he [Marx] 'advised' Dehler to draw A.[denauer's] attention to the convenience of discussions with the Israeli government before publishing the statement." To the question of how Marx should respond if asked about the way to enter such discussions, Livneh had replied that it was unreasonable to assume the chancellor would not be successful in initiating direct contact with the Israeli government, if he wished to do so.<sup>86</sup> After the German declaration in late September 1951, the consulate continued to assist Marx' networking activities. In the fall of 1951, Marx also proposed introducing Livneh to influential

84 Sinn, *Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, 138.

85 See *ibid.*, 136–142; Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953*, 78 f.

86 ISA, MFA 533/8, Eliahu Livneh to WES and Felix Elieser Shinnar, 3 September 1951: "Es ist nicht anzunehmen, dass es dem Bundeskanzler nicht gelingen sollte einen solchen indirekten Kontakt herzustellen, wenn er wünschen sollte."

figures of Germany's heavy industry in order to support Israel's efforts toward a reparations agreement.<sup>87</sup>

It should be noted that officials of the MFA knew Karl Marx through Livneh's reports, and even met with him. Thus, while the MFA instructed Israeli diplomats around the world to avoid official and permanent contacts with German journalists, this did not seem to apply to Marx.<sup>88</sup>

## Conclusion

Livneh's statement at the first Zentralrat meeting that the State of Israel would not forget her children, wherever they may be, can be understood literally as it is. The consulate in Munich indeed maintained ties with the Jews in Germany despite the Israeli boycott policy. Reflective of the goal that led to the establishment of the consulate – the promotion and regulation of immigration to Israel – the activities of the consulate in its first year under Chaim Yahil were directed towards assisting the Goers in the DP camps, while excluding the Stayers, notably those parts of the German-Jewish population intending to remain in Germany. Political and internal developments in the second half of 1949 – the establishment of West Germany; Israel's measures to seek reparations from Germany; and the entry of Eliahu Livneh to the post of consul – led to a shift in the consulate's policy priorities regarding the renewed German-Jewish communities. This entailed, most notably, an involvement in the communities' political affairs in order to advance Israel's economic interests in compensation from Germany. Consul Livneh saw the German-Jewish leadership of the communities as a "cheap partner" and source of potential harm to the Israeli demand for reparations in favor of

87 See ISA, MFA 533/7, Eliahu Livneh to Felix Elieser Shinnar, 4 October 1951; *ibid.*, Felix Elieser Shinnar to Eliahu Livneh, 14 October 1951; ISA, MFA 2417/3, Felix Elieser Shinnar to Eliahu Livneh, 5 December 1951.

88 See *ibid.*, Eliahu Livneh to the Israeli Consular Department, 28 November 1949; ISA, MFA 2413/2, Israeli Delegation in London to A. Yasu, 16 August 1951. The consulate and the MFA supported Marx' newspaper in order to publish reports that Israel was interested in disseminating in Germany for political, economic, and security reasons. Thus, for example, in the wake of the enlistment of German experts into Arab armies, Marx' newspaper published an anonymous article in the winter of 1952 on the problematic nature of this matter. The article was written by Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, the consulate's secretary, in accordance with the WES' guidelines. See ISA, MFA 532/12, Gershon Avner to Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, 26 February 1952; *ibid.*, Gershon Avner to Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, 30 March 1952; Ben-Yaacov, *A Lasting Reward*, 68.

its own reconciliation with Bonn. Therefore, he attached great importance to neutralizing the political power of the communities.

In light of all this, a careful analysis of Livneh's statement at the Zentralrat opening meeting, as mentioned above, reveals the Israeli attempt to create a façade of close ties and kinship between the Jewish State and the Jews in Germany. This was done primarily in pursuit of Israel's economic interests and not in support of the revival of Jewish life in Germany. Moreover, Livneh's conception of the German-Jewish leadership as a "cheap partner" indicates that his compassionate words about Israel's concern for her scattered children contained a hidden but deliberate allusion: to the power and dependency relationship in a family, between the authoritative parent – the State of Israel – and the dependent child – the Jewish community. In other words, the State of Israel claimed authority and power over local German-Jewish communities to represent its own relevant matters within Germany.

The policy of the consulate in Munich towards the renewal of the German-Jewish communities was inherently conflicting, a blend of exclusive and inclusive measures, the perpetuation of the general boycott discourse and promotion of political cooperation. On the one hand, the consulate adopted a position that rejected any connection between German-Jewish life and the State of Israel in order to reinforce the prevailing Israeli national and public discourse. Therefore, the consul avoided ceremonies and events that affirmed the existence of the Jewish communities, such as the dedication of synagogues or public prayers. This approach even obscured the memory of those German-Jewish communities who had perished in the Holocaust. On the other hand, consulate staff took steps towards the communities and evoked a common identity wherever it was in the Israeli economic interest. This was reflected in unofficial expressions of appreciation by the consul and the MFA for the German-Jewish directors of the Zentralrat. Another means was attending the Zentralrat's meetings, whose decisions could have an impact on the Israeli claim for reparations. Moreover, the talents, reputations, and networks of German-Jewish leaders, such as Hendrik George van Dam and Karl Marx, also aided Consul Livneh in advancing Israeli interests. In other words, the Israeli consulate in Munich was involved in the formulation and consolidation of political decisions relevant to the Jewish communities in Germany not for the sake of their renewal, but largely for self-serving Israeli motives. That said, it were those early contacts that planted the seeds of more mutual and complementary relations between the communities and Israel in the decades ahead.



Schwerpunkt  
*Lucha y libertad* –  
Jews in Twentieth Century South America

Edited by Lukas Böckmann and  
Jan Gerber





## Introduction

In his *World History of the Jewish People*, Simon Dubnow explained that over the preceding centuries, Jewish life had always been diasporic, but had nevertheless grouped around particular centers.<sup>1</sup> These centers, he wrote, had shifted over time, had migrated, or been transposed. When Dubnow wrote his *World History* in the 1920s, he thought that the Russian/Eastern European center, which had existed since the thirteenth century, was in a state of dissolution. Between 1881 and 1914, around 2.4 million Jews had left Eastern Europe on account of pogroms, State discrimination, and difficult economic and social circumstances.<sup>2</sup> The October Revolution, the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, and the implosion of the Russian Empire had induced another wave of emigration. Dubnow therefore believed that Palestine and America were becoming the new Jewish centers.<sup>3</sup> His gaze was directed especially at North America, where more than two million Jews from Eastern Europe had emigrated since the 1880s.<sup>4</sup> However, he also registered that the initially hesitant migration of Jews to South America was steadily increasing.<sup>5</sup> In the shadow of Canada and the United States, a new Jewish center was establishing itself in the subcontinent by the beginning of the twentieth century. This region and its Jewries were the topic of a research colloquium that was held at the Dubnow Institute in the summer semester of 2018 and from which the present focal point emerged.

Jews had begun settling in South America since the earliest phase of the Conquista. From the sixteenth century onward, several thousand Jews known as *conversos* or New Christians, who had for the most part been forcibly

- 1 Simon Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, transl. by Aaron S. Steinberg, 10 vols., Berlin 1920–1929, here vol. 1: *Die älteste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes. Orientalische Periode*, Berlin 1925, xxiii–xxvi.
- 2 Sergio DellaPergola, s. v. “Demographie,” in: *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur (EJGK)*. Im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig ed. by Dan Diner, 7 vols., Stuttgart 2011–2017, here vol. 2, Stuttgart 2012, 90.
- 3 Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, here vol. 10. *Die neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes. Das Zeitalter der zweiten Reaktion (1880–1914). Nebst Epilog (1914–1928)*, Berlin 1929, 275.
- 4 DellaPergola, s. v. “Demographie,” 90.
- 5 Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, here vol. 3: *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Orient vom Untergange Judäas bis zum Verfall der autonomen Zentren im Morgenlande*, Berlin 1920, 302–304.

converted to Catholicism, came to the New World to escape the Inquisition on the Iberian Peninsula, settling predominantly in the northern regions of present-day Brazil.<sup>6</sup> Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the hitherto rather meager number of Jewish migrants to South America began to increase. Argentina especially became a popular destination for Eastern European Jewries seeking to escape persecution and precarious living conditions. In his 1896 book *The Jewish State*, which was foundational for political Zionism, Theodor Herzl even named the country alongside Palestine as one of the two possible territories for Jewish settlement. While Herzl answered his own question – “Palestine or Argentina?” – in favor of the former,<sup>7</sup> the German Jewish businessman Baron Maurice de Hirsch opted for the land around the Rio de la Plata. He had already founded the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) in 1891, an organization that lobbied Eastern European Jews to emigrate to South America. To this end, it bought up large estates first in Argentina and later also in Brazil, which should then be used for the establishment of agricultural colonies.<sup>8</sup> South America was attractive, on the one, hand due to its sparse settlement and apparently favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, Argentina had developed a comparatively liberal migration policy on the basis of the maxim “Gobernar es poblar” (governing means settling), coined by the liberal intellectual and prominent politician Juan Bautista Alberdi in 1853. Following its break with Spanish colonial rule, the political leadership in Buenos Aires increasingly tried to orient the country toward the secular model of Republican France, hoping that the enactment of liberal immigration laws in 1876 would increase its scant population through immigration from Europe. This policy was also connected to the hope that migrants from Europe, which was associated

- 6 Robert M. Levine, *The History of Brazil*, Westport, Conn./London 1999, 41–48; José Antônio Gonsalves de Mello, *Gente da Nação. Cristãos-novos e judeus em Pernambuco, 1542–1654* [People of the Nation. New Christians and Jews in Pernambuco, 1542–1654], Recife 1996; Paolo Bernardini/Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800*, New York/Oxford 2001; Anita Novinsky, *Cristãos novos na Bahía* [New Christians in Bahía], São Paulo 1972; Seymour B. Liebman, *The Inquisitors and the Jews in the New World*, Coral Gables, Fla., 1975; Judith Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit. Die Geschichte der Juden in Lateinamerika*, Hamburg 1996; David Graizbord, s. v. “Conversos,” in: *EJGK*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 2012, 39–43.
- 7 Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*, Leipzig/Vienna 1896, 29.
- 8 Eugene F. Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa. A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires*, New York/London 1982; Haim Avni, *Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía 1810–1950* [Argentina and the History of Jewish Immigration, 1810–1950], Jerusalem 1983, 131; idem, *Argentina, “tierra prometida.” El barón de Hirsch y su proyecto de colonización judía* [Argentina, the Promised Land. Baron de Hirsch and His Jewish Settlement Project], Buenos Aires 2018; Victor A. Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890–1930*. In *Search of an Identity*, Detroit, Mich., 1990.

with progress and modernity, would stimulate the country's economy and modernize its society through their education, expertise, and culture. This ostensibly cosmopolitan immigration policy was inspired not least of all by pseudo-scientific racial theories that regarded the indigenous, mestizo, and creole populations as inferior to Europeans.<sup>9</sup>

Between 1880 and 1914, around 113,000 Jews immigrated to Argentina alone, followed by another 100,000 between 1915 and 1939.<sup>10</sup> To this day, the country remains the most important hub of Jewish life on the subcontinent. The plan devised by Baron de Hirsch and the JCA for three million emigrants from the Russian Empire to settle in Argentina did not succeed, but the organization had nevertheless founded altogether 31 colonies in the country by the 1930s, in which some 30,000 Jewish settlers lived.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to Argentina, there was initially no mass immigration to Brazil, the second Jewish settlement hub in South America. The relatively low number of agrarian colonies founded by the JCA between 1903 and 1924 were unable to attract more than a few thousand Jewish colonists.<sup>12</sup> With the onset of World War I and the consequent collapse of the Brazilian economy, immigration from Europe, which Brazil had expressly promoted in a similar fashion to its southern neighbor, came to an almost complete stop. After the end of the war, however, the numbers shot up dramatically as the United States' receptiveness rapidly diminished. With the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 and the Johnson Reed Act of 1924, which stipulated quotas for new immigrants, the age of mass immigration to the United States was essentially over. By this point, a whole range of Jewish organizations, newspapers, journals, and literary circles had already established themselves in South America – especially in Argentina and Brazil – which were oriented both in terms of linguistic practice and thematic foci toward Spanish, Portuguese, and Yiddish culture. In 1928, the *Yidisher visnshaftlekher institut*

9 Jeffrey Lesser/Raanan Rein, Introduction, in: idem (eds.), *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans*, Albuquerque, N. Mex., 2008, 1–22, here 8 f.; Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit*, 62–66; Mariusz Kałczewiak, *Polacos in Argentina. Polish Jews, Interwar Migration, and the Emergence of Transatlantic Jewish Culture*, Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2020, 114.

10 DellaPergola, s. v. “Demographie,” 92.

11 Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, *Medio siglo en el surco argentino. Cincuentenario de la Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.), 1891 Agosto 1941 [Half a Century on the Argentine Soil. Fiftieth Anniversary of the Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.), 1891–August 1941]*, Buenos Aires 1942; Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, s. v. “Kolonisation,” in: *EJGK*, vol. 3, Stuttgart 2012, 387 f.; Frank Wolff, *Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens. Raumkonzepte und Interessenkonflikte im jüdischen Argentinien 1889–1939*, in: Jochen Oltmer (ed.), *Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration*, Wiesbaden 2018, 133–164, here 146; Avni, Argentina, “tierra prometida,” 379.

12 *Ibid.*, 382.

(YIVO), which at the time was still headquartered in Vilnius, opened an office in Buenos Aires.<sup>13</sup>

The immigrants coming to Brazil continued to be predominantly Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and German, yet alongside the Japanese immigrants, another unmistakable group had joined the mix. In the aftermath of the Great War and the violent processes of state-building then occurring in Central and Eastern Europe, immigration from these regions increased tenfold between 1924 and 1934. Of altogether 93,000 immigrants who came from Eastern Europe to Brazil, almost fifty percent were of Jewish origin. It is estimated that some ten percent of Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe chose Brazil as their destination in the mid-1920s. By the 1940s, Brazil's Jewish population had grown to over 55,000 and would continue to grow with renewed migration movements during the 1950s, now primarily from the Middle East, to reach 100,000 altogether.<sup>14</sup>

Jewish life in South America thus developed in close correlation with the situation in Europe. The migration and refugee movements to the subcontinent were the result of events and developments in precisely those spaces that Simon Dubnow observed, commented on, and analyzed from his base first in Petrograd, then in Berlin, and from 1933 onward in Riga – events and developments to which he was also subject. The issues revolved around social questions, the collapse of the old empires, the idea of establishing ethnically homogenized nation-states and the associated nationalities question. Then there were issues like the consolidation of Bolshevik power and finally of National Socialism. The situation in Europe and its traditional Jewish areas of settlement were therefore mirrored in the composition of the immigration movements to South America. The Jewish immigrants who came to Argentina between 1881 and 1914 hailed above all from the Russian Empire, Romania, and Turkey; those who came between 1918 and 1933 (migration movements had virtually ceased during World War I) were from Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Morocco, and Syria; and those who arrived from 1933 until after the end of World War II were from Germany, Eastern Europe, and Italy.<sup>15</sup>

13 Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos* [History of the Argentine Jews], Buenos Aires 1993, 225–259; Liliana Feierstein, s. v. “Buenos Aires,” in: *EJGK*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 2011, 461.

14 Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables. Brazil and the Jewish Question*, Berkeley, Calif., 1995, 23–27; Roney Cytrynowicz, *Beyond the State and Ideology. Immigration of the Jewish Community to Brazil, 1937–1945*, in: Lesser/Rein (eds.), *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans*, 89–105; idem, *The Yiddish Side of Jewish Brazil. Cultural Endeavors and Literary Heritage*, in: Malena Chinski/Alan Astro (eds.), *Splendor, Decline, and Rediscovery of Yiddish in Latin America*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2018, 15–41; Lesser/Rein, *Introduction*, 14–16; Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit*, 118–120 and 163–166.

15 *Ibid.*

Within just a few decades, the relative economic and political security that the JCA had promised to the first colonists had become a reality for their descendants, albeit not as originally envisioned. The organization of the philanthropist de Hirsch had on occasion cast migration to the South American agrarian colonies as an “Exodus” to the Promised Land for persecuted Jews.<sup>16</sup> Even though it became increasingly clear during the 1920s that the settlement project had failed and that ever greater numbers of Jewish immigrants were relocating to, or from the outset settling in, the metropolises, they and their descendants for the most part underwent a rapid social and economic ascent into the middle class.<sup>17</sup> In the long term, this went hand in hand with a process of acculturation, as can be seen in the case of Argentina with regard, among other things, to marriages. In the 1930s, only between one and five percent of Jewish adults married a non-Jewish partner. By the early 1960s, this proportion had risen to 25 percent, growing again in the following two decades to forty percent.<sup>18</sup> The self-conception of the younger generation was increasingly oriented toward the host society. Yet the history of South American Jewries continued to stand in a relationship of interdependence to the ruptures and upheavals emanating especially from Europe. The essays on Argentina, Brazil, and Chile collected in this focal point reconstruct the essential features of Jewish life in South America. From the end of the nineteenth century onward, these were significantly shaped by the motif *Lucha y libertad*, that is, struggle and freedom.

Befitting the intentions of the policymakers, the immigrants reached the subcontinent with new ideas. With the growing wave of migration, European traditions of thought, such as positivism, liberalism, and socialism, began arriving in South America from the mid-nineteenth century onward.<sup>19</sup> In his

16 Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, *Medio siglo en el surco argentino*, 5–10 and 46; Iván Cherjovsky, *Recuerdos de Moisés Ville. La colonización agrícola en la memoria colectiva judeo-argentina (1910–2010)* [The Memories of Moisés Ville. The Agricultural Colonization in the Jewish-Argentine Collective Memory, 1910–2010], Buenos Aires 2017, 42; Wolff, *Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens*, 142; Avni, *Argentina, “tierra prometida,”* 329; Dominique Frischer, *Le Moïse des Amériques. Vies et œuvres du munificent baron de Hirsch* [The Moses of the Americas. Lives and Works of the Munificent Baron de Hirsch], Paris 2002.

17 Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit*, 208–229; Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa*, 91–123.

18 Lesser/Rein, *Introduction*, 10.

19 Robert G. Nachman, *Positivism, Modernization, and the Middle Class in Brazil*, in: *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57 (1977), no. 1, 1–23; Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos*, 179–224; Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica. Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* [A Peripheral Modernity. Buenos Aires 1920 and 1930], Buenos Aires 1988; Edgardo Bilsky, *Etnicidad y clase obrera. La presencia judía en el movimiento obrero argentino* [Ethnicity and the Working Class. Jewish Presence in the Argentine Workers’ Movement], in: *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* [Latin American Migration Studies] 4 (1989), no. 11, 27–47.

essay *Psychoanalysis between Marxism and Jewishness in Argentina*, Mariano Ben Plotkin (Buenos Aires) traces the migration of knowledge through the example of psychoanalysis. Having emerged in the heart of the Habsburg Empire, this field did not only undergo a geographical expansion through its transmission to South America. By means of the biographies of the Austrian-born psychoanalyst Marie Langer and the Argentinian psychoanalyst José Bleger, Ben Plotkin reveals the circumstances under which psychoanalysis was received in Argentina, where it saw an almost unparalleled dissemination and remains of enormous significance in the culture of the metropolises to this day. Life trajectories like those of Langer and Bleger also expose the difficulties of possessing multi-layered self-understandings: Having grown up in Jewish families, both did not only work as psychoanalysts, but were also active in the Communist Party of Argentina. As this essay discusses, these different belongings came into conflict with one another in the mid-twentieth century, to which Bleger and Langer found their own idiosyncratic responses.

The often tense interplay between various forms of belonging was characteristic of the lives of the Jewish immigrants, including the Jewish Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector. Her family left their home in Podolia shortly after her birth (probably in December 1920), fleeing the pogroms then raging in Eastern Europe. Her parents had initially hoped to emigrate to the United States, yet failed to do so due to the tightened immigration restrictions and so went to Brazil instead.<sup>20</sup> In her essay *Pertencer*, Susanne Zepp (Berlin) analyzes the unique manner in which Clarice Lispector inscribed her various backgrounds and experiences of Jewishness and Brazilianness into her literary works. The essay reveals that Lispector was always opposed to essentialist understandings of belonging. Instead, she created a literary language that aimed to demonstrate the inapplicability of static concepts of identity on the basis of historical experience.

The entanglement of the two cultural and geographic continents divided by the Atlantic was engraved deeply in Lispector's biography and persisted into the second half of the twentieth century. Even though it occurred more than 10,000 kilometers away from Buenos Aires and Brasília, the Holocaust had a particularly incisive impact on the Jewish population of South America.<sup>21</sup> With the onset of National Socialist anti-Jewish policy, a renewed refugee

20 Nádia Battella Gotlib, Clarice. *Uma vida que se conta* [Clarice. *A Life Told*], São Paulo 1995, 63; Benjamin Moser, *Why this World. A Biography of Clarice Lispector*, Oxford 2009, 30 f.

21 Edna Aizenberg, *On the Edge of the Holocaust. The Shoah in Latin American Literature and Culture*, Waltham, Mass., 2015; Berta Waldman, *Representation of the Shoah in Brazilian Literature*, in: Yaron Harel et al. (eds.), *Jews and Jewish Identities in Latin America. Historical, Cultural, and Literary Perspectives*, Brighton 2017, 376–389.

movement emerged from Europe, through which numerous emigrants came to South America. Many of these were only looking for temporary asylum, but ended up making a new home for themselves.<sup>22</sup> One of the most prominent examples from the German-speaking world was the forced exile of Stefan Zweig, who settled in Brazil with his wife Lotte after their emigration. The essay “*Ruht er im Dunkeln der Gezeiten ...*” by Liliana Ruth Feierstein (Berlin) opens with the tragic end of the couple’s story as they committed suicide together in Petrópolis in 1942. Feierstein uses the debates surrounding Zweig’s burial to discuss the political, social, and religious challenges facing Jewish burial rituals in twentieth-century South America. Her primary focus, however, is on the vagarious relationship between Jewish tradition and jurisprudence that has persisted in Brazilian culture into the new millennium. Thus, she shows how Zweig’s suicide contributed to a revision of the hitherto uncritical perception of European fascism among the Brazilian upper class. In 1943, Brazil entered into World War II.

The Holocaust also led to a shift in the self-understanding of many South American Jews, extending far beyond Brazil. The dual process of secularization and acculturation slowed down: The experience of persecution and annihilation on the basis of origins alone led to a resurgence of the importance of origins in people’s consciousness. Many South American Jews, who had in previous years been gradually distancing themselves from their backgrounds, increasingly began to consider themselves as Jews again, albeit often not in a religious sense. The foundation of the State of Israel, which was also understood on the international level as a reaction to the Holocaust, engendered new emotional loyalties. Without necessarily defining themselves as Zionists, many South American Jews felt an attachment to Israel. Also those who were rather critical of the Jewish State were nevertheless frequently associated with it by non-Jews.<sup>23</sup>

22 See, e. g., Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 128–196; Liliana Feierstein, *Im Land von “Vitzliputzli.” Aspekte der Geschichte deutschsprachiger Juden in Lateinamerika*, in: Elke-Vera Kotowski (ed.), *Das Kulturerbe deutschsprachiger Juden. Eine Spurensuche in den Ursprungs-, Transit- und Emigrationsländern*, Berlin/Munich/Boston, Mass., 2015, 359–373; Cytynowicz, *Beyond the State and Ideology*, 102; Daniela Gleizer, *El exilio incómodo. México y los refugiados judíos, 1933–1945* [The Inconvenient Exile. Mexico and the Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945], Mexico City 2011; Ariel Raber, *La migración de los sobrevivientes del Holocausto a la Argentina a través de Paraguay* [The Migration of Holocaust Survivors to Argentina via Paraguay], in: Emmanuel Kahan/Wanda Wechsler/Ariel Raber (eds.), *Hacer patria. Estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina* [Making a Homeland. Studies on Jewish Life in Argentina], Buenos Aires 2020, 141–172; Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia. The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism*, New York 1998.

23 Beatrice D. Gurwitz, *Argentine Jews in the Age of Revolt. Between the New World and the Third World*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2016, 45.

In the wake of the Cuban Revolution, these developments sparked numerous conflicts. There is hardly an event that shaped the general history of South America after World War II like Fidel Castro's triumphant entry into Havana in January 1959. What began as a national social reform movement to reinstate the constitution of 1940 and the representative democracy enshrined therein,<sup>24</sup> soon developed into a point of convergence for the worldwide systemic conflict between East and West. The radical upheaval in Cuba and the turn of Castro's government toward socialism from 1960 onward<sup>25</sup> was to exert an influence on two opposing and yet deeply correlated developments on the South American mainland. Like a distant echo of the Cold War, the fear of a domino effect sparked by the recent revolution accelerated the rise to power of more or less authoritarian military dictatorships in numerous countries, often backed by the United States. In the centers of Jewish life in South America, these escalated political circumstances placed the socially visible Jewish community organizations in a compromising position. Both the Brazilian (1964–1985) and Argentinian (1976–1983) military dictatorships moved against dissidents, intellectuals, students, and socialist guerrilla groups, sometimes with extreme brutality, thus affecting milieus to which many Jews had traditionally been attracted.<sup>26</sup> The consequently high proportion of victims of these military dictatorships who had a Jewish familial background forced community organizations to decide whether they should get involved in everyday political developments or whether an all too obvious intervention ran the risk of becoming associated with the imprisoned and disappeared and thus of ending up in the sights of the juntas.

Also in Chile prior political certainties were becoming brittle. As in many parts of South America, Jewish immigrants were met with hostility by the conservative and deeply Catholic nationalists. At the latest by the 1970s, as Gustavo Guzmán (Tel Aviv/Potsdam) elucidates in his essay *A Community Working for Progress*, this attitude began to change: Following the bloody putsch against the democratically elected president Salvador Allende in 1973, the military established an authoritarian dictatorship while at the same time implementing liberal economic policies. As the reforms of Allende's government had aimed at an economic redistribution to the disadvantage of

24 Ingo Juchler, *Die Studentenbewegungen in den Vereinigten Staaten und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der sechziger Jahre. Eine Untersuchung hinsichtlich ihrer Beeinflussung durch Befreiungsbewegungen und -theorien aus der Dritten Welt*, Berlin 1996, 133.

25 Boris Goldenberg, *Lateinamerika und die Kubanische Revolution*, Cologne/Berlin 1963, 278–310; Robert M. Levine, *Tropical Diaspora. The Jewish Experience in Cuba*, Gainesville, Fla., 1993, 236–282.

26 Emmanuel Kahan, *Memories that Lie a Little. Jewish Experiences during the Argentine Dictatorship*, transl. by David Foster, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2019, 238 f.



the middle and upper classes, to which the Jewish population by then predominantly belonged, Jewish organizations broadly welcomed the change in government, undemocratic though it was. The new regime recognized the Jewish middle class as an important social factor in the desired economic upturn. It therefore adopted a positive stance toward Jewish organizations and toward Israel, thus placing the Jewish population in a thoroughly ambivalent situation.

The revolution led by Fidel Castro did not only resonate on the other end of the political spectrum in Chile, where the Cuban example had played a significant role in Allende's electoral victory. All over South America, young intellectuals, and students in particular, reacted euphorically to the politics of national liberation propagated by the new government in Havana.<sup>27</sup> In Brazil, and even more so in Argentina, the milieus emerging from this positive stance toward the Cuban Revolution – which soon came to be known as the “New Left” in contradistinction to the traditional workers' movement – were especially attractive to the descendants of Jewish immigrants.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the newly founded parties, non-parliamentary organizations, and guerrilla groups of the 1960s had a disproportionately high number of members of Jewish origin. This is a peculiarity that could already be observed with regard to the very first Argentinian guerrilla group to be directly supported by the Cuban revolutionary leadership, namely the Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo. Through this emblematic case, Lukas Böckmann's essay *Gauchos und Guerilleros* highlights the influence of both Jewish and Catholic experiences and backgrounds on the guerrilla movement and its concept of a socialist revolution.

While the New Left still held a positive stance on the Jewish State in the early 1960s, sometimes even regarding it as an iteration of the same process of national liberation of which it considered itself a part, this view began to change vehemently in the latter half of the 1960s. The First Tricontinental Conference, which took place in Havana in January 1966, condemned Israel as an imperialist state that resorted to “racist and fascist methods.”<sup>29</sup> In conjunction with the Six-Day War in 1967, this allowed anti-Zionist positions

27 See, for example, María Cristina Tortti, El “viejo” partido socialista y los orígenes de la “nueva” izquierda [The “Old” Socialist Party and the Origins of the “New” Left], Buenos Aires 2009; Oscar Terán, Nuestros años sesentas. La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual argentina, 1956–1966 [Our Sixties. The Emergence of the Intellectual New Left in Argentina, 1956–1966], Buenos Aires 1991.

28 Gurwitz, Argentine Jews in the Age of Revolt, 1–6 and 106–192.

29 Resolución sobre el conflicto árabe-israelí [Resolution regarding the Arab-Israeli Conflict], cit. in Editorial Nueva Sion, Israel. Un tema para la izquierda [Israel. An Issue for the Left], Buenos Aires 1968, 181–183, here 182.

to become even more influential within the New Left.<sup>30</sup> In Argentina, these international political developments, as Emmanuel Kahan (La Plata) recapitulates in his essay *The Jewish Youth in Times of Political Radicalization*, resulted in repeated polemics regarding Jewish self-conceptions among young intellectuals up to the early 1970s. These debates, which were conducted in a social climate of increasing radicalization, led not only to the defection of former Zionist activists to the national liberation groups of the New Left, but also to the differentiation of positions within Labor Zionism itself.

It was in the context of such debates that the Argentinian intellectual León Rozitchner, who was closely connected to the New Left through his collaboration with some of its emblematic publications, began to work on an extensive essay, published in late 1967, with the title *Ser Judío* (“Being Jewish”).<sup>31</sup> Rozitchner’s grandparents were from Bessarabia and Lithuania. They left Eastern Europe together with Rozitchner’s then still young parents in 1894, hoping for a better future as citizens of a liberal state, and ended up settling in a JCA agrarian colony in the Argentinian province of Entre Ríos. Rozitchner’s mother only agreed to marry his father on the condition that they relocate to the city.<sup>32</sup> Born Moses Leib Rozitchner in 1924, he would forty years later, then writing under his Hispanicized name, take the adverse stances of progressive intellectuals, the student movement, and leftist groups toward Israel as an opportunity to address fundamental questions of Jewish belonging and diasporic existence. As an avowed atheist, Rozitchner placed neither faith nor religious traditions at the center of his Jewish self-understanding, but rather a shared historical experience of persecution. The basic common denominator of Jewish experience, to his mind, was to be “negated merely on account of being.”<sup>33</sup> Against this historical background, Rozitchner, who had never denied his own sympathies for socialist revolution, tried to determine the Jewish belonging of the younger generation in the context

30 Eli Lederhendler (ed.), *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*, Bethesda, Md., 2000, esp. the following essays: Leonardo Senkman, *Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp. The Rise of “Fraie Shtime,” 1967–1969, 167–187*; and Haim Avni, *The Impact of the Six-Day War on a Zionist Community. The Case of Argentina, 137–165*. See also Judit Bokser-Liwerant, *The Impact of the Six-Day War on the Mexican Jewish Community*, in: *ibid.*, 187–204; Michel Gherman, *Jews, Zionism and the Left in Brazil. Echoes of a Relationship*, in: *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism* 39 (2018), no. 2, <<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/actap-2018-0002/html>> (28 July 2022).

31 León Rozitchner, *Ser Judío* [Being Jewish], Buenos Aires 1967.

32 Javier Trímboli, *La izquierda en la Argentina. Conversaciones con Carlos Altamirano, Martín Caparrós, Horacio González, Eduardo Gruner, Emilio de Ipola, León Rozitchner, Beatriz Sarlo, Horacio Tarcus* [The Left in Argentina. Conversations with Carlos Altamirano, Martín Caparrós, Horacio González, Eduardo Gruner, Emilio de Ipola, León Rozitchner, Beatriz Sarlo, Horacio Tarcus], Buenos Aires 1998, 181.

33 Rozitchner, *Ser Judío*, 27.

of the shifting circumstances of his time. As though to underline the central question of this search, the cover of the 1967 edition of *Ser Judío* included a painting by Marc Chagall. This painting, which emerged between 1915 and 1919, depicts the likeness of the artist, who spent the war in Eastern Europe, with his head divided in two, alongside the vertical silhouette of his hometown Vitebsk.<sup>34</sup> Chagall chose the title *N'importe où hors du monde* (Anywhere out of the World) in reference to a poem by Baudelaire.

Following this metaphor, this focal point examines the attempts of Latin American Jewries to claim a place for themselves. The paired words *Lucha y libertad*, which here serve as a kind of motto for the following articles, are therefore not only an emblematic cipher for the specific Latin American zeitgeist of the decades following World War II. They also capture the characteristic conditions and experiences of Latin American Jews, their fundamental questions of belonging and political engagement in the surrounding society, and their struggles for liberty. This focal point thus sheds light on a research topic that has been underestimated in European historiography to date but is nevertheless profoundly linked to its epistemological interests.

*Translated from the German by Tim Corbett*

34 Sabine Koller, s. v. "Witebsk," in: EJGK, vol. 6, Stuttgart 2015, 439–442.



Mariano Ben Plotkin

## Psychoanalysis between Marxism and Jewishness in Argentina: The Parallel Trajectories of Marie Langer and José Bleger in the 1960s and 1970s

In 1971, something unexpected took place within the large Argentine psychoanalytic community: A relatively sizable group of senior and junior analysts resigned from the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA), created in 1942, with the ostensive intention to break the existing rigid system of analytic hierarchies and, at the same time, to place psychoanalysis at the service of social revolution. In doing so, the psychoanalysts were joining a vast national movement of intellectuals and activists that felt that a revolution was imminent. It was the first time in the world history of psychoanalysis that a group of members of such size left an association officially recognized by the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) for purely political reasons. One of the leaders of the secession, and only female founding member of the association, was Austrian-born analyst Marie Langer. The night before leaving the APA, the rebel analysts had met at the house of one of them. Between nervousness and incertitude, they were waiting for someone in particular to arrive and join them: Dr. José Bleger. Then the phone rang: It was Bleger's wife, informing them that Bleger would not join the separatist movement. The feeling of disappointment was general amongst them.<sup>1</sup>

Although the rebels claimed that they would articulate Psychoanalysis in the terms of Marxism, the fact was that virtually none of them had a formal theoretical background in Marxism, nor did they have (with a few exceptions) previous political experience. One of the exceptions was Marie Langer, who, as a young woman back in Austria, had been a member of the Austrian Communist Party. Nonetheless, she had abandoned political activism upon her arrival in Argentina back in the early 1940s and was only now recovering the political passion of her youth.

Bleger was another exception within the Argentine psychoanalytic community. Not only had he joined the APA and the Argentine Communist Party more or less at the same time, in the 1950s (even if expelled in the 1960s), but he devoted a good portion of his intellectual energies to articulate at the

1 Ximena Sinay, Marie Langer. *Psicoanálisis y militancia* [Marie Langer. *Psychoanalysis and Activism*], Buenos Aires 2008, 81.

theoretical level what he described as the three sources of his personal identity: Marxism, psychoanalysis, and Jewishness.

While Marie Langer sought to put the theory and practice of psychoanalysis at the service of social revolution, Bleger's project consisted in recovering the dialectical dimension of Freud's thinking. Their paths converged in many aspects (for a short period of time, Bleger was even Langer's analyst and their relationship was one of mutual respect as intellectuals), but in the moment of action, Bleger decided to stay put. He had his reasons: According to him, Langer's project would require giving up psychoanalysis altogether. In Bleger's view, science could only be truly revolutionary if its autonomy was protected; thus, Langer's project would bastardize both psychoanalysis and Marxism.

Langer's and Bleger's were two different projects of articulating psychoanalysis, Marxism, and the social sciences. In the particular case of Bleger, Judaism was another important dimension of his thought. The main hypothesis of this article is that, whereas Langer tried to turn the practice of psychoanalysis into an actual revolutionary tool, thus erasing the borders between professional and political practices, for Bleger, the conciliation between Marxism and psychoanalysis could only take place at the conceptual, theoretical level: Psychoanalysis could not and should not cater to any political project. He made this clear in his book *Psicoanálisis y dialéctica materialista* (Psychoanalysis and Dialectical Materialism) of 1958, where he pointed out that while the practice of psychoanalysis takes place at the level of drama, the theory develops itself in dynamic formulations. According to Bleger, the dialectic dimension of psychoanalysis was in its practice, not in its theory.

The eventual failure of Langer's and Bleger's projects showed not only their limits and internal contradictions, but also the difficulties of formulating different belongings and self-conceptions in the increasingly polarized and violent Latin American (and particularly Argentine) political atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. Since the fall of the Perón government in 1955, the country had been ruled by a succession of weak civilian governments and military dictatorships. In the 1960s, groups of leftist guerrillas became active and state repression turned more violent. The result was that violence became the main feature of Argentine political culture.

A second hypothesis is that the diffusion of a system of thought and beliefs, as psychoanalysis certainly is, cannot be understood without paying particular attention to the transnational characteristics of its multiple forms of reception and appropriation. Therefore, the specific conditions of reception and dissemination of psychoanalysis in Argentina – and, by extension, in Latin America – are as constitutive of the history of psychoanalysis as they are of its history in Europe or the United States. There is nothing like

a “real psychoanalysis” that could serve as a yardstick against which other forms of psychoanalysis could be measured and compared.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, what is usually surmised about the history and nature of psychoanalysis when it is analyzed from the vantage point of the “central countries” does not necessarily apply in other cultural settings. This article will focus on two trajectories, Bleger’s and Langer’s, as case studies to understand the features that characterize individual modes of implantation of psychoanalysis and its relations to politics and Jewishness in one of the countries in the world in which psychoanalysis – until this day – occupies a central place in the urban culture: Argentina.

### Psychoanalysis in Latin America: Jewishness and Progressive Politics

For a long time, the connection between psychoanalysis, Jewishness, and progressive thinking has been taken for granted. It is well known that, from its origins, psychoanalysis was perceived by many as a “Jewish science.” Precisely to prevent this, Freud, who believed that science was universal, appointed his non-Jewish dauphin Carl Gustav Jung to lead the young psychoanalytic movement. Although Freud never denied his (secular and godless) Jewish belonging, in his public writings, such as his autobiography, he emphasized his distance from the Jewish religion.<sup>3</sup> For Freud, Jewishness was a component of his national identity. However, Yosef Yerushalmi has explored Freud’s proximity to Jewish traditions, which became particularly evident in his last and controversial book on *Moses and Monotheism*;<sup>4</sup> and scholars such as Élisabeth Roudinesco, Stephen Frosh, and others consider Jewishness a constitutive element of psychoanalysis.<sup>5</sup>

- 2 See Joy Damousi/Mariano Ben Plotkin (eds.), *The Transnational Unconscious. Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism*, London 2009.
- 3 Sigmund Freud, *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement* (1914), in: James Strachey et al. (eds.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., London 1991, here vol. 14: *On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works* (1914–1916).
- 4 Idem, *Moses and Monotheism. Three Essays* (1939), in: *ibid.*, vol. 23: *Moses and Monotheism, an Outline of Psychoanalysis and Other Works* (1937–1939); Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud’s Moses. Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, New Haven, Conn., 1991.
- 5 Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Humanity and Its Gods. Atheism*, in: *Psychoanalysis and History* 11 (2009), no. 2, 251–261; Stephen Frosh, *Hate and the “Jewish Science.” Anti-Semitism, Nazism and Psychoanalysis*, Basingstoke/New York 2005.

Similarly, psychoanalysis has also been perceived as an emancipatory doctrine that promotes sexual and social liberation. Many (by no means all, though) early psychoanalysts indeed developed strong connections with the progressive social democratic culture of Vienna and later of Germany and Hungary.<sup>6</sup> In the 1920s and early 1930s, there were also attempts to combine psychoanalysis with different forms of socialism and Marxism, most notably by Wilhelm Reich and Paul Federn. In the immediate post-revolutionary years, the Soviet government, and particularly Leon Trotsky, became very interested in psychoanalysis.<sup>7</sup> Most of those early attempts of combining psychoanalysis and Marxism, nevertheless, ended in failure. Freud himself, a political liberal, was skeptical about the possibility of drawing political conclusions from his ideas. After the fall of Trotsky, the practice of psychoanalysis was repressed in the Soviet Union, and Reich was expelled both from the psychoanalytic community and from the Communist Party. Later, the Frankfurt School and its heirs would be more successful in critically integrating both unorthodox versions of psychoanalysis and Marxism and, in the 1960s, French philosopher Louis Althusser combined Marxist theory with Jacques Lacan's version of psychoanalysis.<sup>8</sup>

The connection between psychoanalysis, Jewishness, and progressivism, however, was not so clear in areas of the world outside of Europe (and even in some European countries, like France),<sup>9</sup> where psychoanalysis also enjoyed an early reception. Although the early reception and circulation of psychoanalysis (particularly before its institutionalization) outside of Europe or the US has generally been ignored by historiography, the fact is that it became known, discussed, and practiced in some Latin American cities very early in the twentieth century, earlier than in many European countries. Back in 1899, that is to say, *before* the publication of *Interpretation of Dreams*, Dr. Juliano Moreira, an Afro-Brazilian psychiatrist (the son of a former slave) from Bahía, introduced Freud's writings on hysteria in the bibliography of his courses on

6 Elizabeth Ann Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics. Psychoanalysis & Social Justice, 1918–1938*, New York 2005.

7 Martin Alan Miller, *Freud and the Bolsheviks. Psychoanalysis in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union*, New Haven, Conn., 1998; Alexander Etkind, *Eros of the Impossible. The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia*, transl. from the Russian by Noah and Maria Rubins, Boulder, Col., 1997; Jacquy Chemouni, *Trotsky et la psychanalyse. Suivi de son attitude à l'égard des troubles mentaux et de la psychanalyse de sa fille Zina (à partir de sa correspondance inédite)*, Paris 2004.

8 Louis Althusser, *Writings on Psychoanalysis. Freud and Lacan*, ed. by Olivier Corpet and François Matheron, transl. and with a preface by Jeffrey Mehlman, New York 1996.

9 Élisabeth Roudinesco, *La bataille de cent ans. Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, 2 vols., Paris 1982–1986.



nervous diseases taught at the local medical school.<sup>10</sup> Later, he would be one of the founding members and leaders of the short-lived Brazilian Psychoanalytic Association created in São Paulo in 1927. In 1914, the first dissertation dealing purely with psychoanalysis was defended at the Medical School of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>11</sup> Four years later, in 1918, Peruvian Honorio Delgado defended his own doctoral dissertation on psychoanalysis at the University of San Marcos in Lima. The case of Delgado stands out because not only did he author one of the earliest biographies of Freud written in any language;<sup>12</sup> he also established a personal relationship with Freud that lasted for over twenty years, exchanging letters and publications and even visiting – together with his German wife – the Freud family in Vienna a couple of times. Freud referred to Delgado as his “first foreign friend.”

This early reception of psychoanalysis in the region was totally unconnected to Jewishness. None of these (or other) followers of Freud were Jewish. In fact, doctors like Delgado, who could be characterized as a “mild” antisemite himself, made a point in separating Freud’s Jewishness from his discipline. Something similar could be said about other Latin American followers of Freud at the time. Even in Argentina, a country that boasted the largest Jewish community in Latin America, only a few of the sympathizers of psychoanalysis were Jewish. Among the six founding members of the APA – the first psychoanalytic society affiliated to the IPA created in Latin America that survives to this day – only two were Jewish: Arnaldo Rascofsky and Austrian exile Marie Langer, whose relationship to Jewishness was, nonetheless, complicated as will be discussed below (her children were baptized).<sup>13</sup> Unlike in some European psychoanalytic societies, very few of the early members of the APA were Jews. It is worth noting that, by the time the APA was founded in 1942, Jews were over-represented in the liberal professions in Argentina. For decades, the undisputable leader of the APA was Angel Garma, a non-Jewish Spanish émigré. Similarly, in Chile, the founder and long-time leader of the local association was Dr. Ignacio Matte Blanco, who was not Jewish either; nor was Fernando Allende Navarro, the first fully trained psychoanalyst in Chile, and probably in all of Latin America.

10 Mariano Ben Plotkin/Mariano Ruperthuz Honorato, *Estimado doctor Freud. Una historia cultural del psicoanálisis en América Latina* [Dear Dr. Freud. A Cultural History of Psychoanalysis in Latin America], Buenos Aires 2017.

11 Hannes Stubbe, *Sigmund Freud in den Tropen. Die erste psychoanalytische Dissertation in der portugiesischsprachigen Welt* (1914), Aachen 2011 (commented and contextualized reprint of Genserico Aragão de Souza Pinto, *Da Psicanálise: a Sexualidade das Neuroses*, PhD dissertation, Rio de Janeiro 1914).

12 Honorio Delgado, *Sigmund Freud*, Lima 1926.

13 Jorge Balán, *Cuéntame tu vida. Una biografía colectiva del psicoanálisis argentino* [Tell Me about Your Life. A Collective Biography of Argentine Psychoanalysis], Buenos Aires 1991.

Although Jewish analysts became more numerous as the APA consolidated in the 1950s and 1960s, with few exceptions psychoanalysis was associated with Jewishness neither by supporters nor by detractors in Argentina or in other Latin American countries. Even some of the dictators who ruled the country in the 1970s and who hated both (psychoanalysis and Jewishness) failed to make any connection between them. Only exceptionally was psychoanalysis perceived as a Jewish discipline.

The connections between the early reception of psychoanalysis and progressive politics in the region were also complex. Some doctors and intellectuals felt attracted to the discipline because they saw in it a possible instrument not only for psychiatric reform, but also for broader social change. However, many more (including Delgado, Brazilian Júlio Pires Porto-Carero, who translated many works by Freud into Portuguese, the Argentine forensic doctor Juan Ramón Beltrán, and many others) viewed psychoanalysis as a potential tool to construct a modern society and, at the same time, to improve mechanisms of social control and discipline. In Brazil, many of these doctors and intellectuals, who were enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by psychoanalysis, also supported Getúlio Vargas' semi-fascist dictatorship established in 1937. A few of them became mental health officers in the public education system under the Vargas regime.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, we can safely say that, although some doctors and intellectuals approached psychoanalysis from the political left, many others did it from the opposite end of the ideological spectrum. Thus, there was nothing particularly Jewish or particularly progressive in the reception of psychoanalysis in Latin America. Unlike in Republican Spain, where psychoanalysis was indeed associated with left-wing (or at least liberal), anticlerical movements, in many Latin American countries, it admitted different ideological interpretations and appropriations.<sup>15</sup>

This is the reason why Argentine doctors José Bleger (1922–1972) and Marie Langer (1910–1987) stand out in the region. Both were Jewish doctors who – though in different ways – tried to articulate psychoanalysis and Marxism (as well as Jewishness, in the case of Bleger) during the 1960s and 1970s. They were not the only Latin American intellectuals who found compatibilities between Marxism and psychoanalysis. What distinguishes these two is, however, the fact that both were prestigious members of the APA (Langer renounced her membership in 1971) and that both played a

14 Plotkin/Rupertuz Honorato, *Estimado doctor Freud*, chap. 3. In Argentina, particularly during the 1960s, many Catholic schools were active in using psychoanalysis for educational purposes and pioneered the creation of psychological cabinets in the schools.

15 Thomas F. Glick, *The Naked Science. Psychoanalysis in Spain, 1914–1948*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24 (1982), no. 4, 533–571.

central role in the constitution of the “psy movement” in Latin America and in the diffusion of a “psy culture” in Argentina. Their works were broadly discussed in many countries of the region and Langer eventually went to exile in Mexico where she continued to practice and teach psychoanalysis as well as to pursue her leftist political activism.

### Jewishness and Politics in the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association during the 1950s and 1960s

Unlike the US, Argentina did not receive in the 1930s and 1940s a wave of prestigious exiled (mostly Jewish) psychoanalysts from central Europe. The few European analysts who arrived in Argentina during the 1940s and 1950s, such as Polish-born Heinrich Racker or the French couple Willy and Madeleine Baranger, either discovered psychoanalysis in Argentina (the Barangers) or underwent most of their analytic training locally (Racker). Spanish émigré Angel Garma, who arrived in the country in the late 1930s, and Marie Langer (an assimilated Jew), who had gained analytic experience in Europe but completed her analytic training under Garma in Argentina, were therefore exceptions. Although, in the decades after the creation of the APA, there was a rapidly increasing presence of Jews in the institution, many of whom became prominent analysts (Racker being one of them), some of the most visible, prestigious, and politically progressive members of this community were non-Jewish, including the idiosyncratic Enrique Pichon-Rivière, Emilio Rodrigué (vice president of the IPA in the late 1960s), Ricardo Horacio Etchegoyen (the first Latin American to become president of the IPA), and psychoanalyst and playwright Eduardo Pavlovsky, among others.

Even for those who were Jews, their Jewish belonging was problematic, given that the official line of the APA conceptualized any religious belonging as a form of neurosis. This, for instance, is what a young woman (German-born and Jewish) said in a symposium on “Relations among Analysts” in 1959, following the official APA line:

“It’s difficult for me to accept the teaching of those who don’t share the idea that having religious beliefs, no matter what they are, is evidence of a more serious neurosis than an analyst can tolerate; that to circumcise or baptize a child is to enter into a kind of submission that we fight against in our patients.”<sup>16</sup>

16 Susana Lustig de Ferrer, *Mis vivencias de pregraduado frente a las relaciones entre analistas* [My Experiences as an Undergraduate vis-à-vis the Relations among Analysts], in: *Revista de Psicoanálisis* 16 (1959), no. 4, 333–336, here 335.

Langer, although Jewish herself, belonged to an acculturated Viennese family, some of whose members had converted to Catholicism. Although she herself did not convert (at some point in her youth she considered that possibility), she had formally renounced the Jewish faith back in Vienna and baptized all her five Latin American-born children as Protestants.<sup>17</sup> According to one of Langer's sons, she never felt Jewish. In this regard, Bleger, who tried to articulate his triple identity as Jewish, Marxist, and psychoanalyst, was an exception within the institution.

Similarly, after its consolidation in the 1950s, the APA could hardly be conceived as a politically progressive institution. Although some of its members – the most notorious of them being Enrique Pichon-Rivière – supported progressive visions of society, they were gradually marginalized (or marginalized themselves) from the official institution, which defined itself as a purely professional and “scientific” – and therefore apolitical – association. Many analysts (including Marie Langer) who questioned the APA's conservative line quit the association in 1971.

### Marie Langer: Between Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Marxism

By the time she died in Buenos Aires in 1987, Marie Langer had become an icon of the progressive circles of the Argentine (and Latin American) “psy world.”<sup>18</sup> After leading the group *Plataforma* that had resigned from the APA (and the IPA), Langer and her fellow “*plataformistas*” tried to place psychoanalysis at the service of the revolution. Moreover, she also became an active feminist. In 1974, she was forced to emigrate to Mexico, when she learned that the Triple A, a paramilitary anti-communist group that operated with the complicity of the Argentine government, had placed her on its death list. In Mexico, she became an active supporter of the Nicaraguan revolution, leading an international group of mental health professionals who offered their services to the Sandinistas.

In 1981, while in Mexico, Langer published an autobiographical book written in collaboration with Argentine psychoanalyst Enrique Guinsberg and her Mexican son-in-law, writer Jaime del Palacio.<sup>19</sup> There, she reshaped

17 Sinay, Marie Langer, 18.

18 Nancy Caro Hollander, *Love in a Time of Hate. Liberation Psychology in Latin America*, New Brunswick, N. J., 1997.

19 Marie Langer/Enrique Guinsberg/Jaime del Palacio, *Memoria, historia y diálogo psicoanalítico* [Memory, History, and Psychoanalytic Dialogue], Mexico 1981.

the history of her life to make it fit into the “Langer myth” that was already under construction. According to this version of her life, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and feminism had always been at the center of her interests. This was clearly the case since the late sixties, but not necessarily before.

Langer was born Marie Lisbeth Glas in Vienna in 1910 to a wealthy family. By the time of her birth, parts of her family had already converted to Catholicism. She attended a progressive Realgymnasium led by a feminist teacher who had close connections with the Social Democratic Party.<sup>20</sup> After finishing high school, Langer enrolled at the medical school. In the meantime, after a visit to Germany where she had the chance to see first-hand the rise of Nazism, she joined the Austrian Communist Party (1933) and became active in its propaganda activities.

In her autobiography, Langer points out that she started her analytic training by need. Like many young Viennese people with progressive ideas, Langer became interested in Freud’s theories and started a therapeutic analysis with Richard Sterba. At the same time, she began looking for positions as a medical resident at different psychiatric hospitals. It was then that she was forced to confront her Jewish belonging for the first time: The Austrian Christian Fascist government had established quotas for Jews in public hospitals and other institutions. Unable to obtain a position, Langer decided to approach the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society (1935) to start psychoanalytic training and an alternative professional career. There, she was interviewed by Anna Freud, and, once admitted, supervised cases with prestigious psychoanalyst Jeanne Lampl-de-Groot, while she continued her analysis (now turned into training analysis) with Sterba.

In those years, the Austrian government abolished all political parties. In order to avoid problems with the authorities, the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society issued a regulation prohibiting its members from participating in political organizations or even from analyzing people who were members of the (now illegal) political parties, particularly those of leftist leaning. Langer was forced to choose between psychoanalysis and politics, and she chose her political allegiance. She terminated her still incomplete analysis with Sterba. “The world was burning and it was not time to look at one’s navel,” recalled Langer almost half a century later.<sup>21</sup> By then, Langer had divorced her first

20 It was the Schwarzwaldschule, a progressive school for girls. The actress Sadie Müller-eisert (born Leviton) had also been a student at that school. She, as well, had emigrated to Buenos Aires and had become connected to alternative circles of the psychoanalytic community (that is to say, people who practiced psychoanalysis but were not members of the APA). See Johanna Hopfengärtner, *Apuntes para una biografía de Béla Székely (1892–1955)* [Notes for a Biography of Béla Székely (1892–1955)], in: *Revista de Psicología* 12 (2012), 187–210.

21 Langer/Guinsberg/del Palacio, *Memoria, historia y diálogo psicoanalítico*, 56.

husband, whom she had married during her high school years, and met Max Langer, also a medical doctor, whose name she took on upon their marriage. In 1936, Marie Langer, with permission from the Communist Party, decided to follow Max to Spain, in order to serve as his medical assistant in the International Brigades. After one year of tending to wounded republican soldiers, the couple was transferred to Paris. When it became clear that the Republic was lost and that the National Socialists would soon invade Austria, the Langers decided to emigrate to South America: first to Uruguay, where Marie worked as a cook and took other jobs while Max worked in a textile factory, and soon after to Buenos Aires in Argentina. The reasons for her emigration to Latin America forced Langer to confront her Jewishness for the second time in her life. It was clear that, no matter how far removed from the Jewish tradition she felt, if the Nazis took over Austria (as they eventually did), she and her family would not be safe. In Buenos Aires, Langer approached the emerging psychoanalytic group, completed her training analysis, and eventually became the only female founding member of the APA.

In the following decades, Langer severed her ties to politics. In her own words, she substituted her political activism for a psychoanalytic one, leading a group of theoretical and moral purists within the APA. As a consequence, she was nicknamed “Virgin Mary.”<sup>22</sup> According to Langer, the abandonment of political activism had several reasons, the most important of which was her relatively precarious situation in her new country. As a foreigner (even though she eventually became an Argentine citizen) who, in addition, could not validate her medical degree, Langer felt that she had to keep a relatively low profile. In fact, it was only after she was finally able to validate her degree in 1959 that she could ultimately become the president of the institution she had contributed to create over a decade before. However, her sympathy for Marxism remained present – although marginally so – in her writings.

In 1951, Langer published what is probably her most important work: *Maternidad y sexo. Estudio psicoanalítico y psicossomático* (Motherhood and Sexuality. A Psychoanalytic and Psychosomatic Study).<sup>23</sup> This book, which went through several editions and was eventually translated into English, German, and French, is considered to be the first attempt made in Argentina – and probably in all of Latin America – to introduce a feminine (although not necessarily a feminist) perspective into psychoanalysis. Grounded in the theories of Melanie Klein – that were then hegemonic in the APA as well

22 Ibid., 79. See also Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas. The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina*, Stanford, Calif., 2001, 94; Balán, *Cuéntame tu vida*, 180.

23 Marie Langer, *Maternidad y sexo. Estudio psicoanalítico y psicossomático*, Buenos Aires 1951. This edition is used here, all translations into English by the author.

as in other Latin American psychoanalytical associations – but also in less orthodox sources, such as the cultural anthropology of Margaret Mead and even psychoanalysts who were not in the canon of the APA, such as Karen Horney, Langer questions Freud’s theory of women’s “penis envy.” Throughout the book, Langer utilizes different theoretical approaches with the purpose of introducing nuances into each other.<sup>24</sup>

In Langer’s text, there is a short, favorable discussion on Marxism, and a longer and less favorable one on feminism, though neither Marxism nor feminism constitute a theoretical ground for her arguments. Langer characterizes feminist women as fanatics and neurotics who renounce their femininity.<sup>25</sup> For her, true femininity could only be realized in maternity: “A woman who gives up motherhood will not generally be happy or able to achieve full sexual enjoyment.”<sup>26</sup> Like other women analysts, Langer, at that time, was opposed to the use of contraceptive pills. The basic thesis of the book is the following: In the past, society imposed on women severe sexual and social restrictions, but it favored their maternal functions and activities. The consequence of this situation was the emergence of hysteria and psychoneuroses among women. However, at the same time, women did not suffer from psychosomatic malaise associated with their reproductive functions. In contrast, nowadays, women have achieved sexual freedom, but are restricted in their maternal role. This new situation has generated psychosomatic diseases that affected the reproductive system.<sup>27</sup> Langer contrasts the “feminist” view on women to the Marxist one. Feminists try to achieve the same sexual rights for women as for men, but at the price of renouncing femininity, whereas Marxists consider the subordinate position of women to be the result of a social system based on private property. For Marxists, in Langer’s view, the struggle for women’s rights was part of the more general class struggle. In this aspect, Langer said that she sympathized with the Marxist perspective.<sup>28</sup>

References to Marxism can also be found in other early works by Langer. In 1956, for instance, she published an article in the APA’s official journal *Revista de Psicoanálisis* (Journal of Psychoanalysis), titled *Freud y la socio-*

24 Hugo Vezzetti, Marie Langer. La maternidad y la revolución [Marie Langer. Motherhood and Revolution], in: Tres al Cuarto 3 (Spring 1994), 38–41.

25 Langer, Maternidad y sexo, 45.

26 Ibid., 25 f.

27 Ibid., 17.

28 Ibid., 45. The idea that women’s liberation could not be restricted to obtaining civil rights but has to be part of a larger social change had been put forward by many anarchists since the beginning of the twentieth century. They dismissed the feminist movement as bourgeois. See Laura Fernández Cordero, Amor y anarquismo. Experiencias pioneras que pensaron y ejercieron la libertad sexual [Love and Anarchy. The Experiences of Pioneers who Thought and Lived Sexual Freedom], Buenos Aires 2017.

*logía* (Freud and Sociology).<sup>29</sup> There, like in other writings, she promoted the articulation of psychoanalysis with the social sciences. She argued that there were similarities between Marxism and psychoanalysis, but that both forms of knowledge were incomplete without each other. However, her references to Marxism were rather marginal to her argument. Langer characterizes Marxism as just one more “sociological theory” among others. However, the exercise of placing psychoanalysis among the social sciences – also present in the book on psychotherapy that she wrote in collaboration with León Grinberg and Emilio Rodríguez in 1957<sup>30</sup> – went against the grain of the hegemonic thinking within the APA, which emphasized the unique and irreducible character of psychoanalysis and therefore its dissociation from any other form of knowledge. What is clear, nonetheless, is that neither Marxism nor feminism were at the center of Langer’s published works in the 1950s and early 1960s.

In her autobiography, Langer claimed that, since the late 1940s, she had felt attracted to the government of Juan Perón and to his charismatic wife, Eva Perón (“Evita”), to the point of paying tribute to her when she died in 1952.<sup>31</sup> Langer claimed, at some point back in the 1950s, that she had thought of joining the women’s branch of the Peronist Party. Like many leftist intellectuals, Langer clearly felt drawn to the political figure of Perón in the early 1970s, when he finally returned to a chaotic Argentina after 18 years of exile to assume the presidency for the third time. However, back in the 1950s, most leftists (and apparently Langer as well, in spite of her later claims) looked upon Peronism as a vernacular version of Fascism.

In the early fifties, for instance, during the Perón government, Langer published a text on urban myths in which she discussed, from a purely psychoanalytic perspective, one such myth.<sup>32</sup> In *El mito del niño asado* (The Myth of the Roasted Child), Langer analyzes a story that circulated in Buenos Aires in the late 1940s: A young couple goes out one evening, leaving their young child with a newly hired babysitter. On their return they find the babysitter wearing the lady’s wedding dress. The sitter tells the couple that she has prepared a special meal for them. To their horror, they discover that the dinner consists in their own child, roasted, complete with potatoes, served on a

29 Marie Langer, Freud y la sociología, in: Revista de Psicoanálisis 13 (1956), no. 3, in: Juan C. Volnovich/Silvia Werthein (eds.), Marie Langer. Mujer, psicoanálisis, marxismo [Marie Langer. Woman, Psychoanalysis, Marxism], Buenos Aires 1989, 27–37.

30 León Grinberg/Marie Langer/Emilio Rodríguez, Psicoterapia del grupo. Su enfoque psicoanalítico [Group Psychotherapy. Its Psychoanalytic Approach], Buenos Aires 1957.

31 Langer/Guinsberg/del Palacio, Memoria, historia y diálogo psicoanalítico, 80.

32 Marie Langer, El mito del niño asado, in: Revista de Psicoanálisis 7 (1950), no. 3, 389–401. This text was included in idem, *Maternidad y sexo*.



well-set table. Langer concluded that the babysitter was a degraded version of Melanie Klein's "bad mother."<sup>33</sup>

However, when in 1957, after the fall of Perón, Langer republished the text, now as part of a collection of essays, she introduced important changes to it, including its very title: It became *El niño asado y otros mitos sobre Eva Perón* (The Roasted Child and Other Myths about Eva Perón).<sup>34</sup> The myth was now analyzed from a political point of view. In this new version of the text, the murderous babysitter represented not just an abstract Kleinian evil mother but a real woman: Eva Perón, who was thus characterized as a perverse, dangerous, and feared woman. In the introduction to the book of 1957, Langer mentions that she had avoided political references when the article was originally published because she feared possible persecution by Perón's dictatorship, which she compared to Mussolini's and Hitler's:

"I avoided analyzing the extent to which [...] the myth originated in the current political situation. I avoided it for obvious reasons, since such an analysis would have made its publication impossible at that time. Now that the political situation in Argentina has changed, I return to the issue to complete it."<sup>35</sup>

Even as late as 1968, Langer associated the situation of psychoanalysis during the Perón era with the one she had endured in Vienna in the 1930s: "During the times of Perón," thus wrote Langer, "many of us analyzed people who worked illegally. That implied a certain personal risk for us, as well as for the association. However, without even discussing it, all of us faced up the situation."<sup>36</sup> Contrary to her later claims, therefore, it is clear that, in the 1950s, Langer had sympathies neither for Perón nor for his wife.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Langer played an important role in the diffusion of psychoanalysis among the educated middle class of Buenos Aires. She introduced a female perspective to the discipline and pioneered the application of psychoanalytic theory to the analysis of broad political development. Despite her later claims, however, she was as far from tackling Peronism as she was from championing feminism. If *Maternidad y sexo* enjoyed a wide readership beyond the narrow limits of the psychoanalytic community, it was, in part, because it was welcomed by a growing middle class which was in search of new analytic and discursive tools, but which was, at the same

33 Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas*, 98.

34 Marie Langer, *El niño asado y otros mitos sobre Eva Perón*, in: idem, *Fantasías eternas a la luz del psicoanálisis* [Eternal Fantasies in the Light of Psychoanalysis], Buenos Aires 1957.

35 Langer, *Fantasías eternas a la luz del psicoanálisis*, 92.

36 Idem, *El analizando del año 2000* [The Analysand of the Year 2000], in: *Revista de Psicoanálisis*, 35 (1968), no. 3–4, reprinted in: Volnovich/Werthein (eds.), *Marie Langer*, 39–61, here 52.

time, still attached to traditional family models.<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting that, in her autobiography, Langer claims that *Maternidad y sexo* had received a positive review by Marxist psychiatrist Sylvia Bermann at the *Revista Latinoamericana de Psiquiatría* (Latin American Journal of Psychiatry). In fact, the review had not been all that positive, although Bermann and Langer later became close friends and collaborators: Bermann had actually criticized Langer's disregard for class differences in discussing her case and dismissed psychoanalysis as a limited school of thought that lacked scientific foundations.<sup>38</sup>

It was only in the late 1960s that Langer re-entered into politics. In that politically charged and violent decade, when there was a proliferation of leftist guerrillas and the country was ruled by murderous military dictatorships, Langer, like many other intellectuals at that time, brought again to life her previous allegiance to Marxism.<sup>39</sup> In a paper delivered at the Psychoanalytic Congress that took place in Vienna in 1971, she pointed out that if in her youth she had had to choose between psychoanalysis and Marxism, this time she would renounce neither.

### José Bleger: Between Psychoanalysis, Jewishness, and Marxism<sup>40</sup>

Although José Bleger also tried to reconcile psychoanalysis and Marxism, his trajectory and project differed widely from Langer's. Moreover, for him, Jewishness was (it had been since his early youth) an essential element of his public identity. Born in 1922 in an agrarian Jewish community in the province of Santa Fe (Argentina) to a family of observant Jewish European immigrants, José Bleger studied medicine in the city of Rosario. Soon, he became active in leftist Jewish and anti-Fascist movements. Unlike many other members of Argentina's large Jewish community, Bleger believed that the Yiddish language constituted the basis of Jewish identity.

37 Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas*, 99.

38 Sylvia Bermann, *Reseña de "Maternidad y sexo"* [Review of "Motherhood and Sexuality"], in: *Revista Latinoamericana de Psiquiatría* 1 (July 1952), no. 4, 80–83.

39 For an overview of Argentina during the 1960s, see Mariano Ben Plotkin (ed.), *Argentina, vol. 5: La búsqueda de la democracia 1960–2000* [Argentina, vol. 5: The Quest for Democracy 1960–2000], Madrid 2012.

40 The part on José Bleger of this article is based on Mariano Ben Plotkin, *José Bleger. Jew, Marxist and Psychoanalyst*, in: *Psychoanalysis and History* 13 (2011), no. 2, 181–205.

As an intellectual interested in the works of the Jewish Hungarian-French Marxist philosopher Georges Politzer, it was through the reading of this author's early works that Bleger became engrossed in psychology and psychoanalysis.<sup>41</sup> Bleger joined the APA as a "candidate" in the mid-1950s, and more or less at the same time he also became a member of the Argentine Communist Party. His was a singularity within both the APA and the Communist Party. Although the APA developed a profile as an apolitical institution, most of its members had a liberal, anti-Peronist orientation. However, since the 1930s, the Argentine Communist Party had denounced psychoanalysis as an idealist, imperialist doctrine. Communist psychiatrists promoted, instead, a form of psychotherapy based on Ivan Pavlov's theories of conditioned reflexes. Throughout his professional life, Bleger tried to integrate Jewishness, Marxism, and psychoanalysis, although – unlike Langer – he would keep this relationship at the theoretical level, while defending the autonomy of science from politics: "Scientific inquiry and discussion have to be carried out as problems and fields that are worthwhile in their own right," wrote Bleger in 1972, just before his death.<sup>42</sup> His project did not consist in combining psychoanalytic practice and Marxism, but rather in generating a space of reflection on the dialectical dimension of psychoanalysis. Following Politzer's project of the late 1920s, Bleger attempted to create a dialectical "concrete" psychology based on the elements that he deemed useful from psychoanalysis, that is to say, on the portions of it that were compatible with dialectical materialism.

In 1958, Bleger published a book titled *Psicoanálisis y dialéctica materialista*,<sup>43</sup> which would be re-edited several times in the following years. According to Bleger, Marxist denunciation of psychoanalysis as an idealistic system of thought was valid, but only if this accusation was directed against the ideological contents of Freud's theory; the psychoanalytic practice did incorporate dialectical elements. Referring to Politzer's early works, Bleger distinguished between psychoanalytic discoveries and practice, on the one hand, and psychoanalytic theory, on the other. It was in the former that he found the true Freudian revolution, whereas Freud's dynamic theory was based on idealistic and mechanistic concepts. Bleger also rejected Freud's theory of instincts, as well as his "reified" theory of the libido. It is noteworthy that, whereas the German Freudian Marxists of the 1920s and 1930s had

41 Georges Politzer, *Critique des Fondements de la Psychologie. La psychologie et la psychanalyse*, Paris 1928.

42 José Bleger, *Ideología y política* [Ideology and Politics], in: *Revista de Psicoanálisis* 30 (1973), no. 2, 509–513, here 511.

43 Idem, *Psicoanálisis y dialéctica materialista. Estudios sobre la estructura del psicoanálisis* [Psychoanalysis and Dialectical Materialism. Studies on the Structure of Psychoanalysis], Buenos Aires 1958.

found in the instinct theory the most revolutionary aspects of psychoanalysis as well as the foundation of its link to materialism, Bleger wanted to strip psychoanalysis of it. Following Politzer, Bleger further challenged the notion that the unconscious could have an ontological reality.

Bleger's ideas on psychoanalysis contrasted with those promoted by the communists as much as his ideas on Marxism fell out of place among the psychoanalysts. Because of its defense of psychoanalysis, the book caused an immediate splash within the Communist Party and originated an agitated debate in which prominent communist psychiatrists, as well as party leaders, participated. The discussion of Bleger's book was ventilated in *Cuadernos de Cultura* (Notebooks on Culture), the official journal of the Argentine Communist Party.<sup>44</sup> The Party meeting ended, according to *Cuadernos de Cultura* and attending communist leader Héctor Agosti, after harsh criticisms on the part of communist psychiatrists and leaders, and with Bleger's ritual recognition that a more active militant participation in the Party would help him overcome the ideological weaknesses and deviations that were present in his text. However, at the end of the discussion, Bleger also made clear that he was not convinced by the arguments presented against the book. He insisted on the need of approaching dialectical materialism from a non-dogmatic point of view. Bleger's book was the first serious, intellectually sophisticated attempt in Argentina (and probably in Latin America) to discuss psychoanalysis from a Marxist point of view, and as such it ran against communist *doxa*.

If the publication of *Psicoanálisis y dialéctica materialista* generated a censure from the Communist Party because it questioned elements of its orthodoxy, the APA, on the other hand, maintained silence on the issue. This silence, however, was not innocent. The *Revista de Psicoanálisis* rigorously published reviews of all the books produced by members of the APA, and the fact that it failed to discuss Bleger's work was considered a statement in itself. Like Reich decades before, Bleger's attempt to articulate Marxism and psychoanalysis was condemned by both communists and psychoanalysts.

A few years later, Bleger expanded his ideas on the relationship between psychoanalysis and Marxism in an article published in 1962 in a philosophy journal.<sup>45</sup> There, he established that since Marxism and psychoanalysis had different epistemological status – Marxism provided a vision of the world, while psychoanalysis, as a limited science, could not – the only possible relationship between them could be established through an evaluation of the methods, hypotheses, and theories of psychoanalysis within the Marxist framework: The application of “the general laws of dialectics to find the

44 *Cuadernos de Cultura* 43 (September/October 1959), 78–93.

45 José Bleger, *Psicoanálisis y Marxismo* [Psychoanalysis and Marxism], in: *Cuestiones de Filosofía* [Issues of Philosophy] 1 (1962), no. 2–3, 60–73.

particular and specific form that they have in [psychoanalysis]” would enrich both dialectics and science. Unlike Langer, at no point did Bleger try to change the nature of the psychoanalytic practice to make it fit Marxism. In fact, as his purely psychoanalytic texts show, his practice continued to be framed in ultra-orthodox Kleinian ideas.<sup>46</sup>

### Bleger and Langer: Two Analysts Who Were So Close and So Far Away

Unlike Bleger, who focused on the theoretical aspects of the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis, Langer believed that the relationship between both could be direct, lineal, and established at the level of the psychoanalytic practice: Psychoanalysis could be turned into a political revolutionary tool. It could be put at the service of a project of national and social liberation and used to oppose the capitalist, oppressive society:

“We always knew that psychiatrists and psychoanalysts do not make the Revolution. But it is important that we, noninstitutional analysts, who are conscious of our contradiction and of our responsibility in this class-based society, continue, no matter where we are, working to collaborate in the struggle and giving our specific support for the creation of the new man.”<sup>47</sup>

In Langer’s view, psychoanalysis could be instrumental in creating a revolutionary subjectivity. Moreover, the members of *Plataforma* (and also of the other secessionist group, *Documento*) established the *Centro de Docencia e Investigación* (Center for Teaching and Research, CDI), which offered courses on psychoanalysis, Marxist philosophy, as well as on a wide variety of other political subjects, to mental health workers. Langer also became active in the *Federación Argentina de Psiquiatras* (Argentine Federation of Psychiatrists), a professional organization that had become politically radicalized in the late 1960s. While the APA restricted its membership to medical doctors, the CDI and other institutions established by dissidents accepted psychologists, nurses, and other professionals into their ranks. For instance, *Plataforma* explained its position in an open letter addressed to “all mental health workers.” They wanted to place psychoanalysis “at the service of

46 See, e. g., *idem*, *Simbiosis y ambigüedad. Estudio psicoanalítico* [Symbiosis and Ambiguity. A Psychoanalytical Study], Buenos Aires 1975).

47 Marie Langer, *Vicisitudes del movimiento psicoanalítico argentino* [Vicissitudes of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Movement], in: *Cambio* [Change] 1 (October/November/December 1975), in: Volnovich/Werthein (eds.), Marie Langer, 97–124, here 124.

those ideologies that challenge, without compromise, the system that in our country is characterized by favoring the exploitation of the oppressed classes.”<sup>48</sup> More explicit was Langer (and co-author Armando Bauleo, another “plataformista”) in the prologue to the second volume of *Cuestionamos* (We Question),<sup>49</sup> a collective work in which many dissident psychoanalysts participated. After citing Reich’s adapted quote from Marx – “the weapon of criticism will not replace the criticism of weapons” – Langer and Bauleo concluded:

“Reich’s direction thus continues: If this work is capable of pursuing the difficult path that leads to the criticism of weapons, it will achieve its goal. September 1933. September 1973 [the month of the coup d’état in Chile that brought Pinochet to power]. Will this work serve toward the same goal?”<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to Langer, Bleger’s attempt to combine psychoanalysis and Marxism was carried out at the conceptual level (the only level at which he believed they could be articulated). In spite of his open political commitments (unlike Langer, he was always explicit about his political sympathies, even after his expulsion from the Communist Party in the early 1960s), he continued to defend the autonomy of science, which, in his view, should not be contaminated by political ideology. According to Bleger, the interrelation between social and psychological phenomena had been recognized neither by psychoanalysts nor by Marxists. However, it was possible to illuminate Marxism with the light of psychoanalysis and vice versa. Similarly to Jean-Paul Sartre, Bleger considered that psychoanalysis could complement Marxism by offering a theory of subjectivity that it (Marxism) did not have. His continued commitment to Kleinian psychoanalysis is relevant because it has been argued that psychoanalysts’ allegiance to Klein’s theories, which promote a non-political version of psychoanalysis, a version in which social or economic variables are left aside, may explain the analysts’ passivity during dictatorships in Latin America.<sup>51</sup>

When, in 1971, a group of leftist psychoanalysts from APA led by Langer and other senior analysts quit the institution and also gave up their ranks at the IPA, Bleger not only failed to join them but, instead, wrote two critical

48 Plataforma, A los trabajadores de salud mental [To the Mental Health Workers], in: Los Libros (March 1972), cit. in: Plotkin, Freud in the Pampas, 201.

49 Marie Langer/Armando Bauleo (eds.), *Cuestionamos*, 2 vols., Buenos Aires 1971–1973, here vol. 2: *Psicoanálisis institucional y psicoanálisis sin institución* [Institutional Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalysis without an Institution], Buenos Aires 1973.

50 Idem, Prólogo [Prologue], in: *ibid.*

51 Silvana Vetö Honorato, *Psicoanálisis en estado de sitio. La desaparición de Gabriel Castillo y las políticas del psicoanálisis en Chile durante la dictadura militar* [Psychoanalysis under State of Siege. The Disappearance of Gabriel Castillo and Psychoanalytic Policies in Chile during the Military Dictatorship], Santiago de Chile 2013.

pieces that were published in the *Revista de Psicoanálisis* after his death. In both articles he addressed the question of the autonomy of science: “In the last instance, in the construction of socialism, technicians and scientists had a revolutionary role to play. And this is a role that is more revolutionary than the one played by politicians or ideologues.”<sup>52</sup> The second article phrased an open criticism directed at both the APA and those who had left the institution. While he acknowledged that the APA, by turning itself into a purely professional association, had betrayed psychoanalysis, Bleger accused the deserters of “intellectual terrorism” and of abandoning psychoanalysis: “[T]o renounce psychoanalysis is the symbol of a twisted form of Marxism, without seeing that political and revolutionary activity, as well as the new socialist order, requires more humanistic knowledge [...].”<sup>53</sup> By remaining faithful to his program of defending the autonomy of science within the Marxist framework, Bleger found himself out of place in the rarified and violent political environment of the late 1960s, when many of his fellow leftist Marxists (including a few analysts) had joined radical political organizations. As Claudia Gilman has shown, in the 1960s and 1970s, the intellectual field became cannibalized by politics.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, Bleger was also marginalized in the APA. Although he commanded intellectual respect among his fellow psychoanalysts, he never occupied prominent leading positions in the institution.

Marie Langer held a less reflective attitude concerning the relationship between psychoanalysis and Marxism. As Hugo Vezzetti has pointed out, to Langer, Marxism was the source of an ideological identity rather than a theoretical instrument, as it clearly was for Bleger.<sup>55</sup> She believed that psychoanalysis applied outside the psychoanalytic institution could be easily turned into a tool for social revolution. Although Langer had probably read, back in Vienna, some of the classics of Marxism, she never quite defined how she actually understood Marxism. In her writings she mixed quotes from Marx and Engels with mentions of the Freudo-Marxists of the 1930s (particularly Wilhelm Reich, whose works Langer admitted to have “discovered” only

52 José Bleger, *La Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina, el psicoanálisis y los psicoanalistas* [Argentine Psychoanalytic Association, Psychoanalysis, and Psychoanalysts], in: *Revista de Psicoanálisis* 30 (1973), no. 2, 515–528, here 520.

53 *Idem*, *Ideología y política*, 513.

54 See Claudia Gilman, *Entre la pluma y el fusil. Debates y dilemas del escritor revolucionario en América Latina* [Between Pen and Rifle. Debates and Dilemmas of the Revolutionary Writers in Latin America], Buenos Aires 2003. See also Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas. La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina, 1956–1966* [Our 1960s. The Formation of the New Intellectual Left in Argentina, 1956–1966], Buenos Aires 1991; and Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas*.

55 Vezzetti, *Marie Langer*, 40.

in the late 1960s), as well as of French philosopher Louis Althusser. For both Langer and Bleger, the convergence of Marxism and psychoanalysis was the result of deep, existential issues. However, while for Bleger it was a consequence of a theoretical, self-conception-related tension, by Langer it was lived as a fulfillment of the desires of her youth. As a young doctor back in Europe, she had not been able to reconcile political activism and psychoanalysis. As a mature woman in Latin America, she could finally do it. People who worked close to her remember Langer's youthful attitude and her expressions of joy when she became politically active in the 1970s and later visited Cuba, something that Bleger, expelled from the Communist Party in the early 1960s, wanted but could not do, because he was denied a visa.

### Bleger, Communism, and Jewishness

Marie Langer was forced by external factors to come to terms with the fact that she was Jewish, a religion and tradition from which she and her family felt distant. Since the 1970s she found her double identity as psychoanalyst and Marxist non-problematic. For Bleger, in contrast, his Jewish belonging was part of a tense tripod that also included Marxism and psychoanalysis. Finding a way to articulate this triple identity became an existential problem for him. In fact, the final reason for his expulsion from the Communist Party was linked not to his views on psychoanalysis, but to Judaism. In 1962, Bleger visited the Soviet Union and, upon his return, published in *Nueva Sion* (New Zion) – a Zionist socialist journal – an article on the conditions of Jews in that country.<sup>56</sup> In this piece, Bleger expressed his deep disappointment with the Soviet Union. What Bleger saw in the Soviet Union forced him to take a fresh look at the “Jewish question” within socialism. He described the effect of his visit to the Soviet Union as a “conversion.” Since the rise of Stalin, the policies of cultural promotion of minorities had come to an end. To his surprise, however, the situation had changed little since the death of Stalin in 1953: The publications in Yiddish had been discontinued and the promoters of an autonomous Jewish culture continued to be persecuted by the State.

Bleger's article elicited a response by Rubén Sinay – a leader of the Argentine group of Communist Jews who promoted assimilation – in the shape

56 José Bleger, *Los judíos en la Unión Soviética* [The Jews in the Soviet Union], in: *Nueva Sion* (1963), reprinted in: Bertrand Russell et al., *Nacionalidad oprimida. La minoría judía en la U.R.S.S.* [Oppressed Minority. The Jewish Minority in the USSR], Montevideo 1968, 222–231.



of a 64-page-long pamphlet against Bleger, titled *La invención del antisemitismo soviético* (The Invention of Soviet Antisemitism).<sup>57</sup> The fact that Sinay considered it necessary to publish such a long piece in order to refute the less than 10-page-long article by Bleger shows the centrality of Bleger's standing in the debate on Jewishness within progressive circles and, particularly, within the Communist Party. Sinay argued that the assimilation of Jews in the Soviet Union, far from being the result of a state policy (as Bleger had claimed), was the natural outcome of the evolution of socialist society and the emergence of the "new man." He also criticized Zionism and Israel's imperialistic policies.

It was clear that Bleger's Jewish identity took precedence over his Communist one, and this resulted in Bleger's expulsion from the Party. If his views on psychoanalysis had triggered a debate and a censure which, nonetheless, did not prevent him from being a member of the Party, its leaders considered that this time Bleger had crossed a red line. According to him, the Soviet Union's unconditional support of the Arab countries provoked (and was evidence of) a general crisis of Marxism: "[A]ll Jewish and non-Jewish progressive forces are left with one single position to choose: the defense and unconditional support of the State of Israel."<sup>58</sup>

Bleger's Jewish activism did not fit well into the APA either. In 1962, the theme of the annual APA symposium was, precisely, "The Psychoanalysis of Anti-Judaism." The topic was a sensitive one at that time since the so-called "Eichmann affair" had generated a wave of violent antisemitism in Argentina.<sup>59</sup> The organizing committee, which Bleger was a member of, consisted of seventeen analysts, eleven of whom were Jewish. By the time of the APA symposium, there had been some noteworthy attempts carried out mostly in the US, based on clinical evidence, to address the social dimension of antisemitism. Of all participants in the symposium, only Bleger seemed to have been aware of this line of research.<sup>60</sup> He presented clinical evidence showing the manifestation of anti-Jewish feelings in patients in moments of distress. Unlike most of the other APA analysts, whose discussion of Jewishness was

57 Rubén Sinay, *La invención del "Antisemitismo Soviético"* [The Invention of "Soviet Antisemitism"], Buenos Aires 1963.

58 Bleger, *Los judíos en la Unión Soviética*, 230.

59 In 1960, war criminal Adolf Eichmann was kidnapped in Argentina by members of the Israeli secret service, Mossad, and taken to Israel, where he was put on trial, condemned to death, and later executed.

60 José Bleger et al., *Experiencia del comité organizador del simposium sobre anti-judaísmo* [Experience of the Organizational Committee of the Symposium on Antijudaism], in: *Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina, Simposium Anual 1963. Psicoanálisis y Anti-judaísmo. 14 y 15 de junio. Primer Boletín* [Annual Symposium 1963. Psychoanalysis and Anti-judaism. 14 and 15 June. First Bulletin], Buenos Aires 1963.

limited to the problems associated with circumcision or guilt, Bleger and his group proposed a multidisciplinary approach to the problem of antisemitism that does not seem to have been particularly well received by his fellow analysts.<sup>61</sup>

Bleger's ideal of generating an autonomous space for social research and science within the framework of Marxism fell through when, for most leftist intellectuals, the gun took precedence over the pen as a tool of expression. His disciples and close collaborators abandoned him, then the APA and, in many cases, psychoanalysis altogether. A few of them even joined armed guerrilla groups. Bleger's three allegiances, to Marxism, to Judaism, and to psychoanalysis, were in constant tension and interfered with each other in a context that could hardly accept multiple self-conceptions. Bleger was spared the worst of state repression, succumbing to an early death.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusions

Marie Langer and José Bleger can be considered as two extreme cases of possibilities opening up (and soon closing) to Argentine and, by extension, to Latin American intellectuals (in this case psychoanalysts) to reconcile their political, intellectual, and professional allegiances; both failed. For Bleger, his intellectual identity took precedence over his political one in a moment when, for most leftist activists, it was the other way around.<sup>63</sup> He thus became isolated towards the end of his life. Langer, in contrast, more in tune with the spirit of the 1960s and early 1970s, tried to combine her professional practice and her political activism. The price she paid was a second exile (this time to Mexico) when she was sixty-four years of age.

A lot has changed in social and political terms since Bleger's and Langer's attempts to articulate Marxism and psychoanalysis. In 1983, democracy was finally restored in Argentina, thus ending over fifty years of alternation between weak civilian governments and brutal military dictatorships. Moreover, since Langer and Bleger's times, and clearly for the last forty years, psychoanalysis has gained wide currency in Buenos Aires, to the point that today, the city is considered one of "the world capitals of psychoanalysis." TV stars and politicians (including the previous president, Mauricio Macri, and even Pope

61 See, e. g., Eduardo Salas, *Circuncisión y antijudaísmo* [Circumcision and Anti-Judaism], in: *ibid.*

62 Bleger died in 1973. The coup d'état took place in 1976. However, in 1974, the civilian government under Perón and his third wife started repressing leftist opponents.

63 Claudia Gilman, *Entre la pluma y el fusil.*

Francis) publicize the fact that they were (or still are, as is the case of President Macri) undergoing psychoanalytic therapy. In spite of its centrality in the culture of Buenos Aires, generally speaking, psychoanalysis has failed to establish productive dialogues with other disciplines and forms of thinking, as Bleger and Langer (each one in his or her own way) tried to do.

At certain moments, particularly in times of economic or political crisis, psychoanalysis has emerged as a public discourse. However, the results were rather disappointing. In the midst of a deep social, political, and economic crisis that affected Argentina in 2001, for instance, in a conjuncture when most social actors and discourses were losing legitimacy, psychoanalysts were sought by the media to provide explanations for the crisis. Exceptions notwithstanding, what psychoanalysts (and psychoanalysis) offered at that time – unlike Bleger’s and Langer’s attempts in the 1970s – was a discipline based on narrow concepts, full of obscure jargon, which could only conceptualize the crisis in terms of its own (psychoanalytic) categories, without establishing any kind of dialogue with the social sciences or with any discourse external to psychoanalysis itself. In other words, in the early 2000s, psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts had very little to offer to Argentine society as a public discourse in relation to other discourses.<sup>64</sup> However, this did not prevent many of them from discussing, from a self-referential position, social and political issues in the media.<sup>65</sup>

I would like to propose as a final hypothesis that the origins of the situation of psychoanalysis in Argentina in the years 2000, and perhaps to this day, can be traced to the same conditions that made impossible Langer’s and Bleger’s projects. The failure to implant a comprehensive conceptualization of psychoanalysis which could engage with broader social issues (including Jewishness) – due to the political conditions of the times – has left an empty space that was occupied by a much narrower version of psychoanalysis, a version that, since the 1970s, in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America has been associated with the hegemonic implantation of the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan. Of course, I am not arguing here that Lacan’s psychoanalysis has these characteristics. What I am saying is that the *particular reception* of Lacanian psychoanalysis in Argentina (and also in Brazil and other Latin American countries) has been tied to the isolation of psycho-

64 See Mariano Ben Plotkin/Sergio Visacovsky, *Saber y autoridad. Intervenciones de psicoanalistas en torno a la crisis en la Argentina* [Knowledge and Authority. Speeches of Psychoanalysts regarding the Crisis in Argentina], in: *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y El Caribe* [Interdisciplinary Studies of Latin America and the Caribbean] 18 (2007), no. 1, 13–40.

65 An exception to this was Germán García, one of the leaders of the Lacanian movement in Argentina. When questioned about the crisis, he said that, as an analyst, he had nothing to contribute. He could discuss the crisis as an intellectual. See *ibid.*

analysis from other forms of social analysis. Marie Langer and José Bleger's version of psychoanalysis, closely attached to the theories of Melanie Klein, may look outmoded today. Marie Langer, in particular, recognized that she was not familiar with Lacan's theories. Bleger did not seem to be particularly interested in them, either. However, both belonged to a generation and to a relatively small group of analysts who were eager to explore both the conceptual and practical limits of their discipline, linking them to other forms of knowledge and practices. The failure of their projects has shaped the history of psychoanalysis in Argentina for decades to come.<sup>66</sup>

66 The research for this article was partially funded by a Pluriannual Research Project (PIP) 2014 of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), by a Proyecto de Unidades Ejecutoras (PUE) of 2017, also of the CONICET, and by a grant from the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires.

Susanne Zepp

*Pertencer:*  
Historical Experience in the Writings  
of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977)

In a seminal essay from 1984 on Latin American Jewish writers, which has shaped the field and its different research interests, Saúl Sosnowski interpreted the diversity of their texts in Spanish, Portuguese, and Yiddish as a “Bridge toward History.”<sup>1</sup> This paper intends to trace how this bridge is constructed in the writings of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977) and suggests that her oeuvre can be interpreted as an aesthetic exploration of a non-essentialist understanding of “belonging,” which – among other approaches to identity – is part of Latin America’s historical experience. This corresponds to Ilan Stavans’ assessment that “the literature of Jewish Latin America is an endless well of possibilities.”<sup>2</sup>

In that context, much has been written and said about the Brazilian author Clarice Lispector, but one of the most memorable quotes stems from the French philosopher Hélène Cixous: “The greatest respect I have for any literary oeuvre in this world, is my respect for Clarice Lispector’s.”<sup>3</sup> The striking way in which Lispector’s writings have been received in world literature is linked with the contexts that will be examined here. As wide-ranging and diverse as the existing research is, there is a consensus that Clarice Lispector’s work is difficult to classify due to the complexity of her writings: Each of her texts renegotiates the relationship between historical experience, belonging, and literary representation, which can be interpreted as a conscious artistic choice against essentialist conceptualizations – be it of literature, nation, gender, class, or religion.

Beyond any binary understanding of European and Latin American, Lispector’s oeuvre is located in a deliberate mode “anywhere in this world,”

- 1 Saúl Sosnowski, Latin American Jewish Writers. A Bridge toward History, in: *Proof-texts* 4 (1984), no. 1, 71–92.
- 2 Ilan Stavans, Mapping the World of Jewish Latin American Literature. From Lispector to Jodorowsky, a Literature of Resistance and Dreams, in: *The Literary Hub*, 28 February 2018, n. p.
- 3 Translation by the author. For the French original, see Hélène Cixous, *Extrême fidélité* [Extreme Fidelity], in: *Travessia* 14 (1987), 11–45, here 24: “Le plus grand respect que j’ai pour une œuvre quelconque au monde, c’est ceci que j’ai pour l’œuvre de Clarice Lispector.”

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as Cixous has described it.<sup>4</sup> However, this does not result in an indifference to specific historical experiences – quite the reverse. Nevertheless, these experiences are not represented at the level of content, as thematic motifs or subjects of these texts, but are transformed into literary devices. Consequently, all modes of belonging are reflected by means of form and techniques. In Lispector’s essay *Pertencer*, which lends this article its title and explicitly deals with questions of belonging, this is also the case. It is remarkable that belonging is expressed with a verb (*pertencer*) instead of the noun (*pertença*). Even if one wants to argue that Clarice Lispector uses the verb for aesthetic reasons, because the noun “pertença,” although formally correct, is not commonly used in Brazilian Portuguese and might therefore sound awkward, this does not render the representation of belonging as a dynamic movement any less noteworthy. For one, Lispector is never reluctant to use rare formulations as semantic markers. On the contrary, it is her deliberate, sophisticated, and nuanced handling of language that distinguishes her style. On the other hand, the content of the essay stresses what the verb already implies: Becoming is the decisive aspect of belonging, not being.

The four sections of this article aim to show, in a paradigmatic way, the literary devices employed in Clarice Lispector’s texts. The first two sections discuss her debut novel *Perto do coração selvagem* (*Near to the Wild Heart*) and a short story from her later work to illustrate how the Hebrew Bible is integrated as a symbol of belonging and transformed in these texts. In this, I am following the path of Berta Waldman in her approach to Brazilian Jewish literatures, in general, and to Lispector’s writings, in particular.<sup>5</sup> However, references to tradition in Lispector’s texts can be even further differentiated: Primary emblems, such as biblical references, require a different interpretative lens than those that are less explicit and oscillate between different modes of cultural expression. These secondary emblems of belonging are discussed in the third section, in the context of the author’s last novel. Its

4 Ibid.

5 See Berta Waldman, *Entre passos e rastros. Presença judaica na literatura brasileira contemporânea* [Between Steps and Tracks. Jewish Presence in Contemporary Brazilian Literature], São Paulo 2002; but also idem, *Por linhas tortas. O judaísmo em Clarice Lispector* [In Crooked Lines. Judaism with Clarice Lispector], in: Arquivo Maaravi. Revista Digital de Estudos Judaicos da UFMG [The UFMG’s Digital Journal for Jewish Studies] 5 (2011), no. 8, 26–35. See also Nelson H. Vieira, *A linguagem espiritual de Clarice Lispector* [The Spiritual Language of Clarice Lispector], in: *Travessia* 14 (1988), 81–95; and idem, *Jewish Voices in Brazilian Literature. A Prophetic Discourse of Alterity*, Gainesville, Fla., 1995. See also Regina Igel, *Clarice Lispector*, in: Darrell B. Lockhart (ed.), *Jewish Writers of Latin America. A Dictionary*, New York 1997, 347–356; and idem, *Imigrantes judeus/escritores brasileiros. O componente judaico na literatura brasileira* [Jewish Immigrants/Brazilian Writers. The Jewish Component in Brazilian Literature], São Paulo 1997.

combination of postmodern narrative techniques and explicit social content will be understood as a distinct critique of realistic narration and, at the same time, as an objection to the postmodernist negation of the subject. The fourth and last part of this paper examines the essay *Pertencer* as a programmatic example of how historical experience is represented in Clarice Lispector's writing.

The author's life was marked by radical historical experiences. Nádia Battella Gotlib has carefully determined the biographical configurations with which the author's oeuvre is associated,<sup>6</sup> and Benjamin Moser has drawn extensively on Gotlib's and other previous studies in his biography, which was widely received in English-speaking countries.<sup>7</sup> It is by no means an easy task to trace the life of Clarice Lispector – even accounts of her year of birth vary between 1920 and 1925, partly due to the author's own contradictory statements. Clarice Lispector's life did not begin in Brazil, but in the historical region of Podolia in present-day Western Ukraine. The year 1919 entered the Yiddish language as *khurbn Ukraine* (generally referring to the Holocaust in Ukraine), and it was in the wake of those events that Mania and Pinkas Lispector decided to build a free life elsewhere with their daughters Elisa and Tania, who were born in 1911 and 1915, and Chaya, who is no other than the future Clarice; at that time, she was only several months old. While the United States were the couple's preferred option, its immigration restrictions eventually made Brazil their destination. Pinkas Lispector managed to take his family there on a precarious journey via Bessarabia and Germany. It was not until much later, however, that Clarice learned from her two older sisters what had happened. On various occasions would Elisa, herself a writer, speak explicitly about this part of her life story. Clarice never did. While Elisa also explored the Yiddish language from a literary angle, linking it to her family's experiences, Clarice always referred to Brazil as her only homeland and Portuguese as her only language.<sup>8</sup>

History and personal experience were a crucial part of Clarice's writing, although not negotiated on the surface. Her works are not merely autobiographical. Instead, she addresses questions of belonging in multiple refrac-

6 Nádia Battella Gotlib, *Clarice. Uma vida que se conta* [Clarice. A Life that Counts Itself], São Paulo 1995.

7 Benjamin Moser, *Why this World. A Biography of Clarice Lispector*, Oxford 2009.

8 See Naomi Lindstrom, *Clarice Lispector and Elisa Lispector*, in: *Yiddish. Modern Jewish Studies* 12 (2001), no. 4, 58–64; André de Souza Pinto, *Retratos falados em Elisa Lispector. Um álbum fragmentado* [Portraits Speaking of Elisa Lispector. A Fragmented Album], in: *Arquivo Maaravi. Revista Digital de Estudos Judaicos da UFMG* [The UFMG's Digital Journal for Jewish Studies] 9 (2015), no. 17, 15–31; Pietro Ferrúa, *Indagações metafísicas na obra de Elisa Lispector* [Metaphysical Inquiries in the Work of Elisa Lispector], in: *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 26 (1979), no. 4, 415–420.

tions, which makes for the lasting appeal of her oeuvre.<sup>9</sup> Clarice Lispector touches on the fundamentals of human existence; her novels explore all facets and areas of belonging and transcend essentialist definitions of presumed “identities,” be they national, religious, ethnic, class- or gender-based. Each one of her writings claims to be an autonomous artwork, not intended for a specific purpose in the sense of “engaged literature.” This is precisely what distinguishes them, but what has also created an incorrect perception of detachment from historical reality.

### Modernist Transformations of the Bible

Clarice Lispector’s debut novel *Perto do coração selvagem* was published in December 1943. The title translates as “near to the wild heart,” which is part of a sentence from James Joyce’s first novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* from 1916. The full quotation precedes Lispector’s novel as an epigraph.<sup>10</sup> The novel is first and foremost introspective; its actual subject matter is not formed by external events, but by internal perceptions and experiences.<sup>11</sup> In a highly complex narrative style that combines stream of consciousness, inner monologues, and auctorial account, several stages

9 See Naomi Lindstrom, *The Pattern of Allusions in Clarice Lispector*, in: *Luso-Brazilian Review* 36 (1999), no. 1, 111–121, esp. 111: “In Lispector’s writing, her Jewishness remains submerged, covert, and ambiguous.”

10 The entire epigraph reads: “Ele estava só. Estava abandonado, feliz, perto do selvagem coração da vida.” In Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the sentence is as follows: “He was alone. He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life.” See James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Charleston, S. C., 2007, 172.

11 See Andrea Jeftanovic, “Perto do Coração Selvagem” de Clarice Lispector. La infancia como temporalidad y espacio existencial [Clarice Lispector’s “Perto do Coração Selvagem.” Childhood as Temporality and Existential Space], in: *Revista Iberoamericana [Iberoamerican Journal]* 73 (2007), no. 218–219, 253–266; Judith A. Payne, *The Heroic Journey. A Feminine Model in Clarice Lispector’s “Perto do Coração Selvagem” and Água Viva*, in: *RLA. Romance Languages Annual* 3 (1991), 554–560; Ellen H. Douglass, *Female Quest toward “Água Viva” in Clarice Lispector’s “Perto do Coração Selvagem.”* in: *Brasil/Brazil. Revista de Literatura Brasileira/A Journal of Brazilian Literature* 3 (1990), no. 3, 44–64; Earl E. Fitz, *Borges, Clarice, and the Development of Latin America’s “New Narrative.”* in: Robert Patrick Newcomb/Richard A. Gordon (eds.), *Beyond Tordesillas. New Approaches to Comparative Luso-Hispanic Studies*, Columbus, Oh., 2017, 108–118; Ana Araújo, *Os múltiplos aspectos da palavra em “Água Viva” e “Perto do Coração Selvagem”* [On the Multiple Aspects of the Word in “Água Viva” and “Perto do Coração Selvagem”], in: *RLA. Romance Languages Annual* 2 (1990), 310–312; Melissa Ann Castillo-Garsows, *Robbing the Mother. A Brazilian Woman’s Response to the Female Body as a Creative Source*, in: *LL Journal* 6 (2011), no. 1, n. p.



of the protagonist Joana's life are presented. The integration of texts from the Scriptures throughout this utterly avantgarde work is a technique that characterizes the entire opus of Clarice Lispector and whose importance has been acknowledged. It also connects to the essential dynamic of the Bible in Joyce's writings – his envisioning of a final disclosure of the truth of the universe through literature.

The novel *Perto do coração selvagem* tells of the life of Joana, whose mother died shortly after giving birth, so that she spends her early childhood only with her father, who also passes away young. The orphaned Joana is placed with her aunt, who dislikes the girl and eventually puts her in a boarding school. As a young woman, Joana marries a lawyer, but soon their initial intimacy turns into alienation and rejection. Only after the separation from her husband, she begins to become aware of herself, and at the end of the novel, she sets off on an undefined journey.

The protagonist's process of becoming is unfolded in a dialogue with Psalm 130: "De profundis clamavi ad te Domine, Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." In the biblical text, a lyrical speaker addresses God directly, whereby the metaphorical description of the place from which they speak – *de profundis* – emphasizes the great distance to God Joana seeks to overcome. The psalm represents the image of a soul oppressed by guilt and inner struggle. The novel *Perto do coração selvagem* develops its own accent from the intertextual dialogue with the Bible:

"De profundis? Something wanted to speak ... De profundis ... Hear herself! Catch the fleeting opportunity that danced light-footedly on the verge of the abyss. De profundis. Close the doors of awareness. At first perceive corrupted water, dizzy phrases, but afterwards amidst the confusion the trickle of pure water quivering over the rough wall. De profundis. Approach carefully, allow the first waves to wash back. De profundis ... She closed her eyes, but only saw penumbra. [...] But she did not really see it, she tried to imagine it perhaps. De profundis. I see a dream I once had: abandoned dark stage, behind some stairs. But the minute I think 'dark stage' in words, the dream is depleted and the cell is left empty. The feeling withers and is just mental. Until the words 'dark stage' have lived enough in me, in my darkness, in my perfume, to the extent that they become a shadowy vision, frayed and impalpable, but behind the stairs. Then I will have a truth again, my dream. De profundis. Why does not whatever wants to speak come? I am ready."<sup>12</sup>

12 For this translation, see Clarice Lispector, *Near to the Wild Heart*, transl. by Alison Entrekin, preface by Benjamin Moser, New York 2012, here 190. For the original, see Clarice Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem* [*Near to the Wild Heart*], Rio de Janeiro 1998, 197 f.: "De profundis? Alguma coisa queria falar ... De profundis ... Ouvir-se! prender a fugaz oportunidade que dançava com os pés leves à beira do abismo. De profundis. Fechar as portas da consciência. A princípio perceber água corrompida, frases tontas, mas depois no meio da confusão o fio de água pura tremulando sobre a parede áspera. De profundis. Aproximar-se com cuidado, deixar escorrerem as primeiras vagas. De profundis ... Cerrou os olhos, mas

The gesture of prayer is not directed towards God, but towards herself, her imagination, and language as such. The answer is expected to manifest in the words themselves. The biblical passage is employed to reflect on aesthetic issues. This way, it establishes a field of tension between existential religious – or religiously interpretable – experience and subjectivity. The invocation of the Lord in Lispector’s text receives no response.<sup>13</sup> A transcendent instance of inspiration is sought but not found. Thus, the protagonist’s inner monologue evokes central questions of Jewish and Christian theology, since it remains related to the one hidden world transcending God and attempts a renewal of a dialogue with Him. In his book *Canon & Creativity*, Alter classified Joyce among the modernist writers who challenge but also “reaffirm the continuing authority of the canon as a resource of collective memory and as a guide for contemplating the dense tangle of human fate.”<sup>14</sup> This assessment is also accurate regarding the biblical reference in Lispector’s novel.

However, at the same time, literary creation no longer seems bound to a higher, possibly religious impulse, but is opposed to it in a provocative manner: It is conceived as auto-factual, as self-creation, and thereby eludes any religion-based conception of art as revelation. In this respect, the novel *Perto do coração selvagem* is entirely modernist.<sup>15</sup> The specificity of these literary devices, however, is that this detachment does not lead to a linguistic crisis but rather, by referring to the biblical text, triggers a reflection on language as an existential experience. The psalm is of interest not as a revealed truth, but as what results from the biblical text in respect of language itself.<sup>16</sup> The

apenas viu penumbra. [...] Mas isso ela não via realmente, procurava imaginar talvez. De profundis. Vejo um sonho que tive: palco escuro abandonado, atrás de uma escada. Mas no momento em que penso ‘palco escuro’ em palavras, o sonho se esgota e fica o casulo vazio. A sensação murcha e – é apenas mental. Até que as palavras ‘palco escuro’ vivam bastante dentro de mim, na minha escuridão, no meu perfume, a ponto de se tornarem uma visão penumbrosa, esgarçada e impalpável, mas atrás da escada. Então terei de novo uma verdade, o meu sonho. De profundis. Por que não vem o que quer falar? Estou pronta.”

- 13 See also Nelson H. Vieira, A linguagem espiritual de Clarice Lispector [The Spiritual Language of Clarice Lispector], in: Noah. Revista Literaria [Literary Journal] 1 (1987), no. 1, 47–56.
- 14 Robert Alter, Canon and Creativity. Modern Writing and the Authority of Scripture, New Haven, Conn., 2000, 20.
- 15 Ravel Giordano Paz’ article “*Quanto ao futuro*” ou de Macunaíma a Macabéa (e um pouco além). A Hora da Estrela como “desconstrução extática” do modernismo brasileiro (“As for the Future” or from Macunaíma to Macabéa and [a Little beyond]. “A Hora da Estrela” as an “Ecstatic Deconstruction” of Brazilian Modernism) interprets the novel *The Hour of the Star* as a deliberate deconstruction of modernist aesthetics. See *ibid.*, in: Revista Cerrados 16 (2007), no. 24, 219–241.
- 16 In this respect, see also Flora Schiminovich, Lispector’s Rethinking of Biblical and Mystical Discourse, in: Robert E. DiAntonio/Nora Glickman (eds.), Tradition and Innovation. Reflections on Latin American Jewish Writing, Albany, N. Y., 1993, 147–156.

poetological reflections in the novel establish the self as an entity that creates itself in the process of writing.

*Perto do coração selvagem* focuses on the processuality of the self via aesthetic exploration, in which particular and collective histories merge. Lispector's first novel is a basic text of modernist literature precisely because of its dialogue with the biblical text, through which it eschews binary attributions of meaning in relation to questions of ethnicity, belonging, class, and gender. At the same time, the novel represents a literary reflection on female authorship. It portrays a woman who conceives herself as a writer, exploring the possibilities for an artist to initiate change and a renewal of existing structures. The novel refers to the transboundary capacity of writing and the relationship between the materiality of language and that of the body, as well as to the continuum of a desire circulating between the two. The spheres of possibilities of female writing appear as utopian spaces, as spaces that are not permanent institutions in the conventional sense because of their fluidity, creative spheres that permanently question and transcend boundaries.

### Speaking in Silence

Clarice Lispector's entire oeuvre is characterized by such literary techniques. The following example dates from the later chapters of her writing. The short story *O manifesto da cidade* (The City Manifesto) stems from the 1974 volume *Onde estivestes de noite* (Where You Were at Night)<sup>17</sup> and revolves around the Brazilian city of Recife, in the federal state of Pernambuco. Lispector is so closely associated with Rio de Janeiro that it sometimes slips out of sight that the author was living in Recife between 1925 and 1937. Nádia Battella Gotlib has pointed out that, in the 1970s, Lispector increasingly turned to the city of her childhood in literature. This includes the essay *Banhos de mar* (Sea Bathing), published 1969 in *Jornal do Brasil*, and

17 For the volume *Onde Estivestes de Noite* as a whole, see Mariângela Alonso, *Rituais, orgias e maldições. O universo fantástico de Clarice Lispector* [Rituals, Orgies, and Curses. The Fantastic Universe of Clarice Lispector], in: Gonzalo Portals Zubiarte/Elton Honores Vásquez (eds.), *El terror y lo gótico en la literatura latinoamericana. Asedios a la figura del monstruo* [Terror and Gothic Elements in Latin American Literature. Sieges on the Figure of the Monster], Lima 2015, 29–42 (Conference Transcript); Gabriela Ruggiero Nor, *Nos labirintos do Maracanã. Leitura de "A Procura de uma Dignidade," de Clarice Lispector* [In the Labyrinths of Maracanã. Reading "A Procura de uma Dignidade" by Clarice Lispector], in: *e-escrita* 4 (2013), no. 3, 102–116; Rolmes Barbosa, *Mapa dos caminhos sem saída* [Dead End Road Map], in: *O Estado de São Paulo. Suplemento Literário* [The State of São Paulo. Literary Supplement], 30 June 1974, 2.

the narrative *Restos do Carnaval* (Remains from Carnival) from the 1971 volume *Felicidade clandestina* (Clandestine Happiness). Brazil's northeast is also featured in one of Lispector's most famous books, *A hora da estrela* (The Hour of the Star) from 1977.

Lispector's short story was written in the 1970s, in one of the most violent periods of the Brazilian military dictatorship, and as a traditionally left-wing port city, Recife suffered severely during this time. Pernambuco was considered by the right-wing Brazilian forces to be a synonym for the "communist danger" in the country. The Federal State had already become the target of particularly brutal repression during the coup d'état on 1 April 1964, and this was to become part of the everyday life for the remaining years of the military dictatorship. Political opposition to the regime was deliberately repressed; members of school and student movements as well as farmers' associations were persecuted, arrested, tortured, and murdered.

In 1993, initiated by the NGO Tortura Nunca Mais, the first Brazilian memorial for the victims of the military dictatorship was inaugurated in Recife. Brazil's first federal regional truth commission was also established in Pernambuco in June 2012. Although the federal state has received national and international recognition for this commitment, the process of coming to terms with the period concerned is still in its early stages, not least due to the amnesty laws that are still in force. The consequences of impunity for torturers and murderers in the service of the military dictatorship are reflected in current human rights violations, such as excessive use of force by the police – also in Pernambuco.

Lispector's short story invites us readers to observe – however, this is not an invitation to a meditative contemplation of the situation in 1974. The text guides our gaze across one of Recife's many bridges to the river. Then, the narrative focuses on the city's prison. In the tangible form of things ("na forma palpável das coisas"), in the individual components of the town, time becomes readable in the urban topography. The history of the city, its construction by stonemasons, carpenters, engineers, sculptors of saints, and craftsmen, who all have death on their mind, seems to place the repeatedly recalled prison at its center:<sup>18</sup>

18 See here for the entire story in Katrina Dodson's brilliant translation: "Why not try in this moment, which isn't a grave one, to look out the window? This is the bridge. This is the river. Here is the Penitentiary. Here is the clock. And Recife. Here is the canal. Where is the stone that I'm sensing? the stone that crushed the city. In the palpable form of things. For this is a realized city. Its last earthquake is lost in the annals. I reach out my hand and without sadness trace from afar the curves of the stone. Something still escapes the compass rose. Something has hardened in the steel arrow that points toward – Another City. This moment isn't grave. I take advantage of it and look out the window. Here is a house. I feel my way along your stairs, those I climbed in Recife. Then the short column. I am

“I am looking. I am searching. [...] From the highest rampart I receive no signal. From here I cannot see, for your clarity is impenetrable. From here I cannot see but feel that something is written in charcoal on a wall. On a wall of this city.”<sup>19</sup>

The final sentences of the story evoke the Menetekel from the Hebrew Bible. In the Book of Daniel, the Babylonian King Belshazzar desecrates the treasure stolen from the Jerusalem Temple during a feast (Dan 5:4). Thereupon, characters appear on the wall of his palace, which none of those present can decipher. Only the prophet Daniel, known as a trustworthy interpreter of dreams, recognizes in them “Mene mene tekel u-parsin” (counted, weighed, and divided): God counted, weighed, and will end the days of the royal rule of Belshazzar.<sup>20</sup>

That same night, Belshazzar is killed. Lispector’s short story about Recife – very discreetly, with the evocation of the Menetekel at the end of the story –

seeing everything extraordinarily well. Nothing eludes me. The city laid out. With such ingenuity. Masons, carpenters, engineers, sculptors of saints, artisans – they bore death in mind. I am seeing ever more clearly: this is the house, mine, the bridge, the river, the Penitentiary, the square blocks of buildings, the steps empty of me, the stone. But here comes a Horse. Here is a horse with four legs and hard hooves of stone, a powerful neck, and the head of Horse. Here is a horse. If this was a word echoing off the hard ground, what do you mean? How hollow this heart is in the center of the city. I am searching, searching. House, pavement, steps, monument, lamppost, your industry. From the highest rampart – I am looking. I am searching. From the highest rampart I receive no signal. From here I cannot see, for your clarity is impenetrable. From here I cannot see but feel that something is written in charcoal on a wall. On a wall of this city.” (Clarice Lispector, *The Complete Stories*, transl. by Katrina Dodson, New York 2015, 40.)

- 19 “Procuro, procuro. [...] Da mais alta muralha não recebo nenhum sinal. Daqui não vejo, pois tua clareza é impenetrável. Daqui não vejo mas sinto que alguma coisa está escrita a carvão numa parede. Numa parede desta cidade.” (Clarice Lispector, *Todos os contos* [The Complete Stories], Lisbon 2016, 412.)
- 20 Dan 5:18–26: “O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; 23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. 25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.”

brings into play the idea that the hubris of the mighty will not go unpunished, that rulers who kill, exalt, and humiliate whom they want will be called to account for it. Recife, Pernambuco, and Brazil are all waiting for this hope to be honored. It is left open who will punish the murderers and torturers. Lispector's text on the port city of Recife with its biblical allusion, however, does not seem to be hoping for legal punishment for the rulers. Thus, the reference to the Hebrew Bible, and the tradition associated with it, receives a central function that is not only valid for one single religious affiliation. It turns into a counter-discourse without resolving doubt whether justice will be served.

### Poetic Justice in a Narrative of Resistance

In 1977 – in the year of her passing – Clarice Lispector's last novel *A hora da estrela* was published. The narrator here is not a female voice, but a writer named Rodrigo.<sup>21</sup> However, the text ostentatiously stages uncertainties with regard to author and narrator. First, the author's dedication is accompanied by the addition in brackets “em verdade de Clarice Lispector,” (“in reality by Clarice Lispector”). Moreover, the author's name is included as an autograph, like a signature, in a poem-like text at the beginning of the novel. The narrator observes a young woman from the poorest of circumstances being hit by a Mercedes limousine and dying. None of the bystanders, not even the narrator, assists the young woman. By telling the story of her life and death, so the narrator declares, he attempts to free himself from the guilt of watching idly. The name of the woman is Macabéa. In his imagination, she came from the poor northeast of Brazil to Rio de Janeiro to start a new life. That is the plot of the novel. However, the meaning of *A hora da estrela* lies not only in the story of Macabéa, but also in the representation of her fate in the narrative discourse. In this novel, the autological power of language demonstrates how metafictional writing can not only generate realities and anchor them in a specific system of reflection, but also how autonomy and critical impulse can come together in the literary text.<sup>22</sup>

- 21 Cynthia A. Sloan has analyzed the consequences of this narrative voice in idem, *The Social and Textual Implications of the Creation of a Male Narrating Subject in Clarice Lispector's "A Hora da Estrela,"* in: *Luso-Brazilian Review* 38 (2001), no. 1, 89–102. See also Kara McBride, *No Caso a Outra [In the Case of the Other]. A Look at the Role of the Male Narrator in Clarice Lispector's "A Hora da Estrela,"* in: *RLA. Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1997), 609–612.
- 22 Concerning its intertextuality, Claire Williams has underlined the importance of language in this novel. See idem, *Macabéa in Wonderland. Linguistic Adventures in Clarice Lispector's "A Hora da Estrela,"* in: *Ellipsis. Journal of the American Portuguese Studies Association* 3

The following excerpt shows how the perspective of the male narrator is arranged according to his own attempt to imagine himself inside the world of a poor woman:

“It is true that I, too, feel no pity for my main character, the girl from the North-east: I want my story to be cold and impartial. Unlike the reader, I reserve the right to be devastatingly cold, for this is not simply a narrative, but above all primary life that breathes, breathes, breathes. [...] Made of porous material, I shall one day assume the form of a molecule with its potential explosion of atoms. What I am writing is something more than mere invention; it is my duty to relate everything about this girl among thousands of others like her. It is my duty, however unrewarding, to confront her with her own existence. For one has a right to shout. So, I am shouting. A simple shout that begs no charity. I know that there are girls who sell their bodies, their only real possession, in exchange for a good dinner rather than the usual mortadella sandwich. But the person whom I am about to describe scarcely has a body to sell; nobody desires her, she is a harmless virgin whom nobody needs. It strikes me that I do not need her either and that what I am writing could be written by another. Another writer, of course, but it would have to be a man for a woman would weep her heart out.”<sup>23</sup>

The ironic last sentence targets stories that take it all too lightly when it comes to describing a deplorable fate. However, the passage has even more to it. The novel not only consciously combines a modernist reflection of aesthetic representation with questions of social content and class struggle,<sup>24</sup> but makes this connection the object of literary contemplation by combining questions of authorship and gender. At the same time, this section also contains a striking problematization of Flaubert’s principle of *impassibilité*, which he explored in *Madame Bovary* and eventually carried to a new level

(2005), 21–38. See also Anna M. Klobucka, In Different Voices. Gender and Dialogue in Clarice Lispector’s Metafiction, in: Cláudia Pazos Alonso/Glória Fernandes (eds.), Women, Literature and Culture in the Portuguese-Speaking World, Lewiston, N. Y., 1996, 155–172.

- 23 For this translation, see Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, transl. by Giovanni Pontiero, Manchester 1992, 13. For the Portuguese original, see Clarice Lispector, *A hora da estrela*, Rio de Janeiro 1999, 13 f.: “Bem, é verdade que também eu não tenho piedade do meu personagem principal, a nordestina: é um relato que desejo frio. Mas tenho o direito de ser dolorosamente frio, e não vós. Por tudo isto é que não vos dou a vez. Não se trata apenas de narrativa, é antes de tudo vida primária que respira, respira, respira. [...] E dever meu, nem que seja de pouca arte, o de revelar-lhe a vida. Porque há o direito ao grito. Então eu grito. Grito puro e sem pedir esmola. Sei que há moças que vendem o corpo, única posse real, em troca de um bom jantar em vez de um sanduíche de mortadela. Mas a pessoa de quem falarei mal tem corpo para vender, ninguém a quer, ela é virgem e inócua, não faz falta a ninguém. Aliás – descobri eu agora – eu também não faço a menor falta, e até o que escrevo um outro escreveria. Um outro escritor, sim, mas teria que ser homem porque escritora mulher pode lacrimejar piegas.”
- 24 In this context, see Valdemar Valente Junior, “A Hora da Estrela.” Narrativa e crise social [“A Hora da Estrela.” Narrative and Social Crisis], in: *e-escrita* 9 (2018), no. 3, 70–79.

in the novel *L'éducation sentimentale*.<sup>25</sup> Rodrigo tries to narrate “like Flaubert,” detached from all empathy with his protagonist, and then realizes that this attitude simply does not suit certain situations. This can be read as a problematization of the tension between the tradition of European realism and a Brazilian reality.<sup>26</sup> It is an ironic approach in the sense of literary reflection. Lispector’s novel represents the relationship of the text to its object and to itself. The novel establishes a level of reflection that makes its devices evident. We can find all this in numerous novels, from *Don Quijote* to modernism and postmodernism.

However, in this case, we witness how precisely these techniques serve as a mode to address the question of an appropriate representation of precarious existence. This novel asks how processes of artistic self-reference relate to their subject. These devices of literary modernism are subject to a critique in a literary and artistic way, not in order to abandon them, but to preserve their innate humane substance.<sup>27</sup>

The novel can be understood as a continuously renewed attempt to explore the meaning of writing, text, and language for the individual. This is why this text has become so prominent. It is possible to illustrate, by means of this novel, certain insights of narrative or intersectional theory; one can connect with a central moment of aesthetic theory by reading and discussing the novel, and one can address the connection between ethics and aesthetics.

The aesthetic experience of literary texts is shaped by the individual viewpoint, which at the same time always claims validity beyond the purely individual. The Brazilian literary scholar Afrânio Coutinho (1911–2000) once described this as follows:

- 25 Jed Deppman, *History with Style. The Impassible Writing of Flaubert*, in: *Reading Style, Reading Fiction* 30 (1996), no. 1, 28–49. See also the study by Marianne Bonwit, *Gustave Flaubert et le principe d'impassibilité* [Gustave Flaubert and the Principle of Impassibility], Berkeley/Los Angeles, Calif., 1950.
- 26 See also the article by Cinthya Torres, *On Poverty and the Representation of the Other in “The Hour of the Star” by Clarice Lispector*, in: *Inti. Revista de Literatura Hispánica* [Journal for Hispanic Literature] 85–86 (2017), 193–203.
- 27 See also Adriana Santos Corrêa, “A Hora da Estrela,” de Clarice Lispector e “Écrire,” de Marguerite Duras. *Reinvenções do ato de escrever ou traduções da subjetividade* [Clarice Lispector’s “A Hora da Estrela” and Marguerite Duras’ “Écrire.” Reinventions of the Writing Act or Translations of Subjectivity], in: *Graphos. Revista da pós-graduação em letras* [Journal for Postgraduate Studies in Language and Literature] 13 (2011), no. 2, n. p.; Rodrigo Molon de Sousa, *No reino dilacerante da vida. Notas sobre um sujeito clariciano* [In the Poignant Realm of Life. Notes on a Claritian Subject], in: *e-escrita* 3 (2012), no. 2b, 166–176; María Inés Lagos, *Sujeto y representación. Viaje al mundo del otro en narraciones de Julio Cortázar, Luisa Valenzuela y Clarice Lispector* [Subject and Representation. A Journey to the World of the Other in the Stories of Julio Cortázar, Luisa Valenzuela, and Clarice Lispector], in: *Letras Femeninas* [Female Writings] 27 (2001), no. 1, 68–82.



“Literature is life, a part of life [...]. While we are reading literary texts, we establish contact with life, with its eternal truths, which apply to all people in all places, because they represent the truths of the human condition. [...] We are dealing here with the genuine, fundamental questions of humanity, which literary texts translate with feelings of experience, with an understanding and judgement of human affairs, in order to explore the meaning of life [...].”<sup>28</sup>

This “establishment of contact” occurs in artistic forms that connect the respective text with the history from which these forms have emerged. The fact that literary texts do not have to have a practical purpose is not a deficiency but an asset. Obviously, literary texts can be related to real contexts; but they are removed from them and therefore always more or less ambiguous as to the dimension of meaning. Moreover, they do not present arguments, they narrate, and it is the readers who generate meaning from what is being narrated. This makes the object of literary studies so challenging to grasp. Precisely because of their ambiguity and their manifold interpretability, texts by a particular author with a particular cultural or religious belonging can be read by readers of completely different cultural horizons. Literature is a domain where cultural and class borders can become permeable. This is a potential that is not always actualized, there are also texts that consolidate and delimit boundaries, but the potential is at least present through the peculiarity of the object of our research, the literary artwork.

In Lispector’s novel *A hora da estrela*, this feature is displayed on every semantic level and is constantly addressed in the mode of representation. The novel is about the fate of a precarious life and, at the same time, the dignity of artistic writing in general. The significance of literary creation is constantly explored. The male narrator’s discourse, which is ironically fractured, allows for a glimpse of the author’s opinion. Using these techniques, the novel also subverts hierarchically ordered oppositions and gender differences.<sup>29</sup> When the narrative form critically questions the text’s ability to determine whether becoming a subject can only ever take place at the expense of the Other, further models of intersubjectivity and subject constitution are also brought into

28 Transl. by the author. For the Portuguese original, see Afrânio Coutinho, *Notas de teoria literária* [Notes on Literary Theory], Rio de Janeiro 1978, 10: “A Literatura é, assim, a vida, parte da vida [...]. Através das obras literárias, tomamos contato com a vida, nas suas verdades eternas, comuns a todos os homens e lugares, porque são as verdades da mesma condição humana. [...] São as verdades humanas, gerais, que traduzem antes um sentimento de experiência, uma compreensão e um julgamento das coisas humanas, um sentido da vida, e que fornecem um retrato vivo e insinuante da vida [...].”

29 See for this aspect also Luciano Taveira de Azevedo, *Uma análise das relações de gênero na obra “A Hora da Estrela” de Clarice Lispector* [An Analysis of Gender Relations in Clarice Lispector’s “A Hora da Estrela”], in: *Revista Letra Magna* 4 (2008), no. 8, 1–11.

play: a mutual recognition of different individuals and an acknowledgment of the Other as the Other.<sup>30</sup>

The novel *A hora da estrela* was written in the mid-1970s, in a time when many Brazilian intellectuals had left the country. The years 1969 to 1974 were marked by particularly repressive measures against opposition members and a brutal anti-guerilla campaign. During this period, the already destitute rural population became dramatically pauperized. In 1974, General Ernesto Beckmann Geisel (1908–1996), chief executive of the state oil company, was elected president of Brazil. The Brazilian economy began to boom due to a combination of domestic restrictive measures suggesting relative political stability and targeted industrial promotion, including international investment. However, the growth was for the benefit of the established oligarchies, not the broad masses, who are forced to live in poverty to this day.

In such precarious times, art is not a luxury. It is either part of the codes, symbols, or signs of the ruling system – or it is not. Lispector's novel makes the peculiarity of the autonomy of an abstract, avantgarde aesthetic evident – by comparing it to art explicitly linked to political movements. In times in which the official discourse is euphorically oriented towards economic progress, the novel *A hora da estrela* depicts the existential experience of a completely impoverished young woman that is determined by violence, indifference, and famine, but it does so in a way that censorship could hardly expose or change. Therefore, the novel is also an example of what aesthetic resistance can actually mean. It is not a mere play on forms and narrative experiments and is not at all detached from social commitment. The effect, however, does not arise from a direct reference to political and social events, but from aesthetic objections to political discourse.

In Clarice Lispector's writing, artistic autonomy and the grasping of the self are connected in such a manner that the literary text becomes an authentic medium of self-reflection. The tense field of existential religious – or religiously interpretable – experience and aesthetic experience of words already familiar to us from the reading of Lispector's debut *Perto do coração selvagem* can also be traced in the novel *A hora da estrela*:

“So long as I have questions to which there are no answers, I shall go on writing. How does one start at the beginning, if things happen before they actually happen? If before the pre-prehistory there already existed apocalyptic monsters? If this history does not exist, it will come to exist. To think is an act. To feel is a fact. Put the two together – it

30 See also Nelson H. Vieira, *Beyond Identity. Clarice Lispector and the Ethical Transcendence of Being for the Other*, in: Amalia Ran/Jean Axelrad Cahan (eds.), *Returning to Babel. Jewish Latin American Experiences, Representations, and Identity*, Leiden 2011, 179–194.

is me who is writing what I am writing. God is the world. The truth is always some inner power without explanation. The more genuine part of my life is unrecognizable, extremely intimate and impossible to define.”<sup>31</sup>

The fact that the narrator of the novel presents himself as unreliable is quite different from the attitude we encounter in the novels of literary realism, for instance. Lispector’s novel can also be understood as a critical reflection of a literary model that, in its processes of self-transparency, is committed to an idea of stable identity which, from the author’s point of view, has no validity.<sup>32</sup> In its place, Lispector shapes various, in part contradictory representations of the individual. She did not accidentally explore these literary techniques during the lethal years of the Brazilian military government. If the content of literary texts is not realizable, it is the impetus to continuously advance and improve the examination of the form of representation, because in this way texts remind us of what is not possible and of the demand that it must be made possible. The challenge of literature consists in this dissonant impenetrability, and through this momentum the critical dimension of a literary text unfolds. Clarice Lispector’s writing is never a withdrawal into art, but an appreciation of the fullness of life of the individual moment through the quest for artistic expression.

### Post-Essentialist Belonging

A last brief text by Clarice Lispector will allow associating these questions with the notion of belonging. The verb “pertencer” is the title of the following short essay published in the *Jornal do Brasil* on 15 June 1968:

“I am sure that even in my cradle it was my foremost will to belong. For reasons that do not matter here, I must have felt in a certain way that I belonged to nothing and nobody. I was just born that way. Since I experienced this human hunger for belonging back in

- 31 For this translation, see Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, transl. by Giovanni Pontiero, 11. For the Portuguese original, see Lispector, *A hora da estrela*, 11: “Enquanto eu tiver perguntas e não houver resposta continuarei a escrever. Como começar pelo início, se as coisas acontecem antes de acontecer? Se antes da pré-pré-história já havia os monstros apocalípticos? Se esta história não existe, passará a existir. Pensar é um ato. Sentir é um fato. Os dois juntos – sou eu que escrevo o que estou escrevendo. Deus é o mundo. A verdade é sempre um contato interior e inexplicável. A minha vida mais verdadeira é irreconhecível, extremamente interior e não tem uma só palavra que a signifique.”
- 32 See also Maria das Graças Fonseca Andrade, *Um autor para sustentar “A Hora da Estrela,”* de Clarice Lispector [An Author to Support “A Hora da Estrela” by Clarice Lispector], in: *Espéculo. Revista de Estudios Literarios* [Speculum. Journal for Literary Studies] 51 (2013), 142–154.

my cradle, it has accompanied me through life as if it were fate. [...] If my oldest wish is to belong, why have I never belonged to any association? Because I do not see this as belonging. What I wanted and can never do is, for example, to pass on everything good that comes out of me to the one to which I belonged. [...] Belonging does not just come from being weak and having to join something or someone stronger. Often the intense will comes from my own capabilities – I want to belong so that my resources are not useless and can strengthen a person or thing. Nevertheless, one thing pleases me: I belong to my country, for example, and, like millions of other people, I am so close to being Brazilian. And I, who in all sincerity never wanted to be famous – I am far too individualistic to be able to withstand the invasions into the private life of a public person – I, who do not want popularity, am nevertheless happy to belong to Brazilian literature. [...] I can almost see myself in the cradle, I can almost reproduce in myself the vague yet urgent feeling of belonging. [...] From time to time life has led me to remember again and again the measure of what I am losing, because I do not belong to it. And so, I learned: to belong is to live.”<sup>33</sup>

The argument developed in this text can almost be characterized as a negative dialectic of belonging, questioning the interrelations and contradictions

- 33 Transl. by the autor. For the Portuguese original, see Clarice Lispector, *Pertencer [To Belong]*, in: *Jornal do Brasil [Newspaper of Brazil]*, 15 June 1968, reprinted in: Clarice Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo. Crônicas [The Discovery of the World. Chronicles]*, Rio de Janeiro 1999, 151–153: “Tenho certeza de que no berço a minha primeira vontade foi a de pertencer. Por motivos que aqui não importam, eu de algum modo devia estar sentindo que não pertencia a nada e a ninguém. Nasci de graça. Se no berço experimentei esta fome humana, ela continua a me acompanhar pela vida afora, como se fosse um destino. [...] Se meu desejo mais antigo é o de pertencer, por que então nunca fiz parte de clubes ou de associações? Porque não é isso o que eu chamo de pertencer. O que eu queria, e não posso, é por exemplo que tudo o que me viesse de bom de dentro de mim eu pudesse dar àquilo que eu pertencesse. [...] Pertencer não vem apenas de ser fraca e precisar unir-se a algo ou a alguém mais forte. Muitas vezes a vontade intensa de pertencer vem em mim de minha própria força – eu quero pertencer para que minha força não seja inútil e fortifique uma pessoa ou uma coisa. Embora eu tenha uma alegria: pertenço, por exemplo, a meu país, e como milhões de outras pessoas sou a ele tão pertencente a ponto de ser brasileira. E eu que, muito sinceramente, jamais desejei ou desejaria a popularidade – sou individualista demais para que eu pudesse suportar a invasão de que uma pessoa popular é vítima –, eu, que não quero a popularidade, sinto-me no entanto feliz de pertencer à literatura brasileira. [...] Quase consigo me visualizar no berço, quase consigo reproduzir em mim a vaga e no entanto premente sensação de precisar pertencer. [...] A vida me fez de vez em quando pertencer, como se fosse para me dar a medida do que eu perco não pertencendo. E então eu soube: pertencer é viver.” With regard to Clarice Lispector’s literary journalism, see Mariela Méndez, *De crepusculares y garotas modernas. Las columnas travestidas de Alfonsina Storni y Clarice Lispector [On Twilights and Modern Girls. The Masked Journalistic Texts of Alfonsina Storni and Clarice Lispector]*, in: *Revista Iberoamericana [Iberoamerican Journal]* 84 (2018), no. 264, 637–654; Catarina von Wedemeyer, *Pertencimento estético. Colunas de jornal de Clarice Lispector [Aesthetic Belonging. Clarice Lispector’s Newspaper Columns]*, in: *Cadernos de Língua e Literatura Hebraica [Journal for Hebrew Language and Literature]* 1 (2015), no. 12, n. p.; Edma Cristina de Góis, *O dever da faceirice. Corpo e feminidade no colonismo e na ficção de Clarice Lispector [The Duty of Diversity. Body and Femininity in the Journalistic Texts and the Fiction of Clarice Lispector]*, in: *Revista Cerrados* 16 (2007), no. 24, 61–72.

between the concept and the perceived experience of its objects, and raising the doubt of ever being able to fully belong. Brazil is portrayed as a country in which everyone yearns to become Brazilian. It is exactly in this longing in which “belonging” lies, not in a condition, an essence, or a passport. A definite belonging is not even represented as necessary, since this would mean a reduction of the human being to a state of quantitative equivalence, in which their particular qualities are lost or at least not considered important. What is striking is that this text also connects the nostalgia for belonging to literature.

Identities are not essential and fixed – they are the effects of process and performance, which always only become meaningful within a differential structure. It is necessary to denote the remainders of biologist thought that have been preserved in some discourses of “identity” in order to open a different way of thinking about belonging. The oeuvre of Clarice Lispector undoubtedly belongs to the canon of world literature of the twentieth century and, at the same time, to the canon of secular Jewish literatures, precisely because it defies essentialist categorizations. This also applies to binary ideas of Europe on the one hand and Latin America on the other. In dissolving rigid concepts of identity – of religious, cultural, but also of gender identity – Lispector’s texts offer a differentiated notion of belonging that is relevant to fundamental questions of literary and historical studies. Anti-essentialism is an important and political attribute of critical-emancipative theory and practice. It is important to apply these insights to literary contexts as well. Lispector’s works open up a space of knowledge that allows to grasp aesthetically what it means to experience belonging as a process, even beyond theoretical reflections.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized how closely Clarice Lispector’s oeuvre is intertwined with that of numerous other works of Latin American Jewish literature. Ilan Stavans’ essay mentioned at the beginning of this article has demonstrated this. Although Lispector’s writing is repeatedly labeled as that of a solitaire, procedures of reflecting on Latin American Jewish historical experience in literary form and techniques can also be found in other oeuvres and in different genres. They, too, are concerned with ways of making the complex tension between particular and collective historical experience, between Europe and Latin America, aesthetically perceptible. These issues are dealt with less at the level of content than in literary form and poetic procedures. Three examples out of many can be mentioned. It is no coincidence that these examples transcend the genre boundaries to lyric poetry, for the speaker constitution of Lispector’s narrative texts is similar to that of lyrical texts. The first examples are the lyrical works of the Argentine writer Alejandra Pizarnik (1936–1972) that deal with doubts about the possibilities of language as they have already been formulated by Nietzsche or Hugo

von Hofmannsthal and then deepened in the discussions of the avantgarde. Pizarnik's skepticism concerning language also marks the damage that history has inflicted on it. In her poetry, Pizarnik ties in with experimental procedures in order to trace the condensations of history in the individual concept, in the individual word.

The Argentinean poet Juan Gelman (1930–2014) and the Cuban poet José Kozer (b. 1940) share this skeptical approach to language, but their devices of confronting these doubts are different. In Juan Gelman's collection of poems *Composiciones* from 1986, for instance, the word is reflected as a transmitter of both image and imagination in dialogue with traditional poems of Spanish-Hebrew poetry. Juan Gelman wrote these texts in exile and in a programmatic preface he depicted the title *Composiciones* as an indication of his technique – these texts are more than translations, they also contain something of himself, they combine different historical contexts into something new that can find its expression in the Spanish language.

In José Kozer's poems, words can take on multiple orientations; they are directed both to the subject of speech and to the other. These various voices in Kozer's poems are connected in dialogue. In his poetic texts, the single word has no claim to absoluteness and can no longer insist on a canonized truth. The multi-perspectivism in his poems distances the words from themselves, thus indicating the lesions of history.

These three approaches – the conceptual poetics of Pizarnik, the interweaving poetics of Gelman, and the polyphonic poetics of José Kozer – also express a deeply anti-essentialist historical reflection in which Jewish historical experience is represented in Latin America. As Clarice Lispector, they pose the question of the relationship between historical experience and the possibilities of creating a literary language adapted to this reality, thus expressing an existential search for meaning and a philosophical understanding of history.

Liliana Ruth Feierstein

»Ruht er im Dunkeln der Gezeiten ...«:  
Tod und Begräbnis im Spannungsfeld konkurrierender  
Gesetze in Lateinamerika

In memoriam Alberto Dines z"l.

*Wir haben zwei Bilder vor uns: Eines zeigt das gelassene Gesicht eines alten, in geistlicher Tracht gekleideten Mannes ... Der Text neben dem Porträt stellt klar, dass es sich um Isaak Aboab, 1605–1693, handelt, den ersten Rabbiner Amerikas. Pernambuco, Brasil 1642–1648. Auf dem zweiten Bild sehen wir einen Trauerzug unzähliger Männer und Frauen. Sichtbar bewegt, begleiten sie die zwei Särge. Die Bildunterschrift besagt: »Mehr als viertausend Menschen begleiten zu Fuß die Särge des Paares Stefan Zweig.« Die beiden Bilder decken die Geschichte der Juden in Brasilien ab.*

Rabbiner Heinrich Lemle, *O drama judaico*<sup>1</sup>

Zwei Darstellungen, zwei Beschreibungen, zwei Rabbiner. Dazwischen 300 Jahre. Gegen Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges veröffentlichte Heinrich (Henrique) Lemle (1909–1978) 1944 im lateinamerikanischen Exil ein kleines Buch mit dem Titel *O drama judaico* (Das jüdische Drama). Im Epilog erklärt der Autor, dass er diesen Rahmen, in dem ein holländisch-sephardischer Rabbiner und ein österreichisch-jüdischer Schriftsteller ins Gespräch kommen, als Symbol für die jüdische Geschichte in Brasilien wählte.

Als erster Rabbiner auf amerikanischem Boden kam Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (1605–1693) 1642 von Amsterdam ins damals holländische Recife und wirkte in der ersten Synagoge des gesamten Kontinents, Kahal Zur Jisra'el.<sup>2</sup> Mag die religiöse Freiheit auch nicht lange bestanden haben, so gelangte dennoch mit Aboab das Judentum über den Atlantik.

- 1 Heinrich Lemle, *O drama judaico* [Das jüdische Drama], Rio de Janeiro 1944 (Übersetzung hier und nachfolgend, wenn nicht anders vermerkt, von der Verfasserin). Zu Heinrich Lemle siehe Em Memoria do grão-rabino Dr. Henrique Lemle z. l. [In Erinnerung an Großrabbiner Dr. Henrique Lemle seligen Angedenkens], hg. von der Associação Religiosa Israelita do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro 1978. Das Zitat im Titel (»Ruht er ...«) ist entnommen Stefan Zweig, *Der begrabene Leuchter*, Frankfurt a. M. 1992, 62.
- 2 Aboab da Fonseca war später einer der Gelehrten, die den Bann gegen Baruch Spinoza aussprachen.

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Drei Jahrhunderte später ging Heinrich Lemle nach Brasilien und auch er gründete eine Synagoge, die Associação Religiosa Israelita in Rio de Janeiro, und beerdigte kurz darauf den berühmtesten Exilierten Lateinamerikas, Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), sowie dessen Frau Lotte (1908–1942). Mit einem Bild des Abschieds der Brasilianer von Zweig schließt er sein Büchlein ab.

Am Beispiel von Tod und Bestattungskulturen möchte dieser Aufsatz die Spannung zwischen jüdischem und staatlichem Recht in Brasilien (und Argentinien) in den Blick nehmen. Verkörpert durch einen Rabbiner, erreicht das jüdische Gesetz mit Aboab de Fonseca Amerika und *verortet* sich dort schließlich mit der Gründung eines Friedhofs. Dreihundert Jahre später ist die Beziehung zwischen den konkurrierenden Gesetzen von Emigration, Exilerfahrung, Säkularisierung, Demokratie und Diktatur geprägt – dabei gehören Friedhöfe nicht zufällig zu den Hauptschauplätzen dieser Dispute.

### Wem gehören die Toten?

»Ich grüße alle meine Freunde! Mögen sie die Morgenröte noch sehen nach der langen Nacht! Ich, allzu Ungeduldiger, gehe ihnen voraus!« So lauten die vermutlich letzten Sätze, die Stefan Zweig niedergeschrieben hat. Jedenfalls sind es die letzten Zeilen des Abschiedsbriefes, der *Declaração* (Erklärung), die er im Februar 1942 in seinem Haus in Petrópolis verfasste und der Nachwelt hinterließ. Der Anfang des Briefes richtete sich an das Gastland:

»Ehe ich aus freiem Willen und mit klaren Sinnen aus dem Leben scheidet, drängt es mich eine letzte Pflicht zu erfüllen: diesem wundervollen Lande Brasilien innig zu danken, das mir und meiner Arbeit so gute und gastliche Rast gegeben. Mit jedem Tage habe ich dies Land mehr lieben gelernt und nirgends hätte ich mir mein Leben lieber vom Grunde aus neu aufgebaut, nachdem die Welt meiner eigenen Sprache für mich untergegangen ist und meine geistige Heimat Europa *sich selber vernichtet*.«<sup>3</sup>

Der Freitod von Stefan Zweig und seiner Frau Lotte Altmann ist bekannt, wie auch die Fotos vom Begräbnis, die damals zirkulierten (Abb. 1). Darauf sind Rabbiner Lemle und Kantor Israel Fleischmann zu erkennen, die die Zeremonie leiteten. Der Überlieferung nach las Lemle eine Passage aus Zweigs Theaterstück *Jeremias* vor, während die osteuropäischen jüdischen Freunde

3 Stefan Zweig, *Declaração* [Erklärung], 22. Februar 1942, zit. nach Alberto Dines, *Tod im Paradies. Die Tragödie des Stefan Zweig*, überarb. und erw. Fassung, übers. aus dem Portugiesischen von Marlen Eckl, Frankfurt a. M./Zürich/Wien 2006, 618 (Hervorhebung der Verfasserin).



ein leises Unbehagen verspürten. Eine auf Jiddisch geflüsterte ironische Bemerkung machte die Runde: »Di galokhim zaynen shoy'n gekumen!«<sup>4</sup>



**Abb. 1:** Rabbiner Heinrich (Henrique) Lemle (links) und Kantor Israel Fleischmann (rechts) während der Begräbniszeremonie von Stefan Zweig und seiner Ehefrau Lotte Altmann auf dem öffentlichen Friedhof von Petrópolis. © Nachlass Rabbiner Dr. Henrique Lemle, HH Heritage & History AG, Zürich/Foto: Mariano Coelho.

4 Galokhim heißt auf Jiddisch. »Priester«. Die Ironie basiert darauf, dass die reformierten Rabbiner und Kantoren Talare trugen wie die evangelischen Pastoren. Das Zitat stammt von dem Journalisten Aron Neumann, zit. nach ebd., 616.

Weniger bekannt hingegen ist, was dieser Vorfall auf verschiedenen Ebenen in Brasilien auslöste. Die Brasilianer waren erschüttert und trauerten um einen ihrer Lieblingsschriftsteller, dem sie Asyl gewährt hatten.<sup>5</sup> Zweigs Suizid rief aber auch einen gewaltigen Konflikt mit und innerhalb der jüdischen Gemeinschaft hervor. Es handelte sich um ein Problem, bei dem zwei Gesetzesstrukturen, mehr noch, zwei Quellen der Autorität und Legitimität aufeinandertrafen.<sup>6</sup> Im Mittelpunkt stand die Bestattung der Toten: Sollten sie nach religiösen Vorschriften begraben werden oder nach den Gesetzen des Landes?

Der Tod ist der radikalste Moment des Lebens. Es kann daher nicht verwundern, dass gerade Religionen, auch die jüdische, dieses Ereignis stark ritualisieren. Ein säkularer Staat kann sich diesen Zeremonien nicht entziehen, konnotiert sie aber anders.<sup>7</sup> Mit dieser Schwierigkeit war die Haskala von Beginn an konfrontiert. Hiervon zeugt etwa der Briefwechsel von 1772 zwischen Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) und dem Rabbiner Jacob Emden (1697–1776) aus Hamburg über die drei Tage, die nach Landesgesetz vor einer Beerdigung verstreichen mussten, um einen Scheintod sicher abschließen zu können.<sup>8</sup> Da nach jüdischem Recht die Beerdigung innerhalb eines Tages geschehen muss, kam es zum Konflikt zwischen dem jüdischen Gesetz (Halacha), neuen wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen und staatlichem Recht.

- 5 Die Legende besagt, dass die Nachricht von Zweigs Tod den damaligen brasilianischen Präsidenten Getúlio Vargas und seine Anhänger so tief bewegte, dass sie ihre bis dahin eher positive Sicht auf den europäischen Faschismus endgültig revidierten. Zwar erklärte Brasilien schon vorher zögerlich und auf Druck der Vereinigten Staaten den Achsenmächten den Krieg, nach Zweigs Tod entsandte das Land jedoch sogar eine Einheit von mehr als 25 000 Soldaten, die *Força Expedicionária Brasileira*, nach Italien. Auch Mexiko hat nicht nur Zigtausenden Anhängern der spanischen Republik Asyl gewährt, sondern 1944 die *Escuadrón 201*, eine Luftwaffeneinheit, zum Kampf an der Seite der Alliierten auf die Philippinen geschickt.
- 6 Zu jüdischen Perspektiven auf die Spannungen zwischen dem staatlichen und dem religiösen Gesetz siehe Gil Graff, *Separation of Church and State. Dina de-Malkhuta Dina in Jewish Law, 1750–1848*, Tuscaloosa, Ala./Chicago, Ill., 2003; Mark Washofsky, *Halakhah and Political Theory. A Study in Jewish Legal Response to Modernity*, in: *Modern Judaism* 9 (1989), H. 3, 289–310; Elisa Klapheck, *Das religiös-säkulare Spannungsfeld des Judentums*, in: *Machloket/Streitschriften* 1 (2015), 9–48.
- 7 Siehe dazu die klassischen Werke von Émile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse. Le système totémique en Australie* [Grundformen des religiösen Lebens. Das Totemsystem in Australien], Paris 1912, sowie Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites des passage* [Übergangsriten], Paris 1909.
- 8 Der Briefwechsel ist nachzulesen in Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften. Jubiläumsausgabe*, hg. von Alexander Altmann u. a., 35 Bde., Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt 1972 ff., hier Bd. 20,2: *Briefwechsel (1761–1785)*. In deutscher Umschrift und in Übersetzung aus dem Hebräischen, bearbeitet von Reuven Michael u. a., Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt 1994, 221–248. Zu der Konfrontation siehe auch Graff, *Separation of Church and State*, 36.

Brasilien eignet sich zur Konkretisierung dieser bisher eher allgemein dargestellten Auseinandersetzung besonders, denn hier können verschiedene Beschreibungen jüdischer Wirklichkeit beobachtet werden: diejenige der Westjuden und der Wissenschaft des Judentums, die sie nach Lateinamerika brachten, und die der mehrheitlich osteuropäischen Juden, die schon länger in den Gemeinden lebten. Diese Konfrontation hat der Journalist Alberto Dines (1932–2018), dessen Vater Zweigs Begräbnis als Repräsentant der jüdischen Gemeinde Rio de Janeiros beiwohnte, sehr eindrücklich rekonstruiert:<sup>9</sup>

Unter den vielen Menschen, die sich nach der traurigen Nachricht auf den Weg zu Zweigs Haus machten, befand sich eine kleine Gruppe von Männern der *hevra kaddischa* (Bestattungsbruderschaft), die von dem aus Osteuropa stammenden Oberrabbiner Rio de Janeiros Mordechai Tzekinovsky angeführt wurde. Im Vorfeld wurden ausführliche Debatten darüber geführt, wie mit Zweigs Freitod aus jüdischer Perspektive zu verfahren sei.<sup>10</sup> Dines beschreibt das folgendermaßen:

»Trotz der Strenge des jüdischen Gesetzes hinsichtlich der Beerdigung von Selbstmördern [...] spricht sich Rabbiner Tzekinovsky zugunsten einer Überführung der Leichname [...] aus, damit beide bei ihren Glaubensbrüdern bleiben. Als ihresgleichen, ohne Unterschied.

*Adonai natan, adonai lakach*, Der Herr gibt, der Herr nimmt – das Gesetz ist eindeutig, [...] die Beerdigungsbruderschaft ist sehr rigoros [...]. Aber der Rabbiner [...] liefert eine andere Auslegung [...]: [...] »Meine Haltung war wahrscheinlich von der Bewunderung für den Schriftsteller beeinflusst. Seine Worte, seine Werke, vor allem seine *Menorah* [damit bezog er sich auf die Novelle *Der begrabene Leuchter*] haben mich tief beeindruckt. Ich konnte mich nicht mit der Vorstellung abfinden, dass dieser Mann ganz zurückgewiesen und seine Seele für immer aus seinem Volk verbannt sein würde.«<sup>11</sup>

Um also die Übergabe der Leichname der Zweigs zu erwirken, begab sich eine Delegation der jüdischen Gemeinde mit entsprechendem Auftrag nach Petrópolis. Der Bürgermeister jedoch argumentierte, dass Stefan Zweig ein detailliertes Testament hinterlassen habe »[...] und dennoch hat er nichts davon gesagt, dass er auf einem jüdischen Friedhof beerdigt zu werden wünscht«.<sup>12</sup> Rabbiner Tzekinovsky erwiderte:

9 Siehe Dines, *Tod im Paradies*.

10 Sich das Leben zu nehmen, ist dem jüdischen Gesetz nach untersagt. Zwar werden auch Selbstmörder auf dem jüdischen Friedhof bestattet, jedoch gibt es für sie einen gesonderten Bereich, für gewöhnlich am Rand des Friedhofs.

11 Dines, *Tod im Paradies*, 612 (Hervorhebungen im Original).

12 Ebd., 613.

»Wir antworteten: ›Gab es im Testament eine Erwähnung bezüglich seines Wunsches, auf einem nichtjüdischen Friedhof begraben zu werden? [...] Wir sind der Auffassung, dass eine Person nicht erwähnen muss, was unanzweifelbar ist: Er wusste, [...] dass er inmitten seines Volkes beerdigt werden würde, auf einem jüdischen Friedhof, und folglich brauchte er dieses Thema nicht in seinem Testament anzusprechen. [...] Es ist eine menschliche Pflicht, dem Toten seine Ruhe im Schoß der Seinen, des Volkes, in das er hineingeboren wurde, zu gestatten.«<sup>13</sup>

In welchem Namen benutzt der Rabbiner hier das Personalpronomen »wir«? Wer antwortet? Meint er »Wir Juden«? Oder eher »Wir, die jüdische Gemeinde« als kulturelles Kollektiv mit ausgeprägtem religiösen und kulturellen Selbstverständnis, eine Minderheit inmitten der brasilianischen Mehrheitsgesellschaft? Der eigene Standpunkt musste gerade hinsichtlich der Begräbnisrituale mit den Behörden verhandelt werden. Deshalb brachte Tzekinovskij gegenüber dem Bürgermeister auch halachische Argumente vor: »>[Wir] ersuchen [...] Sie, die Tatsache zu berücksichtigen, dass der Friedhof seines Volkes und seiner Religion Priorität haben muss.«<sup>14</sup>

Als Vertreter der Stadt reagierte der Bürgermeister irritiert: Wenn die jüdische Gemeinde darauf beharre, beide Leichname mitzunehmen, könne er dem nichts entgegensetzen. Er befürchte jedoch, dass die Bewohner von Petrópolis »sehr enttäuscht« sein und »große Entrüstung und großen Zorn« erwidern würden.<sup>15</sup> Für die *hevra kaddischa* war das »[n]icht mehr, nicht weniger: Eine offene Drohung gegen die Juden«.<sup>16</sup> Die jüdische Gemeinde gab zunächst nicht nach. Ihr Vorsitzender, der polnische Schneider Henrique Nussenbaum, schaffte es sogar, persönlich bei Präsident Getúlio Vargas (1882–1954) in dessen Urlaubsresidenz vorzusprechen. Dines gibt das Gespräch folgendermaßen wieder: »›Herr Präsident, er gehört *uns* ...‹«. Vargas antwortete schlicht: »›Es sind die Einwohner von Petrópolis, die ihn hier haben möchten‹.«<sup>17</sup> Es war nichts mehr zu machen. »›Tief betrübt und verzweifelt zogen wir uns zurück. Später erfuhren wir, dass jemand nach Petrópolis gefahren war, um einen [jüdischen] ›Gottesdienst‹ auf dem städtischen Friedhof von Petrópolis abzuhalten. Wir missbilligten dies‹«, erzählte Tzekinovskij.<sup>18</sup>

13 Ebd., 613 f. (Hervorhebung der Verfasserin). Die Aussagen von Rabbiner Tzekinovskij zitiert Dines aus einem Brief an ihn im Jahr 1980.

14 Ebd., 614.

15 Ebd.

16 Ebd.

17 Ebd., 616 f.

18 Ebd., 614 (Hervorhebung der Verfasserin). Später wurde festgestellt, dass Zweig selbst gewünscht hatte, »›auf dem Friedhof von Rio de Janeiro in bescheidenster und diskretester Form bestattet [zu] werden‹« (so laut einer Anweisung an seinen Verleger Abraham Koogan vom 18. Februar 1942). Zit. nach Dines, *Tod im Paradies*, 615.

Mehrere Tausend Menschen folgten dem Trauerzug; es war ein Meer aus Blumen. Zuvor hatten die Brasilianer die Särge zur Totenwache in die Academia de Letras gebracht. Nussenbaum stellte minimale Forderungen, damit auch dort der jüdische Ritus gewahrt werde: »Blumen und Kränze sollen in einem anderen Saal abgelegt werden und die Särge geschlossen bleiben«. <sup>19</sup>

Schließlich gab es doch ein jüdisches Begräbnis. Auf dem staatlichen Friedhof vollzogen Rabbiner Lemle und Kantor Fleischmann das Kaddisch. In einem fremden Land. Auf einem fremden Friedhof. Bei Nachbarn.

### Auf fremdem Boden

*Di galokhim zaynen shoyn gekumen.* Heinrich Lemle akzeptierte damit einen Kompromiss, zu dem kein orthodoxer Rabbiner bereit gewesen war: ein jüdisches Bestattungsritual auf fremdem Boden. Fremd nicht nur, weil das Begräbnis auf einem nichtjüdischen Friedhof stattfand, <sup>20</sup> ohne die *tahara*, die rituelle Reinigung der Toten, <sup>21</sup> sondern auch weil Lemle selbst erst 1940 in Brasilien angekommen war.

1909 in Augsburg geboren, hatte er am Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminar in Breslau sowie an der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin studiert und danach – wie viele Rabbinerstudenten damals – an der Universität Würzburg promoviert (mit der Dissertationsschrift *Mendelssohn und die Toleranz auf dem Grunde des Naturrechts und der Naturreligion*; 1932). Er war als Jugendrabbiner in Mannheim und Frankfurt am Main tätig und wurde im Zuge der Novemberpogrome 1938 nach Buchenwald deportiert, kam drei Wochen später jedoch durch die Intervention von Lily Monta-

19 Ebd., 610. Im Judentum werden die Särge traditionell geschlossen gehalten.

20 Zum Problem der Säkularisierung von Friedhöfen und dem kulturellen Umgang mit dem Tod siehe Philippe Aries, *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident du Moyen Age à nos jours* [Essays zur Geschichte des Todes im Westen vom Mittelalter bis heute], Paris 1975, sowie Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead. A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, Princeton, N. J., 2015. Zur Bedeutung des Friedhofs im Judentum siehe Ariel Bar-Levav, *We Are where We Are not. The Cemetery in Jewish Culture*, in: *Jewish Studies* 41 (2002), 15–46.

21 Zu jüdischen Traditionen hinsichtlich Tod und Trauerarbeit siehe Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*, New York 2000, sowie Leonor Slavsky, *La espada encendida. Un estudio sobre la muerte y la identidad étnica en el judaísmo* [Das brennende Schwert. Eine Studie über Tod und ethnische Identität im Judentum], Buenos Aires 1993.

gu<sup>22</sup> wieder frei. Über England floh er, nach einer Internierung auf der Isle of Man, 1940 nach Brasilien. 1951 gründete er das erste Zentrum für Jüdische Studien in Lateinamerika an der Universität Rio de Janeiro.

Die Verknüpfung der verschiedenen Sprachen sowie biblischer und literarischer Texte bildet eine Konstante in der Tradition der Wissenschaft des Judentums, insbesondere bei Rabbinern im lateinamerikanischen Exil, die in ihren wöchentlichen Predigten und Artikeln religiöse mit weltlichen Quellen verwoben. In diesem Fall ging es aber nicht allein um den Freitod von Zweig und seine politischen Auswirkungen – auf globaler Ebene und für Brasilien im Besonderen –, sondern um den österreichisch-jüdischen Autor selbst, genauer um seine eigene Interpretation der jüdischen Quellen.

In seinem Aufsatz *A vida e a morte de S. Zweig à luz da história judaica* (Leben und Tod des S. Zweig im Lichte der jüdischen Geschichte) thematisierte Lemle erneut Zweigs Drama *Jeremias* und bekräftigte: »Gott ist immer mit den Besiegten«. <sup>23</sup> Dabei ging es ihm – ganz in talmudischer Tradition – um eine Interpretation auf verschiedenen Ebenen: Jeremias, das Exil Zweigs und sein Freitod im Zuge der Selbstzerstörung seiner intellektuellen Heimat. Gleichzeitig war es Lemle und anderen Rabbinern in Südamerika – trotz der großen Anerkennung und Bewunderung, die dem Schriftsteller Zweig entgegenbracht wurde – wichtig, das Gebot des (Weiter)lebens zu bekräftigen und so deutlich zu machen, dass Selbstmord kein jüdischer Weg sein dürfe. Dies ist auch vor dem Hintergrund zu sehen, dass Fritz Pinkuss (1905–1994), ab 1936 Rabbiner der jüdischen Gemeinde in São Paulo, in seinen Memoiren von zahlreichen jüdischen Exilierten berichtete, die Zweig auf diese Weise folgen wollten. <sup>24</sup>

1949, einige Jahre nach der Veröffentlichung von *O drama judaico*, erschien ein Machsor (Gebetbuch für die hohen Feiertage) erstmals vollständig auf Portugiesisch. Er beruhte auf der gemeinsamen Übersetzungsarbeit von Lemle und Pinkuss. Auf den Machsor folgte ein Siddur, der in seiner Komposition stark an das *Einheitsgebetbuch* des liberalen Judentums (*tefillot le-kol ha-schana*) angelehnt war, das 1929 federführend vom Frankfurter Rabbiner

22 Lily Montagu (1873–1963), britische Sozialarbeiterin. Geboren und aufgewachsen in einer jüdisch-orthodoxen Familie, wählte sie, beeinflusst von Claude Montefiore, den Weg des liberalen Judentums, für das sie sich in Europa stark engagierte. Nach 1938 setzte sie sich von London aus dafür ein, in Lagern internierte Rabbiner zu befreien und ihnen die Emigration zu ermöglichen. Zur Biografie Montagus siehe Ellen M. Umansky, *Lily Montagu and the Advancement of Liberal Judaism. From Vision to Vocation*, New York 1983.

23 Zweig veröffentlichte *Jeremias* 1917 als Reaktion auf den Ersten Weltkrieg. Die Uraufführung in Zürich war ein großer Erfolg.

24 Fritz Pinkuss, *Lernen, Lehren, Helfen. Sechs Jahrzehnte als Rabbiner auf zwei Kontinenten*, Heidelberg 1990, 65.

Caesar Seligmann (1860–1950) in Breslau herausgegeben worden war.<sup>25</sup> Mit der Unterstützung des im britischen Exil lebenden Seligmann setzte diese zentrale Manifestation des liberalen Judentums so auch sprachlich in den Süden über. Darauf folgten weitere, eher didaktische Werke zur Geschichte und den grundlegenden Konzepten des Judentums, die intern der kulturellen Bildung der Jugend und extern dem Abbau von antisemitischen Klischees in der brasilianischen Gesellschaft dienen sollten.

Diese Publikationen erwiesen sich nicht nur als Meilensteine der Geschichte des liberalen Judentums in Lateinamerika, sondern veranschaulichten darüber hinaus den Kulturtransfer der deutschsprachigen Juden und – obwohl sie in den lateinamerikanischen Gemeinden eine Minderheit bildeten – ihren Einfluss auf das dortige Judentum.

Mit der Gründung des Dachverbandes CENTRA (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der jüdischen Gemeinden und Organisationen zentraleuropäischen Ursprungs in Lateinamerika) in Montevideo gelang es ihnen 1956, mehr als zwanzig zentraleuropäische Kongregationen aus neun verschiedenen Ländern zu versammeln und so die Fortführung der Breslauer Tradition zu gewährleisten. Die Arbeit der CENTRA gipfelte schließlich 1962 in der Konstituierung des Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires – des ersten und einzigen Rabbinerseminars auf dem gesamten Subkontinent. Zwischen den drei verschiedenen Gruppen der deutschsprachigen, osteuropäischen und sephardischen Juden wurde von Rabbiner Marshall Meyer (1930–1993) eine Brücke geschlagen. Meyer, als nordamerikanischer Gelehrter in dieser Frage »neutral«, war als Schüler Abraham Joshua Heschels 1959 nach Buenos Aires gekommen und später ein Protagonist des Widerstands gegen die argentinische Diktatur der 1970er und Anfang der 1980er Jahre. Er war insbesondere bekannt für sein außerordentliches Engagement im Kampf um humane Haftbedingungen der politischen Gefangenen und bei der Suche nach jüdischen *desaparecidos*.<sup>26</sup> Viele Jahre später übernahmen einige jüdische Familien in Argentinien einen für Opfer der Shoah verbreiteten Brauch und

25 Zu dem *tefillot le-kol ha-schana* siehe Annette Böckler, The »Einheitsgebetbuch«. History, Theology, and Post-War Reception of the Last Pre-War German Jewish Prayer Book (Manuskript).

26 *Desaparecidos* sind »Verschwundene«, also von den Militärs Entführte und Ermordete, deren Leichen nie gefunden wurden. Zu Marshall Meyer siehe Diego Rosenberg, Marshall Meyer. El rabino que le vio la cara al diablo [Marshall Meyer. Der Rabbiner, der dem Teufel ins Gesicht sah], Buenos Aires 2010; Mariela Volcovich, Marshall T. Meyer. El hombre, un rabino [Marshall T. Meyer. Der Mann, ein Rabbiner], Buenos Aires 2009; Sebastián Carassai, Violencia política, dictadura militar y memoria. La Argentina de los años setenta y ochenta a partir del Archivo Marshall T. Meyer [Politische Gewalt, Militärdiktatur und Erinnerung. Argentinien in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren, ausgehend vom Archiv Marshall T. Meyer.], in: Estudios Ibero-Americanos [Iberoamerikanische Studien] 43 (2017), H. 2, 380–396.

brachten Tafeln mit den Namen Ermordeter an den Gräbern der Angehörigen an, um so – gleichsam als Asyl – denen einen Gedenkort zu schaffen, die nicht beerdigt werden konnten.<sup>27</sup>

### (Un)heiliger Boden

Auf der Schwelle zwischen Leben und Tod repräsentieren Friedhöfe auch die Spannungen zwischen den verschiedenen Gesetzen – denen des Judentums und denen des Staates. Das betrifft beispielsweise den Ausschluss sogenannter Unreiner (*teme'im*), den abgesonderten Bereich innerhalb eines Friedhofes für Selbstmörder oder die Zeitspanne zwischen Tod und Begräbnis. Die Konflikte zwischen diesen Gesetzen und ihrer Auslegung ist keineswegs bloße Übung, sondern hat(te) bedeutende Auswirkungen auf das politische Leben Lateinamerikas. Das gleichzeitige Bestehen beider Gesetzes- und Denktraditionen, das bereits der jüdische Gelehrte Samuel aus Nehardea (3. Jahrhundert) im Talmud vorschlägt, ermöglicht eine Bereicherung durch gegenseitiges Infragestellen.<sup>28</sup>

»Es spielt keine Rolle. Wo immer ein Jude begraben liegt, wird die Stätte zu heiliger Erde.« [...] Wo er liegt, wird seine Botschaft sein.«<sup>29</sup> Mit dieser Anspielung auf Zweigs Legende *Der begrabene Leuchter* versuchte Rabbiner Tzekinovsky dem Verleger Abraham Koogan (1912–2000),<sup>30</sup> dem jungen Freund Stefan Zweigs, Trost zu spenden. Koogan betrachtete die offizielle

27 Siehe dazu den Film *Kadish* von Bernardo Kononovich (2009) sowie Liliana Ruth Feierstein, Trauer und/oder Melancholie. Religiös-kulturelle Spuren in der Trauerarbeit über politische Gewalt in Argentinien, in: *Jahrbuch Zentrum Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg* 2 (2015), 85–101, und dies., »A Quilt of Memory«. The Shoah as a Prism in the Testimonies of Survivors of the Dictatorship in Argentina, in: *European Review* 22 (2014), H. 4, 585–593.

28 Siehe dazu Elisa Klapheck, Dina de-malchuta dina, in: Liliana Ruth Feierstein/Daniel Weidner (Hgg.), *Diaspora and Law* (im Erscheinen).

29 Dines, *Tod im Paradies*, 615.

30 Abrahão (Abraham) Koogan, 1912 in Bessarabien geboren und 2000 in Rio de Janeiro gestorben, war Buchhändler, einer der engsten Freunde Zweigs in Brasilien und der Verleger seiner Bücher. Koogan war ein Original der lateinamerikanischen Verlagswelt: Vom Schirmverkäufer zum Büchermenschen geworden, spezialisierte er sich vor allem auf medizinische und psychologische Themen und war der erste Verleger der Werke Freuds in Brasilien. Siehe Alberto Dines/Israel Beloch/Kristina Michahelles, *Stefan Zweig und sein Freundeskreis. Sein letztes Adressbuch 1940–1942*, übers. aus dem Portugiesischen von Stephan Krier, Berlin 2016.



staatliche Trauerfeier in Petrópolis als große Inszenierung und war daher entsetzt.<sup>31</sup>

Die Bestattung der Toten, insbesondere der Ort für das Begräbnis, ist in der jüdischen Kultur so bedeutsam, dass die Gründung der Mehrzahl der Gemeinden in der »Neuen Welt« ihren Ursprung in einer Gruppe der *hevra kaddischa* hat. In Buenos Aires, der Metropolregion mit der größten jüdischen Bevölkerung des Subkontinents, bestand die jüdische Gemeinde 1894 noch aus einer kleinen Gruppe, doch im ersten Artikel der Satzung hieß es bereits: »[D]ie Beerdigungen und Einäscherungen [sind] streng nach mosaischem Gesetz und Sitte zu gestalten [...]«, und Artikel 2 legte fest, »dafür, was die Mittel betrifft, im Rahmen der Möglichkeiten bedürftige Glaubensgenossen zu unterstützen.«<sup>32</sup>

Im zweiten großen Zentrum São Paulo begannen die Bemühungen um den Erwerb eines Friedhofsgeländes 1915.<sup>33</sup> Erst 1919 wurde die Erlaubnis erteilt. Die Spannungen mit der Stadtverwaltung waren enorm, da die Forderung der Halacha, dort ausschließlich Juden zu bestatten, den Gesetzen der Republik Brasilien widersprach, die keine unterschiedliche Behandlung brasilianischer Staatsbürger duldeten. Insbesondere stand sie dem Recht aller Bürger entgegen, unabhängig von der Konfession auf einem Friedhof ihrer Wahl beerdigt zu werden – eine Demokratisierung der vormals üblichen Praxis, nichtkatholische Personen auf einem Areal für Abtrünnige zu bestatten. Der Disput drehte sich um die Frage des Laizismus. In der Verfassung von 1891 grenzte sich die brasilianische Republik von der katholischen Kirche ab, unter anderem mit Artikel 72, in dem Begräbnisstätten als säkular und allen Konfessionen offenstehend erklärt werden:

»Die Friedhöfe haben säkular zu sein und werden von der Stadtverwaltung geführt. Alle religiösen Gemeinschaften können dort die ihrem Glauben gemäßen Riten praktizieren, solange diese nicht gegen die öffentliche Moral und die Gesetze verstoßen.«<sup>34</sup>

Die Forderung der jüdischen Gemeinde als religiöser Minderheit nach Exklusivität in der Friedhofsfrage kollidierte offensichtlich mit den Säkularisierungs- und Gleichheitsbestrebungen der Republik. Die Halacha bietet jedoch Argumente zur Rechtfertigung dieser Differenz. In einem Schreiben der jüdi-

31 Siehe Dines, *Tod im Paradies*, 615.

32 AMIA/Comunidad judía de Buenos Aires (Hgg.), *Libro del Centenario 1894–1994* [Buch zur Jahrhundertfeier 1894–1994], Buenos Aires 1994.

33 Der Erwerb des Grundstücks, der aufgrund der Kosten immer die größte Hürde darstellte, oblag dem aus Litauen stammenden Mauricio Klabin, einem der wichtigsten jüdischen Philanthropen Brasiliens.

34 Zit. nach Monica Musatti Cytrynowicz/Roney Cytrynowicz, *Associação Cemitério Israelita de São Paulo, 85 anos. Patrimônio da história da comunidade judaica e da cidade de São Paulo* [85 Jahre Associação Cemitério Israelita de São Paulo. Historisches Erbe der jüdischen Gemeinde und der Stadt São Paulo], São Paulo 2008, 13.

schen Gemeinde an das zuständige Ministerium wird dieser Wunsch mit dem jüdischen Gesetz begründet, demzufolge Gräber für die Ewigkeit zu bestehen haben und nie eingeebnet werden dürfen. Letzteres war auf brasilianischen Friedhöfen üblicherweise der Fall, wenn keine Gebühren mehr gezahlt wurden. Die jüdische Gemeinde berief sich auf den Grundsatz der Gleichheit aller Staatsbürger: Es wäre ungerecht, Juden unabhängig von ihrer wirtschaftlichen Situation Grabstätten auf ewig zu ermöglichen, den übrigen Brasilianern jedoch vergängliche Ruhestätten, die bei ausbleibender Zahlung entfernt würden. Die Gemeinde (*kehila*) bot dafür eine Lösung: die Schaffung eines eigenen Friedhofs, der ihren Mitgliedern für alle Zeiten offensteht und für dessen Unterhaltung sie selbst ohne staatliche Unterstützung aufkommt. Später wurde außerdem die Tatsache angeführt, dass die – trotz des laizistischen und neutralen Charakters erfolgende – Ausschmückung der Friedhöfe mit Christus- und Heiligendarstellungen die Akzeptanz eines solchen Ortes bei Menschen anderen Glaubens mindere.<sup>35</sup> Die Auseinandersetzungen zogen sich bis 1919 hin. 1923 gab es erneut Differenzen mit der Regierung bezüglich der »jüdischen Zugehörigkeit«<sup>36</sup> (*»qualidade de israelita«*), also der Frage, welche Personen nach den staatlichen Gesetzen berechtigt waren, auf dem jüdischen Friedhof begraben zu werden. Besonders schwierig war die Entscheidung im Fall interreligiöser Ehen. Schließlich fand sich eine Kompromisslösung, die die Beerdigung nicht nur für Juden, sondern auch für deren Ehepartner sowie für weitere Familienangehörige erlaubte, was die Halacha traditionellerweise nicht zulässt.

Nach der Beilegung dieser Differenzen keimte ein interner Streit auf, der so bereits in Buenos Aires geführt wurde. Ab Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts operierte für mehrere Jahrzehnte ein gewaltiges, als Sociedad Varsovia und später als Zwi Migdal bekannt gewordenes Netzwerk in Lateinamerika, das Frauenhandel betrieb.<sup>37</sup> Die jüdische Gemeinde sowohl in Brasilien als auch in Argentinien begann hiergegen vorzugehen und Zuhälter sowie Prostituierte aus ihren Institutionen auszuschließen.<sup>38</sup> Die härteste Maßnahme gegen diese

35 Siehe ebd.

36 Ebd., 28.

37 Zur Geschichte der Zwi Migdal siehe Victor A. Mirelman, *En búsqueda de una identidad. Los inmigrantes judíos en Buenos Aires, 1890–1930* [Auf der Suche nach einer Identität. Jüdische Einwanderer in Buenos Aires, 1890–1930], Buenos Aires 1988; Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos* [Geschichte der jüdischen Argentinier], Buenos Aires 2006; Haim Avni, *Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía, 1810–1950* [Argentinien und die Geschichte der jüdischen Einwanderung, 1810–1950], Buenos Aires 1983; ders., »Clientes«, rufianes y prostitutas. Comunidades judías de Argentina e Israel frente a la trata de blancas [»Kunden«, Zuhälter und Prostituierte. Jüdische Gemeinden in Argentinien und Israel gegen Frauenhandel], Buenos Aires 2014.

38 Dies ist ein komplexes und interessantes Kapitel jüdischer Geschichte, das die Befreiung Hunderter junger Jüdinnen aus den Fängen von Zuhältern beinhaltet, u. a. mithilfe der Vereinigung Ezras Nashim mit Sitz in London.

Menschen war die Verweigerung eines Begräbnisses auf einem jüdischen Friedhof. So stand zum Beispiel in der Satzung des Vereins der Israeliten von São Paulo explizit, dass Zuhältern oder Prostituierten keine Bescheinigung der jüdischen Zugehörigkeit ausgestellt werde (Art. 28).<sup>39</sup> Daraufhin bildeten diese Personen – außerhalb der offiziellen Gemeinde – Vereinigungen zur gegenseitigen Hilfe. Deren Hauptziel war die Errichtung eigener Friedhöfe und Synagogen, um nach dem jüdischen Ritus leben und sterben zu können, so zum Beispiel 1906 die Associação Beneficente Funerária e Religiosa Israelita in Rio de Janeiro, die 1916 den Cemitério de Inhaúma weihte, und die Sociedade Feminina Religiosa e Beneficente Israelita, gegründet 1924 in São Paulo. Letztere ersuchte 1925 um Erlaubnis, einen eigenen Friedhof zu eröffnen. Die Stadtverwaltung von São Paulo reagierte irritiert, da man bereits eine Ausnahme gewährt hatte, die nun offenbar nicht von der gesamten Gemeinde akzeptiert wurde. Die Behörden argumentierten, die Diskriminierung einzelner Mitglieder sei ein Affront gegen die Prinzipien der Republik und zeuge von mangelndem Respekt gegenüber den eigenen Toten.<sup>40</sup>

In Buenos Aires war derselbe interne Konflikt schon früher aufgekommen. Zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts gab es Versuche, Grundstücke zu erwerben, um einen jüdischen Friedhof zu errichten – wegen der hohen Kaufpreise ein schwieriges Unterfangen. Die Mitglieder der Zwi Migdal boten an, einen Großteil der Summe zu spenden, doch nach einer lebhaften Diskussion wurde das Angebot ausgeschlagen, da das Geld von »Unreinen« stamme. Die Sociedad Varsovia kaufte daraufhin ein eigenes Gelände in Avellaneda, auf dem Zuhälter und Prostituierte beerdigt wurden. Der offiziellen Gemeinde gelang solch ein Erwerb erst 1910 (Cementerio de Liniers).<sup>41</sup> Bekannt ist in diesem Zusammenhang der Ausspruch des Oberrabbiners von Buenos Aires Reuven ha-Cohen Sinai: »Ich läge lieber unter ehrenwerten Nichtjuden als unter unseren Unreinen [*teme'im*].«<sup>42</sup>

39 Cytrynowicz/Cytrynowicz, Associação Cemitério Israelita de São Paulo, 85 anos, 36.

40 Ebd., 38–40.

41 Siehe Mirelman, En búsqueda de una identidad; Feierstein, Historia de los judíos argentinos; Slavsky, La espada encendida. Ich danke Mirtha Schalom für die Informationen zum Friedhof der Zwi Migdal in Avellaneda.

42 »Prefiero yacer entre gentiles honorables que entre nuestros tmeym« Zit. nach Feierstein, Historia de los judíos argentinos, 297.

## Die 1970er Jahre

Etwa dreißig Jahre nach Zweigs Freitod ereignete sich am 11. September 1973 ein anderer, noch dramatischerer politischer Suizid. Nach dem Militärputsch in Santiago de Chile nahm sich Salvador Allende (1908–1973) im Präsidentenpalast *La Moneda* das Leben. Die Situation auf dem Subkontinent spitzte sich zu. In Brasilien, seit 1964 Militärdiktatur, war es Journalisten untersagt, über die Geschehnisse in Chile zu schreiben. Alberto Dines, damals Direktor der wichtigsten Tageszeitung *Jornal do Brasil*, löste das Problem indes auf »talmudische« Weise: Auf der Titelseite der Ausgabe vom 12. September 1973 war ein Artikel über die Ereignisse im Nachbarland abgedruckt, jedoch ohne eine einzige Schlagzeile oder Überschrift. Alle Exemplare dieser außergewöhnlichen Ausgabe wurden verkauft – Dines verlor wegen seiner kritischen politischen Positionen einige Zeit danach seine Stelle (Abb. 2).<sup>43</sup>

Emigranten, die aus Europa nach Lateinamerika ausgewandert waren, durchlebten in dieser Zeit noch einmal den Albtraum von Verfolgung, Folter und Ermordung. Auch wenn die Mitglieder der jüdischen Gemeinde in Brasilien mehrheitlich nicht unmittelbar von Gewalt der Militärdiktatur betroffen waren und verhältnismäßig wenige Tote und Verschwundene zu beklagen hatten, blieben sie von diesen Prozessen nicht unberührt.<sup>44</sup> 1975 versuchte Dines, der mittlerweile für eine andere Zeitung arbeitete, seinen »dreifachen« Kollegen, den jüdischen, kommunistischen Journalisten Vlado

43 Zu Alberto Dines und seiner Arbeit gegen die Zensur sowie für ausführlichere Informationen zu der Zeitungsausgabe ohne Überschrift siehe den Aufsatz von Giuliano Galli, *O jornalismo brasileiro está em luto. Morreu Alberto Dines* [Der brasilianische Journalismus trauert. Alberto Dines ist gestorben], 22. Mai 2018, <<https://vladimirherzog.org/o-jornalismo-brasileiro-esta-em-luto-morreu-alberto-dines/>> (17. April 2022).

44 Hier sei lediglich auf die unfassbare Erfahrung der jüdischen Gemeinde in Argentinien verwiesen, die bei einem Bevölkerungsanteil von nur 0,8 Prozent fast 15 Prozent aller *desaparecidos* zu beklagen hatte. Siehe dazu u. a. DAIA (Hg.), *Informe sobre la situación de los detenidos-desaparecidos judíos durante el genocidio perpetrado en Argentina, 1976–1983* [Bericht über die Lage der jüdischen Gefangenen und Verschwundenen während des in Argentinien verübten Genozids, 1976–1983], Buenos Aires 2007; COSOFAM (Hg.), *La violación de los derechos humanos de argentinos judíos bajo el régimen militar (1976–1983)* [Menschenrechtsverletzungen an argentinischen Juden unter der Militärherrschaft (1976–1983)], Buenos Aires 2006; Edy Kaufman, *Jewish Victims of Repression in Argentina under Military Rule (1976–1983)*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4 (1989), 479–499; Gabriela Lotersztein, *Los judíos bajo el terror. Argentina 1976–1983* [Juden unter der Terrorherrschaft. Argentinien 1976–1983], Buenos Aires 2008.



Herzog (1937–1975), zu schützen, der zur Zielscheibe einer Hexenjagd des Militärs geworden war.<sup>45</sup>

Vlado Herzog wurde 1937 in Osijek (Königreich Jugoslawien) geboren. Seine Familie entkam der Verfolgung während des Krieges durch die Flucht nach Italien und die anschließende Überfahrt nach Brasilien im Jahr 1942. Dort studierte Herzog später Philosophie, wurde einer der bekanntesten Journalisten des Landes und Direktor des berühmten Fernsehsenders *TV Cultura*. Am 24. Oktober 1975 stellte er sich in São Paulo der Polizei, die ihn unter dem Vorwand einbestellt hatte, seine Beziehungen zur verbotenen kommunistischen Partei zu »klären«, und ihn kurzerhand festnahm. Zwei Genossen, die sich zur selben Zeit im Gefängnis befanden, hörten seine Schreie im Keller des Polizeigebäudes. Am Tag danach behaupteten die Militärs anhand gefälschter Fotos, die in allen Zeitungen Brasiliens verbreitet wurden, seinen Selbstmord und übergaben der Witwe die Leiche.<sup>46</sup>

Die Männer der *hevra kaddischa* informierten die Gemeindeleitung, dass der Leichnam zahlreiche Spuren schwerer Folter aufwies und demnach anzunehmen sei, dass Herzog keinen Suizid begangen habe. Die Familie schlug Alarm: Ein Ermordeter dürfe nicht bei den Selbstmördern in der letzten Reihe bestattet werden. Der Widerspruch zwischen Politik und Halacha gelangte an die Öffentlichkeit und fand Beachtung in der brasilianischen Gesellschaft. Rabbiner Pinkuss geriet zunehmend unter Druck. Mehr als 600 Personen, darunter Journalisten, Fotografen, viele seiner nichtjüdischen Genossen und sogar katholische Priester aus dem Widerstand, nahmen an Herzogs Begräbnis teil. Der jüdische Friedhof wurde komplett von der Polizei umstellt. Die Halacha setzte sich (zögerlich) durch. Vlado Herzog wurde mit einer schnellen Zeremonie in einer »normalen« Reihe – wenn auch nicht ganz im Zentrum des kleinen Friedhofs – bestattet.<sup>47</sup> Diese indirekte, aber dennoch deutliche Anklage der jüdischen Gemeinde stellte die Militärs als Lügner und Mörder bloß und fand starken Widerhall in der brasilianischen Gesellschaft. Einige Tage später fand in der Kathedrale von São Paulo unter Mitwirkung von Kardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, Rabbiner Henry Sobel und Pfarrer James Wright ein ökumenischer Gottesdienst im Gedenken an Vlado

45 Zu jüdischen Opfern der Militärdiktatur in Brasilien siehe Beatriz Kushnir, *Dez histórias mais uma para contar. Militantes (judeus) das esquerdas armadas mortos sob tortura no Brasil (1969–75) [Zehn Geschichten und eine mehr zum Erzählen. Aktivist\*innen der bewaffneten Linken (Juden), die in Brasilien unter Folter getötet wurden (1969–1975)]* (Vortrag, gehalten bei der 17. International Research Conference of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, 22. Juni 2015).

46 Zu Herzogs Tod sowie den jüdischen Opfern der Diktatur in Brasilien siehe ebd.

47 Herzog ist auf dem Cemitério Israelita do Butantã in São Paulo im Sektor G, Reihe 28/64 begraben. Siehe ebd.

Herzog statt, an dem mehrere Tausend Menschen teilnahmen. Beide Ereignisse leiteten den Beginn einer zähen Widerstandsbewegung ein.

Herzog war indes nicht der erste Fall, der einen solchen Konflikt zwischen Halacha und Diktatur auslöste. Bereits vier Jahre zuvor war Chael Charles Schreier (1946–1969) getötet worden. Das Militär hatte der Familie den Ermordeten in einem versiegelten Metallsarg übergeben. Nach Waschung des Leichnams gemäß den Regeln der *tahara* bezeugten die Männer der *hevra kaddischa* Zeichen brutaler Folter.<sup>48</sup>

Das Handeln der Rabbiner und die Deutung der Halacha variierten stark, gerade in Lateinamerika, wo viele Diktaturopfer als verschwunden galten. Einige Rabbiner in Argentinien versuchten, den Familien bei der Trauarbeit zu helfen, indem sie – auf der Erfahrung der *agunot*,<sup>49</sup> insbesondere aber der Shoah basierend – anboten, das Kaddisch zu sprechen,<sup>50</sup> sobald keine Hoffnung mehr bestand. Andere verweigerten genau diese Möglichkeit, etwa in der beeindruckenden Erzählung *K. Relato de uma busca* von Bernardo Kucinski, der hier die Suche nach seiner verschwundenen Schwester Ana Rosa Kucinski Silva literarisch verarbeitete. Im Kapitel *Der Grabstein* wird von einem Gespräch mit dem Gemeinderabbiner und von dessen Weigerung berichtet, ein Grabmal (*mazeyve*) für Rosa zu stellen: »[O]hne Körper keinen Stein, so will es das jüdische Gesetz.«<sup>51</sup>

Die Halacha wurde auch manchmal aus Angst nicht befolgt. Als 1971 die 27-jährige Psychologin Iara Iavelberg (1944–1971),<sup>52</sup> eine Ikone der brasilianischen Guerilla, ermordet wurde, übergab man der Familie erst einen Monat später den einbalsamierten Leichnam. Als Todesursache wurde – wie bei Herzog und vielen anderen – Suizid angegeben, das Öffnen des verschlossenen Sarges diesmal aber explizit verboten. Familie und Gemeinde waren schockiert, denn Iavelberg wurde in der Abteilung für Selbstmörder bestattet. In den 1990er Jahren beantragten ihre Geschwister bei der jüdischen Gemeinde eine Autopsie und forderten im sehr wahrscheinlichen Falle

48 Siehe Kushnir, *Dez histórias mais uma para contar*, 9, und dies., »Bendito seja o verdadeiro Juiz«. *As narrativas dos fatos em momentos díspares*, Chael, Iara e Vlado [»Gesegnet sei der wahre Richter«. Tatsachenberichte zu verschiedenen Zeiten, Chael, Iara und Vlado], in: *Cadernos CONIB* 5 (2008), 53–61.

49 Ehefrauen, die aufgrund fehlender Einwilligung des Mannes zur Scheidung (entweder durch sein Verschwinden oder seine Weigerung, einer Scheidung zuzustimmen) die Ehe nicht beenden können.

50 Siehe dazu Feierstein, *Trauer und/oder Melancholie*.

51 Bernardo Kucinski, *K. Relato de uma busca* [K. Erzählung einer Suche], São Paulo 2014.

52 Zu Iara Iavelberg siehe die Biografie von Judith Lieblich Patarra, Iara. *Reportagem biográfica* [Iara. Biografischer Bericht], Rio de Janeiro 1993, sowie Beatriz Kushnir, *A trajetória de Iara Iavelberg e o empenho familiar por seu sepultamento* [Iara Iavelbergs Werdegang und das Engagement der Familie für ihre Beerdigung], in: *Revista Estudos Judaicos* [Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien] 8 (2005), 76–79.

einer Ermordung die Überführung des Sarges zu den Gräbern ihrer Eltern als historische Reparation. Obwohl in Brasilien zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits lange Demokratie herrschte, lehnte die *hevra kaddisha* die Autopsie aus halachischen Motiven ab.<sup>53</sup> Da die tatsächlichen Umstände ihres Todes jedoch einen Mord nahelegten, schlug sie eine Zeremonie neben Iavelbergs Grab vor, um der Stätte die angemessene Würde zu verleihen. Die Familie war damit jedoch nicht einverstanden, sondern betrachtete die Beibehaltung der Grabstätte als erneuten Sieg der Mörder über die Wahrheit und die Halacha. Iavelbergs Familie klagte vor einem Zivilgericht gegen die Entscheidung und bekam schließlich Recht. Im September 2003, nach der gerichtlich angeordneten Exhumierung, wurden Iara Iavelbergs sterbliche Überreste umgebettet. Im gleichen Jahr erhielt Vlado Herzogs Familie eine revidierte Sterbeurkunde, in der als Todesursache Mord eingetragen war.

Heinrich Lemle – der passenderweise über das Toleranzkonzept bei Moses Mendelssohn promoviert hatte – war 1942 bei der Beerdigung der Zweigs als liberaler Rabbiner einen Schritt vorangegangen, um Forderungen der Halacha und der Mitmenschlichkeit gleichermaßen zu respektieren. Sechzig Jahre später wagte die brasilianische Justiz den Schritt auf den jüdischen Friedhof, um der halachischen Deutung historische Gerechtigkeit zukommen zu lassen. Inzwischen ist das liberale Judentum durch die CENTRA, das Wirken der 16 deutschsprachigen Rabbiner und der Religionslehrer (*hazanim*) sowie aller mitteleuropäischen Einwanderer zur vorherrschenden Richtung auf dem südamerikanischen Subkontinent geworden.<sup>54</sup> *Di galokhim zaynen shoyn gekumen.*

Moses Mendelssohn schließt sein Werk *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (1783) mit dem berühmten Aufruf:

»Lasset niemanden in euern Staaten Herzenskundiger und Gedankenrichter seyn; niemanden ein Recht sich anmaßen, das der Allwissende sich alleine vorbehalten hat! *Wenn wir dem Kaiser geben, was des Kaisers ist; so gebet ihr selbst G-tte, was G-ttes ist! Liebet die Wahrheit! Liebet den Frieden!*«<sup>55</sup>

In der Geschichte kreuzen sich manchmal die Wege Gottes und des Kaisers.

Zwei Bilder, zwei Gesetze: Halacha und Staatsgewalt. Dazwischen viele Rabbiner, viele Herrscher und mehr als dreihundert Jahre. Verschiedene Traditionen der Rechtsprechung treffen aufeinander, verschiedene Quellen der

53 Im Judentum ist die Störung der Totenruhe strikt verboten.

54 Zur Geschichte der zentraleuropäischen Rabbiner und *hazanim* in Lateinamerika siehe Liliana Ruth Feierstein, *Das Erbe von Breslau. Zentraleuropäische Rabbiner in Lateinamerika*, in: *Münchener Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* (2016), H. 2, 77–83.

55 Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum*, Berlin 1783, 141 (Hervorhebung der Verfasserin).



Autorität, die sich manchmal überschneiden oder gegenseitig ausschließen. Gerade bei Begräbnissen kommt dies zum Tragen. Tote bewohnen einen heiligen Ort und die Gesetze zählen dort besonders. Der Tod ist eine kosmische Störung der Welt: Rabbiner, aber auch Rechtskategorien des säkularen Staates versuchen, sie durch Beerdigungen wieder in Ordnung zu bringen.<sup>56</sup>

*Dina de-malchuta dina* ist ein altes talmudisches Prinzip, das die Juden in der Diaspora dazu verpflichtet, den Gesetzen des Landes so gut wie möglich zu gehorchen, auch wo diese nicht mit der Halacha übereinstimmen. Die ständig daraus entstehenden Konflikte zwischen Rechtskategorien des säkularen Staates und der Halacha werden immer wieder neu verhandelt – stets politisch und oft produktiv. Die Quellen dieses Essays bieten einige Anhaltspunkte dafür, wie Juden in der Diaspora eine relevante politische Theorie konstruieren konnten, die sich nicht kompromisslos zwischen Halacha und säkularer Staatsgewalt entscheiden musste.

56 Hier bes. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*. Laqueur zeigt sehr überzeugend, dass weder religiöse noch säkulare Gesetze dem Tod gleichgültig gegenüberstehen.



Gustavo Guzmán

## A Community Working for Progress: The Chilean Right Wing's Improved Attitudes toward Jews, 1958–1978

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Chilean rightists' attitudes toward Jews were negative. This was especially clear during the 1930s, when most local rightists behaved indifferently to the plight of Jews in Germany and were hostile to Jewish immigration. To be sure, after the November Pogrom, as the center and the left strongly condemned the government-led persecution of Jews and stood in solidarity with the victims, the right remained conspicuously unconcerned.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, when the issue of Jewish refugees was discussed at the Évian Conference in July 1938, influential Chilean rightists emphatically opposed an increase in the immigration quotas for Jews. Such was the case with the conservative senator Maximiano Errázuriz Valdés, according to whom Chile did not need “traders or intermediaries” but farmers. “Sadly,” he said, “Jews are not farmers but traders who will come to compete [with our businessmen] and become intermediaries.” Additionally, their religion made them “elements difficult to assimilate” and likely “to create a hitherto unknown ethnic problem.” In fact, the ultimate responsibility for Jew-hatred, he stressed, lay with “the Jews themselves,” as “they create problems where these did not previously exist.”<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, right-wing attitudes toward Jews in the 1970s were remarkably positive. Although the Chilean right was experiencing its most authoritarian period at this time, negative attitudes toward Jews were replaced by a noteworthy friendly stance. Now, right-wing generals, politicians, and businessmen expressed their appreciation for Jews – and the Jewish State – on a regular basis. In March 1977, for instance, attorney Maximiano Errázuriz Eguiguren, the nephew of Senator Errázuriz Valdés and a well-known rightist himself, wrote a noteworthy piece praising Jews by reference to issues

- 1 Barbarie [Barbarism], in: La Hora [The Hour], 14 November 1938, 3; La cuestión judía [The Jewish Question], in: El Mercurio [The Mercury], 22 November 1938, 3; El pueblo de Chile protesta contra la persecución de judíos en Alemania [The Chilean People Protest against the Persecution of Jews in Germany], in: Mundo Judío [Jewish World], 24 November 1938, 1; Las campañas antisemitas [The Antisemitic Campaigns], in: El Diario Ilustrado [The Illustrated Daily], 25 November 1938, 3.
- 2 Senate of Chile, Sessions of the Senate of Chile, 24th Ordinary Session, 12 July 1938, 875–877.

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as disparate as Israel's military power and the quality of Jewish musicians.<sup>3</sup> General Augusto Pinochet himself expressed his admiration for Jews on his visits to synagogues and similar occasions.<sup>4</sup> The guiding thread to these expressions was that Jews were a community that contributed decisively to the Chilean economy. In other words, the undesirable immigrants of the past had become respected businesspeople in the rightists' eyes.

This paper explores the Chilean right wing's improved attitudes toward Jews between 1958 and 1978. This period began with the election of Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez as president of Chile, a moment in which the right recovered control over the government after a twenty-year hiatus by appealing to an entrepreneurial image, allegedly apolitical and modernizing. This new self-conception resulted, among other things, in a weakening of right-wing antisemitism, as Jews were seen as privileged agents of capitalist modernization. Although these claims persisted until 1978, the political scenario had by that time drastically changed. After the reformist governments of *Democracia Cristiana* (Christian Democratic Party, 1964–1970) and *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity, 1970–1973), in which Jewish figures played key roles, General Pinochet ruled the country with an iron fist – along with the right's unanimous support. However, the overt authoritarianism of the Chilean right did not necessarily entail antisemitism. Conversely, the right-wing establishment viewed Jews and Israel as important allies in the process of “National Reconstruction.” As multiple sources show, influential Jewish actors saw General Pinochet and the Chilean right as allies, too.

This article argues that these new positive right-wing attitudes toward Jews were a by-product of both external and internal factors. On the one hand, Israel's cooperation with Pinochet's Chile, which included arms trade and mutual international recognition, the alignment of both countries with the United States, and the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on Latin America, contributed to this change in the right-wing perceptions of Jews. These factors interacted with broader, transnational processes, such as the increasing marginalization of antisemitism within Western right-wing movements and the changes in the Catholic Church after World War II. Finally, this development led to Jewish Chileans achieving prosperity and social recognition, becoming respected members of the bourgeoisie and eventually of the right wing itself.

- 3 Maximiano Errázuriz Eguiguren, *El milagro israelí* [The Israeli Miracle], in: *La Palabra Israelita* [The Israelite Word], 24 March 1977, 3.
- 4 Por primera vez, un Presidente chileno visitó Sinagoga en Yom Kipur [A Chilean President Visited a Synagogue on Yom Kippur for the First Time], in: *ibid.*, 30 September 1977, 1; Jefe de Estado asistió a oficios de Yom Kipur [Head of State Attended Yom Kippur Services], in: *ibid.*, 20 October 1978, 3.

Chilean Jews, the Rauff Affair,  
and the “Revolution of Managers” (1958–1964)

In June 1958, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on the prosecution of Franz Pfeiffer, a Chilean Nazi charged with attempting to bomb a synagogue in Santiago and blackmailing Jews. If they did not bow to his financial demands, he threatened to blow their businesses up.<sup>5</sup> Pfeiffer was not only a local Nazi but also a member of the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS)<sup>6</sup> and of a Ku Klux Klan branch in Waco, Texas.<sup>7</sup> His anti-Jewish activities and affiliations might lead us to think that the situation for Jews in late-1950s Chile was extremely difficult, overshadowed by the menace of antisemitism. However, Pfeiffer was an exception, a far-right extremist who was prosecuted and jailed. In sharp contrast to him, by the late 1950s most Chilean rightists had abandoned any form of anti-Jewish hostility, at least publicly.

A few weeks after Pfeiffer’s capture, six members of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) visited Chile, Argentina, and Brazil with the intention of “opening havens” for Jewish refugees.<sup>8</sup> The representatives met with local political authorities, religious leaders, and Jewish communities, arriving at remarkably positive conclusions. In those countries, the AJC representatives stressed, Jews were “participating fully in the political and intellectual life” and there were no “significant organized anti-Semitic movements.”<sup>9</sup> Although the latter statement may have been too optimistic in light of the events that took place in Argentina in the 1960s, they were essentially correct, at least with respect to Chile. Jews had successfully integrated there, standing out as businesspeople, industrialists, and professionals. Indeed, on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Jewish Chilean community (1956), President Carlos Ibáñez himself headed some of the celebration activities. The message was clear: Jews were as Chilean as anyone else.<sup>10</sup>

5 Ku Klux Klan in Chile Charged with Anti-Jewish Terroristic Activities, in: The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 10 June 1958.

6 Xavier Casals, *Ultrapatriotas. Extrema derecha y nacionalismo de la guerra fría a la era de la globalización* [Ultrapatriots. The Extreme Right and Nationalism from the Cold War to the Era of Globalization], Barcelona 2003, 176 f.

7 “Klan” Group Seized in Santiago, in: The New York Times, 24 May 1958, 3.

8 Jewish Unit to Go to 3 Latin Lands, in: *ibid.*, 27 July 1958, 25.

9 Latins’ Bias Slight, Jewish Group Finds, in: *ibid.*, 11 September 1958, 7.

10 Archivo Histórico del Judaísmo Chileno [Historical Archive of Chilean Judaism], Santiago de Chile, Collection: Comité Representativo de Entidades Judías de Chile (CREJ) [Representative Committee of Jewish Entities of Chile (CREJ)], Box 3, Cincuentenario de la Colectividad Israelita de Chile [Fiftieth Anniversary of the Israelite Community of Chile], 1956.

However, the integration of Jews into Chilean society was not only an institutional matter or a matter of personal success. Many individuals not formally affiliated to community organizations also successfully integrated into Chilean society, especially into the middle class. These Jewish Chileans, educated in public schools and universities, highly assimilated, constitute an illuminating case from the perspective of the New Ethnic Studies. According to this historiographical trend, issues such as these actors' occupations and political preferences shed light not only on the history of Jews themselves but also on broader aspects of Latin American history, especially those related to immigration and ethnicity.<sup>11</sup>

Negative stereotypes of Jews existed in twentieth-century Chile, mostly linked to the country's Catholic culture. There was also discrimination against Jews, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, when government authorities arbitrarily restricted Jewish immigration. Yet not even in these harsh years did the Chilean right make antisemitism a central element of its political agenda.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, the Chilean rightists did not make Jews targets of physical violence.<sup>13</sup>

This generally positive scenario in fact made Chile a haven for Jews. To be sure, in the 1950s and 1960s that country received hundreds of Jewish immigrants from Hungary and Romania. In fact, minutes of the United HIAS Service reveal that Chile was one of the countries receiving "the highest number of Jewish immigrants and refugees" in Latin America.<sup>14</sup> These sources also show that, as a result of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society's (HIAS) interventions with President Jorge Alessandri's government, restrictions on

11 This emphasis on the non-affiliated Jews and their importance in order to study both the Jewish experiences and broader immigration processes is one of the main claims of New Ethnic Studies, a historiographical trend that has significantly informed this paper. See Jeffrey Lesser/Raanan Rein, Introduction, in: idem (eds.), *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans*, Albuquerque, N. Mex., 2008, 1–22.

12 When studying antisemitism, it is fundamental to differentiate between stereotypes, social discrimination, political antisemitism, and physical violence. See Jonathan Judaken, *Rethinking Anti-Semitism*. Introduction, in: *The American Historical Review* 123 (2018), no. 4, 1122–1138, here 1127–1129.

13 One of the few episodes of right-wing physical violence against Jews occurred in 1941, when a handful of Chilean fascists attacked the Israelite Circle's synagogue, harming a couple of persons. See Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Anti-Semitism and the Chilean Movimiento Nacional Socialista, 1932–1941*, in: David Sheinin/Lois Baer Barr (eds.), *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America*. *New Studies on History and Literature*, New York 1996, 161–181, here 176.

14 YIVO Archives, New York (henceforth YIVO), HIAS Archive. UHS Office in Chile (1933–1969), Series 2, Central Administration Records (1935–1969), Folder 460, Sessions of the Board of Directors, 1959.

Jewish immigration were eased. For instance, work contracts stopped being mandatory for Jewish applicants.<sup>15</sup>

In comparison with previous decades, the situation for Chilean Jews had significantly improved. So had the right's attitudes toward them. If during the 1930s, most rightists had been opposed to Jewish immigration, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Jorge Alessandri's right-wing administration actually facilitated their arrival. Thus, in just a couple of decades, Jews went from being seen as undesirable immigrants to being considered respected businesspeople, advantaged agents of capitalist modernization.

The best moment to grasp this positive development for Jews in Chile was paradoxically during the Rauff Affair in 1962–63. The capture of the German war criminal Walther Rauff and the subsequent extradition process did not provoke a rise in right-wing antisemitism. In this regard, there were considerable differences to Argentina, where Adolf Eichmann's kidnapping (1960) was followed by a veritable wave of antisemitism. This included multiple physical attacks on Jews, the most famous of which was that against Graciela Sirota, a Jewish student who was abducted and tortured as revenge for Eichmann's seizure.<sup>16</sup>

Walther Rauff was a former navy officer accused of assassinating tens of thousands of people by means of "gas vans" or mobile gas chambers. After World War II, he escaped from Europe under a false identity, finding refuge in Syria, where he worked in the service of the government. After a short time in Ecuador, Rauff moved to Chile in 1959, where he lived peacefully until Eichmann's capture prompted the German authorities to prosecute other notorious war criminals like him.<sup>17</sup>

In December 1962, Rauff was arrested in Punta Arenas (Chilean Patagonia), where he had been living and working under his real name. His capture started an extradition process that lasted until April 1963, with attorney Eduardo Novoa representing the West German government and Enrique Schepeler defending Rauff. While the former delivered ample evidence proving Rauff's culpability, the latter based his strategy on stressing the statute of limitations. In fact, Schepeler never claimed that his client was not guilty; he basically said that the crimes attributed to him had occurred in another

15 YIVO, Folder 461, Sessions of the Board of Directors, 1959–1962.

16 Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and los judíos. De la partición de Palestina al caso Eichmann (1947–1962)* [Argentina, Israel, and the Jews. From the Partition of Palestine to the Eichmann Case (1947–1962)], Buenos Aires 2007, 22–24.

17 Heinz Schnepfen, *Walther Rauff. Organisator der Gaswagenmorde. Eine Biografie*, Berlin 2011, 111–119.

country and long ago. This position finally prevailed and Rauff was released, following which he remained in Chile, where he died in May 1984.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond the differences between the two cases – while Rauff faced an extradition process, Eichmann was kidnapped from Argentinian territory – the Chilean right's reaction to the Rauff Affair was remarkable. Neither after his capture nor during his extradition process did the right-wing establishment embrace anti-Jewish positions. What predominated among the Chilean rightists was actually silence. Like on other occasions during which issues related to the Holocaust forced the right to take a stance, indifference prevailed.

An examination of the position adopted by *El Mercurio* is illuminating in this regard. This was not only the most important Chilean newspaper of the twentieth century, but itself also an influential right-wing actor. One distinguishing feature of this newspaper was its fierce defense of its positions in its editorial pages, a section that dealt with diverse issues. Regarding the Rauff Affair, however, *El Mercurio* remained conspicuously silent.

The Jewish Chilean press did report on the Rauff Affair, although cautiously. Whereas *Mundo Judío* followed the case with a certain regularity and expressed its disappointment with Rauff's release,<sup>19</sup> the weekly *La Palabra Israelita* barely covered the issue. In fact, the latter did not comment on Rauff's release at all.<sup>20</sup> This was certainly not a result of indolence, but of the concern that complaints against the local justice system might eventually harm the Jews' positive situation in the country.

How did the Rauff Affair reflect the good situation of the Chilean Jews? To repeat, Rauff's capture and extradition process did not cause outbursts of right-wing antisemitism. Indeed, during the months that the affaire lasted, no rightist leader publicly defended Rauff or made anti-Jewish statements. Furthermore, the right-wing establishment did not raise the issue of dual loyalty, as occurred in Argentina after Eichmann's capture.<sup>21</sup> Thus, in a conjuncture that might have produced important expressions of antisemitism, Jewish Chileans remained free from right-wing attacks, both verbally and physically.

18 Gustavo Guzmán, Chile y el Holocausto. A cincuenta años de la captura de Walther Rauff [Chile and the Holocaust. 50 Years after the Arrest of Walther Rauff], 6 December 2012, <<https://m.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2012/12/06/chile-y-el-holocausto-a-cincuenta-anos-de-la-captura-de-walther-rauff/>> (6 July 2022).

19 Sensacional captura de criminal de guerra [Sensational Arrest of War Criminal], in: *Mundo Judío*, 7 December 1962, 1; Rauff en Chile [Rauff in Chile], in: *ibid.*, 10 May 1963, 3.

20 Criminal de Guerra fue capturado en Chile [War Criminal Arrested in Chile], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 7 December 1962, 1.

21 Many Argentine rightists strongly opposed the Argentine Jews' identification with Zionism and the State of Israel, accusing them of dual loyalty. This meant that in times of crisis, such as that caused by Eichmann's kidnapping, Jews allegedly preferred to support Israel than to remain loyal to Argentina. See Rein, Argentina, Israel y los judíos, 113 and 249 f.



When Rauff was brought to justice, the Chilean right was experiencing an important reconfiguration process. After three radical administrations (1938–1952) and Carlos Ibáñez' populist government (1952–1958), the right-wing establishment had finally regained power by embracing an updated, businessperson-like image, allegedly apolitical and modernizing. This message allowed Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez to become president in 1958, thereby launching the *Revolución de los Gerentes* (Revolution of Managers).

Regardless of the diversity among the Chilean right of the 1950s, there was a consensus on the need for a capitalist modernization project. This meant drastically restricting state intervention in the economy and implementing aggressive free-market policies, a plan mainly defended by business associations, the economists at the Catholic University, and *El Mercurio*. The obvious leader for such a project was Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez, son of former President Arturo Alessandri Palma and a successful businessman himself.<sup>22</sup>

Once in office, President Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez faced multiple problems, some of which were predictable, such as inflation, strikes, and left-wing opposition. Others were unexpected and influenced the government and the right as a whole. The first was the Cuban Revolution, which reshaped Latin American politics by strengthening the left and its revolutionary project. The second was the American support for an agrarian reform, in the context of President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. This forced the Chilean government to put in practice an economic reform strongly opposed by its voters – and supported by its rivals. The third was the modernizing process within the Catholic Church, which entailed, among other things, a firm support for an agrarian reform as well as an abandonment of the Conservative Party in favor of the Christian Democratic Party.<sup>23</sup>

These factors, combined with the failure of Alessandri Rodríguez's capitalist modernization project, put the right in a critical situation. As vast sectors placed their expectations for social change either on the Christian Democratic Party or on the left, the right was seen as the obstacle to reforming Chile. In this scenario, the right-wing establishment refused to offer its own candidate in the 1964 presidential election. In order to impede socialist Salvador Allende's triumph, the right unconditionally backed the candidacy of Eduardo Frei Montalva and the Christian Democratic Party. However, the president-elect publicly disdained the rightists' support, confirming his ambitious reformist plans.<sup>24</sup> Thus began the *Revolución en Libertad* (Revolution in Freedom).

22 Sofia Correa Sutil, *Con las riendas del poder. La derecha chilena en el siglo XX* [With the Reins of Power. The Chilean Right of the Twentieth Century], Santiago 2011, 213–219.

23 *Ibid.*, 265–282.

24 *Ibid.*, 289 f.

From the “Revolution in Freedom” to the “Popular Unity”:  
The Reformists, the Radicalized Right,  
and the Jews (1964–1973)

In May 1966, Hayim Gvati arrived in Santiago to “inspect the work by Israeli agronomists and engineers aiding Chile’s agricultural development.” Gvati was Israel’s minister of agriculture and had been invited by the Frei administration to consult on its most ambitious economic plan, the Agrarian Reform.<sup>25</sup> This project had two main aims: to redistribute under-exploited lands among farmers, which angered the rightists as it posed a threat to private property, and to increase agricultural productivity through modern scientific methods, an area in which Israel had expertise. The mastermind of the Agrarian Reform was a Jewish Chilean, the agronomist Jacques Chonchol. Despite his conspicuous role in the Reform and the Israeli assistance in the project, there were no significant expressions of right-wing antisemitism in the second half of the 1960s. This is noteworthy considering the radicalization of the Chilean right.

After Frei Montalva’s election success in 1964, the right abandoned its propositional discourse and clung to anti-communism and nostalgia for past times. Such a lachrymose stance, however, was quickly replaced by a more aggressive attitude. Authoritarian, anti-liberal expressions started resounding unabashed among Chilean rightists. Even the traditional conservative and liberal parties, established in the nineteenth century and quintessential representatives of the right, merged with Jorge Prat Echaurren’s nationalists to give birth to the Partido Nacional (National Party) in 1966. This was key in mobilizing the right-wing opposition to Frei Montalva’s reformism.<sup>26</sup> In this scenario of right-wing atavism, it would not have been surprising to see antisemitic expressions by the Agrarian Reform’s opponents. However, this did not occur.

A few weeks after Gvati’s trip, the President of Israel visited Chile, too. The trip allowed some right-wing actors to display their improved attitudes toward Jews. Such was the case with *El Mercurio*, which published an editorial page praising President Zalman Shazar’s visit and calling for closer relations with Israel, a country “of primary importance in the modern world.”<sup>27</sup> Another issue that allowed *El Mercurio* to show its novel pro-Jewish credentials was the persecution of Jewish dissidents in the USSR, which the news-

25 Israel President to Visit Chile. Minister Meets Chilean President, in: The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 13 May 1966.

26 Correa Sutil, *Con las riendas del poder*, 301–311.

27 El excelentísimo Señor Zalman Shazar [The Honorable Mister Zalman Shazar], in: *El Mercurio*, 27 June 1966, 31.

paper in July 1968 referred to as a “flagrant violation of human rights.”<sup>28</sup> Gone were the days when *El Mercurio* reacted to the November Pogrom by stating, “The reasons that have induced the German authorities to expel [the Jewish] race from their territory are not disputed, since they belong to every nation’s right to dictate its own laws.”<sup>29</sup> Now, the influential newspaper denounced antisemitism – as long as the antisemites in question were communists. In this sense, the new right-wing approach to Jews was a byproduct of the Cold War and anti-communism. It allowed rightists to discredit the left as a whole by pointing out Soviet antisemitism. Likewise, it gave the Chilean rightists of the 1960s an opportunity to emphasize their new “modernizing” credentials.

These novel positive attitudes toward Jews were not a uniquely political issue, though. Indeed, a revolution was also taking place within the Catholic Church. In October 1965, in the context of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI promulgated a declaration on non-Christian religions – *Nostra aetate* – that became a milestone in the new positive Catholic approach to Jews.<sup>30</sup> Remarkably, one year previously, the Chilean Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez had called upon the Vatican to “clearly absolve the Jewish people” of the charge of deicide.<sup>31</sup> A few months later, when delivering a lecture in a Santiago synagogue, the cardinal again called upon the Catholic Church to “repudiate once and for all the charges of deicide against the Jewish people [and] denounce antisemitism,” after which he was “greeted by the large audience with an enthusiastic standing ovation.”<sup>32</sup> Although Silva Henríquez was not a rightist, his position sheds light on the generally changing attitudes toward Jews in 1960s Chile, a process that affected the rightists, too.

One of the main factors behind the right’s newly positive approach to Jews was Israel. The right-wing establishment perceived the country not only as an entity defending Jews on a global scale but also as a Western bulwark in the Middle East, a crucial ally of the United States in the Cold War, and a country whose friendship might benefit Chilean interests. This perception increased after the Six-Day War (1967), especially within military circles. Additionally, the prosperity and social recognition achieved by Jewish Chileans positively influenced the rightists’ perceptions of them. This was especially clear after the election of Salvador Allende as president in September 1970.

28 Los judíos en la URSS [The Jews in the USSR], in: *ibid.*, 6 July 1968, 3.

29 La cuestión judía [The Jewish Question], in: *ibid.*, 22 November 1938, 3.

30 John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother. The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933–1965*, Cambridge, Mass., 2012, 239 f.

31 Chilean Primate Says Vatican Must Absolve Jews of Deicide Charge, in: The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 6 November 1964.

32 Cardinal in Chile Addresses Audience in Santiago’s Largest Synagogue, in: *ibid.*, 2 August 1965.

Sources from the archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) offer illuminating information on the socioeconomic characteristics of Chilean Jews and their reactions to Allende's electoral success and economic policies.<sup>33</sup> This material also reveals a growing concurrence between Jewish opposition to the Popular Unity and that of the right. These sources essentially consist of reports and correspondence between representatives of the JDC and the United HIAS Service, both in New York and Latin America. The most important of these representatives were Gaynor I. Jacobson, executive vice president of the JDC, and Samuel L. Haber, executive vice president of HIAS. In Latin America, the delegate for both institutions was Fred E. Weinstein, who reported regularly on Chile, using information he received from Santiago and from his own trips there. The main leader of the Jewish Chilean institutions was the president of the Comité Representativo de la Comunidad Israelita (Representative Committee of the Jewish Community), Gil Sinay, who also reported regularly to Jacobson, Haber, and Weinstein.

Gil Sinay's letters express growing criticism of Allende's government as its economic policies negatively impacted on Chilean Jews. They also reveal a quick alignment of the central Jewish institutions with the Government Junta after the coup. On some occasions, Sinay even defended Pinochet's regime, denying for instance the accusations of antisemitism being made against the Junta.

Correspondence following Allende's election shows that there was "panic" among many Chilean Jews.<sup>34</sup> A September 1970 report states that "some 4,000 Jews [of 40,000] had already left" the country after Allende's election. According to the document, although "the new Chilean leaders have no anti-semitic background, problems of an economic nature which would affect the Jewish population can be foreseen."<sup>35</sup>

Against this background, the JDC received many letters offering aid for Jews fleeing Chile. Walter M. Lippmann, vice president of the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, wrote one of those letters in October 1970. The response of Gaynor I. Jacobson is one of the most instructive sources on the Jewish Chilean institutions' stance vis-à-vis Allende's government. Jacobson told Lippmann that he had just returned from Santiago, "the trip having been occasioned by just the sort of reports of uneasiness among our brethren which you describe." He confirmed that Allende's victory "did indeed arouse great concern in the Chilean Jewish community and

33 Archives of the American Joint Distribution Committee (henceforth JDC Archives), New York Collection, Chile Office, Folder: Chile. General, 1965–1974.

34 *Ibid.*, Samuel L. Haber to T. Feder, 17 September 1970.

35 *Ibid.*, Report on Chile, 12 September 1970.

elsewhere in Latin America. One immediate reaction was the departure of a number of Jews [although] larger numbers of non-Jews took the same steps.” This was “motivated by fears that Dr. Allende’s economic program would severely handicap both business and professional careers.” Regarding the situation, Jacobson had sent Fred E. Weinstein to Chile to monitor it in situ. “Fred’s reports confirmed our fears of real panic existing in the Jewish community,” said Jacobson. “Children were being taken out of the schools in preparation for departures.” This was particularly clear among those “who came to Chile as refugees themselves.”<sup>36</sup>

Two months later, Weinstein conveyed the same impressions. In a letter to Samuel L. Haber, he emphasized that Jews who had migrated to Chile as refugees from Poland, Hungary, and Romania interpreted Allende’s election in light of their own experiences in Europe, embracing a pessimistic stance. Nonetheless, “with diametrical opposition to this negative picture, many Chileans speak in a confident tone about the future of Chile.”<sup>37</sup> Among the latter, Weinstein emphasized, there were also many Jews.

Thus, if many Jews felt “panic” vis-à-vis Allende’s government, many others still supported it. Furthermore, in multiple cases these Jewish Chileans worked in key positions of the Popular Unity government. Such was the case with Jacques Chonchol, minister of agriculture; Miguel Lawner, vice minister of housing; Enrique Testa, president of the State Defense Council; David Silberman, vice minister of mining; Jaime Faivovich, intendant of Santiago; Oscar Weiss, director of *La Nación*, the government newspaper; José de Mayo, director of the Currency House; and David Baytelman, one of the heads of Allende’s Agrarian Reform. Additionally, the communist Senator Volodia Teitelboim and socialist Congressman Jacobo Schaulsohn backed the government from Congress. Some Jews also played an important role in the nationalization of banks, such as Marcos Colodro and Jacobo Rosenblut.<sup>38</sup>

The Chilean left and President Allende had been historically friendly with Jews. In the 1930s, this political camp systematically condemned antisemitism, demonstrated its solidarity with Jews, and took concrete measures to increase Jewish immigration.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the Jewish Chileans who active-

36 Ibid., Gaynor I. Jacobson to Walter M. Lippmann, 19 October 1970.

37 Ibid., Fred E. Weinstein to Samuel L. Haber, 3 December 1970.

38 Enrique Testa Aruete, *El judaísmo chileno en el gobierno del Presidente Allende (1970–1973)* [Chilean Jewry in President Allende’s Government (1970–1973)], in: *Judaica Latinoamericana* 4, Jerusalem 2001, 345–366, here 351–353.

39 Irntrud Wojak, *Chile y la inmigración judeo-alemana* [Chile and German-Jewish Immigration], in: Avraham Milgram (ed.), *Entre la aceptación y el rechazo. América Latina y los refugiados judíos del nazismo* [Between Acceptance and Rejection. Latin America and Jews Fleeing Nazism], Jerusalem 2003, 128–173, here 155–159.

ly participated in politics up to the 1970s had done so in parties that ranged from the secular center to the Marxist left. Among them were Ángel Faivovich (radical senator), Jacobo Schaulsohn (socialist congressman), Natalio Berman (socialist congressman), and Marcos Chamudes (communist congressman). In this sense, Chile was not an exception to the general alliance between Jews and the left traceable in other Western countries. As Philip Mendes has pointed out, “from approximately 1830 until 1970, an informal political alliance existed between Jews and the political Left [...] at various times and in various places.” Of course, “this was never an alliance of all Jews and all Left groups”; yet there was a general tendency of both groups to work hand in hand.<sup>40</sup>

In Chile, this alliance had been reinforced by right-wing discrimination against Jews, left-wing support for Jewish immigration, and Jewish education. Unlike the right, which had been indifferent to the plight of the Jews and hostile to their immigration, the left had historically condemned anti-semitism and expressed solidarity toward “Israelites,” both verbally and with concrete measures. Thus, attitudes toward Jews acquired a symbolic value, becoming a marker of belonging: Just as negative approaches – from overt antisemitism to indifference – were characteristic of the right, “anti-antisemitism” became a distinguishing feature of the left.<sup>41</sup> From the second half of the 1950s, however, this dividing line weakened. From then onwards, Chilean rightists increasingly embraced positive attitudes toward Jews. Something similar happened in other parts of the West as well.<sup>42</sup>

Honoring his friendship with Jews, Allende met the main Jewish leaders a few days after Congress confirmed his election victory. Subsequently, a group of notables – including top figures of the Representative Committee of the Jewish Community, the Zionist Federation, and other institutions – visited the president-elect to congratulate him. Allende reiterated his democratic credentials and his long-standing friendship with Jews and Israel. Jews had nothing to fear from his government, he said, since they would keep enjoying religious freedom and antisemitism would never be tolerated. Allende also spoke of those Jews who, “driven by an unjustified panic,” had fled after his electoral triumph. “As a medical doctor myself, I understand them. They are people traumatized by the effects of World War II, but I am certain that they will return to the country once that fear vanishes,” he stated. Gil Sinay replied that these were “personal decisions” that members of other commu-

40 Philip Mendes, *Jews and the Left. The Rise and Fall of a Political Alliance*, New York 2014, 1–12.

41 Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites. Trials in Emancipation*, Cambridge 2006, 111–115.

42 Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity*, London 2016, 82–97.

nities had made as well.<sup>43</sup> He was right. In the weeks after Allende's election, thousands of non-Jewish Chileans fled the country, too.<sup>44</sup>

As Mario Sznajder has shown, there was a fundamental gap between the statements made by Jewish institutions and the true fears of Jews themselves. Although many emphasized that the new government would guarantee their safety, the actual apprehension was how the Popular Unity government's economic policies would harm Jews' assets.<sup>45</sup> Thus, although public statements referred to ethnic and religious issues, there was in fact a class matter dividing these Jews from the leftist government.

The other apprehension among Jews regarding the new government was its approach to Israel. Many feared that the Popular Unity government's closeness to Fidel Castro would make Chile follow the Cuban example, breaking diplomatic relations with the Jewish State.<sup>46</sup> These fears were unfounded. Beyond his friendship with Jews, President Allende publicly supported Israel on multiple occasions. In April 1971, for instance, he stressed that the Middle East conflict could be solved "only within the concept of the Jewish State's right to existence and survival."<sup>47</sup> One year later, the Israeli ambassador to Chile told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency he was "very much satisfied with Chile's attitude toward Israel."<sup>48</sup>

Such fears were also unfounded in light of the cooperation between Chile and the State of Israel. In the period between 1970 and 1973, Israeli technical assistance in agriculture expanded to other areas.<sup>49</sup> One of those areas was housing. In mid-1972, Israeli advisors visited Santiago to share their expertise with the Popular Unity government's functionaries, expertise they had

43 El Dr. Allende se entrevistó con personeros de la colectividad [Dr. Allende Met with Community Representatives], in: *Mundo Judío*, 28 October 1970, 6 f.; *Cómo fue la entrevista con el Presidente Electo* [How Was the Interview with the President-Elect?], in: *ibid.*, 2 November 1970, 11.

44 Chileans Choose Argentine Stay, in: *The New York Times*, 17 September 1970, 8.

45 Mario S. Sznajder, *El judaísmo chileno y el gobierno de la Unidad Popular (1970–1973)* [Chilean Jewry and the Popular Unity Government (1970–1973)], in: *Judaica Latinoamericana* 2, Jerusalem 1993, 137–148, here 146.

46 JDC Archives, New York Collection, Chile Office, Folder: Chile. General, 1965–1974, Gaynor I. Jacobson to Walter M. Lippmann, 19 October 1970; *ibid.*, Report on Chile, 1 March 1972.

47 Allende Says Solution of Mideast Conflict Must Include Israel's Right to Exist, in: *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 12 April 1971.

48 Israeli Envoy Satisfied with Chile's Attitude toward Israel, in: *ibid.*, 11 April 1972.

49 Chile State U Signs Agreement with Four Israeli Universities for Technical Cooperation, in: *ibid.*, 30 April 1971; Chileans in Israel to Discuss Scientific Cooperation Program, in: *ibid.*, 20 October 1972; Chile, Israel, in Exchange Programs, in: *ibid.*, 17 April 1973.

acquired through the massive immigration that followed the Six-Day War in 1967.<sup>50</sup> Israel aided the Chilean Ministry of Planning, too.<sup>51</sup>

The connections between the Chilean left and the Israeli Labor Party facilitated the cooperation between both countries. In this sense, it is revealing that both Mapam and Histadrut representatives attended the presidential inauguration ceremony in November 1970.<sup>52</sup> Reciprocal visits between left-wing politicians of both countries were common in those years as well.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike the 1960s, when the Jewish contribution to the Agrarian Reform did not provoke significant expressions of right-wing antisemitism, in the early 1970s, the right-wing press denounced the Jews in Allende's government. For instance, the National Party-owned newspaper *Tribuna* published several antisemitic letters in October 1971,<sup>54</sup> prompting the Representative Committee of the Jewish Community to stress, "The Israelite community as such is apolitical."<sup>55</sup>

The resurgence of antisemitism in the National Party's newspaper raises the question of how genuine the right's sympathetic attitudes toward Jews were. Were there differences between their public statements and what Chilean rightists truly thought about Jews? Did the Chilean crisis expose behind-the-scenes stances regarding Jews that had been publicly disowned?

Notwithstanding the importance of these issues, there are three reasons to not overestimate *Tribuna's* antisemitic statements. First, these were verbal manifestations, expressed during a moment of radicalization. This process did not lead to physical attacks on Jews, which is remarkable when considering that some of those radicalized rightists had embraced terrorism. Second, these antisemitic expressions were relatively isolated and actually failed in their mobilizing purposes. The right was already widely mobilized against Allende's government, making these antisemitic manifestations pointless. Third, despite widespread Jewish participation in the Popular Unity government, many other Jews actually belonged to the right-wing opposition. Since most Jewish Chileans belonged to the middle and upper classes, this should not be surprising.

50 Alto personero israelí en Chile [High Israeli Representative in Chile], in: *Mundo Judío*, 31 July 1972, 8.

51 Ministro ODEPLAN, Gonzalo Martner, de visita en Israel [Minister of Planning, Gonzalo Martner, Visits Israel], in: *ibid.*, 6 March 1972, 2.

52 Dr. Allende: "Admiro el espíritu pionero de Israel" [Dr. Allende: "I Admire the Pioneer Spirit of Israel"], in: *ibid.*, 18 November 1970, 1.

53 Parlamentarios chilenos visitan Israel [Chilean Parliamentarians Visit Israel], in: *ibid.*, 27 December 1971, 1 f.; Vicepresidente de la CUT visita Israel [Vice President of the CUT (Workers' United Center of Chile) Visits Israel], in: *ibid.*, 4 June 1973, 9.

54 See Opiniones [Opinions], in: *Tribuna* [Tribune], 1 October 1971, 2; *ibid.*, 4 October 1971, 2; *ibid.*, 6 October 1971, 2; *ibid.*, 8 October 1971, 2; *ibid.*, 9 October 1971, 2; *ibid.*, 13 October 1971, 2.

55 La campaña antisemita de Tribuna [The Antisemitic Campaign of Tribuna], in: *Mundo Judío*, 29 October 1971, 12.



The JDC Archives contain multiple sources on both the socioeconomic characteristics of Jewish Chileans and their encounter with the right in opposing Allende. On the former, the most revealing sources are the AJC reports. One of these stresses an idea frequently pointed out by American Jewish observers: “Not anti-Semitism but anti-capitalism could impel large numbers of Jews to emigrate.”<sup>56</sup> Another report states that since Chilean Jews’ “socio-economic structure belongs to the middle or upper class, formed by industrialists, businessmen, and professionals,” five thousand Jews had already left the country.<sup>57</sup> In sum, these sources expose a structural gap between Allende’s economic policies and the material interests of many Chilean Jews as a consequence of class.

Regarding Jewish opposition to the Popular Unity and its concurrence in this respect with the right, one of the most illuminating documents is a letter from Eva Stein, JDC and HIAS representative in Santiago, to Fred E. Weinstein:

Dear Fred:

You will surely have read in the newspaper of the latest events in Chile, and know that yesterday, April 12, the day before the inauguration of the UNCTAD [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development], there was one of the largest gatherings ever seen in Chile, in defense of liberty and democracy. We all went to participate in this march, which is very important for the future of all.

The immense majority of the population of Chile, in Great Santiago, made up of people from all the social levels, made timely preparations to meet at the site authorized by the authorities. All the offices and stores closed early to give the people an opportunity to take part in the liberty march. Workers, employees, employers, men, women, the elderly and the students, all joined the movement initiated by the democratic institutions.

It was impressive to see hundreds of cars full of people, with their Chilean flags, and people on foot circulating through the streets to go in direction of the reunion. The enthusiasm spread to thousands of participants to light torches producing with their illumination and effect of fantasy and *fiesta!* [sic]

With this march, they wanted to demonstrate to the foreign delegates who are attending UNCTAD, that in this country there exists a strong democratic force solidly united.

At the end of the speeches, everyone returned quietly to their homes to listen the news, there was optimism. Today all the newspapers carry big headlines, but just how many people attended, will never be known. For this, Chile is asking for a plebiscite to demonstrate to the government the discontent which exists among the people, but as the government knows that if they do so, they are lost, they don’t want to permit it.

56 JDC Archives, New York Collection, Chile Office, Folder: Chile. General, 1965–1974, Report on Chile, 1 March 1972.

57 Ibid., Report on Chile, 18 January 1973. Given the lack of historically verified data on how many Jews fled Chile in 1970–1973, these figures have to be interpreted with caution. However, the contribution of reports such as those by the AJC and the JDC, often compiled thoroughly by professionals and scholars, cannot be overlooked.

In the meantime the problems are more acute each day. The scarcity is great and the problems we shall face when this conference ends will be grave.

The parties which side with the Government will also carry out a march and we shall see to what size it will reach, although everyone knows that they are well organized and controlled and that those not participating could have big problems.

Hoping that this gives a more or less general picture of what is going on here, I close with the best regards to you.

Cordially,  
Eva.<sup>58</sup>

Stein was referring to the “March of Democracy,” held in April 1972. As Margaret Power showed in her piece on gender and politics, right-wing women were fundamental actors in opposing Allende’s government, especially after the “March of the Empty Pots and Pans” (December 1971).<sup>59</sup> Stein was not only representative of two important transnational Jewish institutions but also one of those right-wing women studied by Power. In this sense, Stein’s case highlights one of the main issues pointed out by the New Ethnic Studies, namely the existence of simultaneous belongings among Jews – or any other ethnic group. Thus, when Eva Stein described the “March of Democracy,” she did so not only as a Jew but also as a right-wing woman, as a member of the Chilean bourgeoisie, as a political opponent of Allende’s government, and so forth. That is why her phrase “we all went to participate in this march” is so appealing. Who was Stein referring to with the words “we all”? Did she mean members of Jewish Chilean institutions? Did this group include non-Jewish individuals? What was the gender composition of the group? Was the “March of Democracy” her first participation in such a political gathering?

The issue of flexible, simultaneous belongings is fundamental when studying ethnic groups such as Chilean Jews, considering that parochial terms like Jewish “community” tend to neglect these complexities. These imply the existence of insurmountable differences between Jews and the rest of the population, as though Jewish Chileans lived in an isolated space. This is simply untrue. The same can be seen with Arab Chileans, Korean Chileans, and so on. The self-conceptions of the individuals making up these collectives can never be understood in light of their ethnic background alone, since they are influenced by other factors as well, such as class, gender, education, family history, and so on.

58 Ibid., Eva Stein to Fred E. Weinstein, 13 April 1972.

59 Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile. Feminine Power and the Struggle against Allende, 1964–1973*, University Park, Pa., 2002, 248–256.

Of importance to this paper is that this means that although Jewish institutions genuinely declared themselves to be “apolitical,” their members were *not*. Like all other Chileans, they held opinions about President Allende’s government, its economic policies, and the September 1973 military coup, among other issues. Again, the JDC material is enlightening in this regard.

### The “National Reconstruction,” Jews, and Israel (1973–1978)

In November 1973, Eva Stein described to JDC Executive Vice President Samuel L. Haber the situation in Chile following the military coup:

Dear Mr. Haber:

I should have written a long time ago, above all after the events here in Chile. Before September 11, soon after returning from my short trip to North America, I had to catch [up] with a great quantity of work, as our community was worried, along with all the rest of the citizens, with the problems of the country, and this caused an increase in the number of persons asking for assistance in our office. On the other hand, one had to remain silent – somewhat stupefied – watching all what was going on here!

Since September 12 and due to the political overturn in the country and the measures taken by the Military Government, the country has entered a period of relative tranquility.

If it had not been for the grace of God and the valiant action of the Armed Forces, it is probable that I would not be here to write.

The change of political regimes also had repercussions in our office. Many families preparing to emigrate, now prefer to stay in the country. Others who had started their paperwork have discontinued doing so. Many have given up the idea of emigrating at all. A feeling of wellbeing and hope has been restored. All is returning to normal: the commerce, industries, universities, schools, etc., which had been paralyzed or in the process of disorganization.

They have started giving back industries which formerly had been taken by the state or expropriated. The process of agrarian reform has been normalized. Industrial and mining production have increased significantly, and a free market has again been established, based on supply and demand.

[...]

With warm regards,  
Eva.<sup>60</sup>

60 JDC Archives, New York Collection, Chile Office, Folder: Chile. General, 1965–1974, Eva Stein to Samuel L. Haber, 5 November 1973.

Stein's testimony does not significantly differ from that offered by non-Jewish opponents to Popular Unity. Conservative Catholics – and Protestants – could also make references to “the grace of God and the valiant action of the Armed Forces” when describing the coup. Nor does her description of how “a feeling of wellbeing and hope has been restored” seem particularly original when compared with the rest of the Chilean right. These topics were widespread among Allende's opponents after the coup, Jews and non-Jews alike.<sup>61</sup>

Although not as enthusiastically as Stein, Gil Sinay described a similar scenario in his correspondence with Haber. In a letter from October 1973, he stressed that “the situation in our community is absolutely normal and the future is foreseen with more reliance.” Furthermore, he stated that “the contacts with the new authorities have been very cordial,” emphasizing their positive attitude toward the Jewish State. “There is no doubt,” Sinay said, “that the new authorities are a fact of trust [sic] for the relations with Israel. Would have gone on the regime of Allende [sic], it would have surely followed Cuba's example by cutting relations with Israel.”<sup>62</sup> In December 1973, Sinay reiterated that “the political situation in Chile with relation to the Jewish community is completely satisfactory. The Jewish institutions are functioning quite normally and there has not been the slightest anti-Semite act [sic] since the establishment of the Government Junta.”<sup>63</sup>

The Jewish institutions' positions vis-à-vis the Junta were largely positive, too. Moreover, it could be argued that these organizations quickly aligned themselves with the military authorities after the coup. Multiple statements and gestures attest to this. For example, a few days after the coup, the Representative Committee of the Jewish Community published a statement hailing “the Honorable Government Junta.”<sup>64</sup> This statement, published on the occasion of Chile's Independence Day (18 September), was indeed the first of multiple gestures of support to the military authorities.<sup>65</sup> In general, these were formal greetings, polite declarations using phrases such as “identification with the nation's destinies” and the like. Yet, some of these statements

61 Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 240.

62 JDC Archives, New York Collection, Chile Office, Folder: Chile. General, 1965–1974, Gil Sinay to Samuel L. Haber, 30 October 1973.

63 *Ibid.*, Gil Sinay to Samuel L. Haber, 7 December 1973.

64 Saludo a la Honorable Junta de Gobierno [Hail to the Honorable Government Junta], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 28 September 1973, 1.

65 Declaración del rabinato de Chile [Declaration of the Chilean Rabbinate], in: *ibid.*, 28 September 1973, 29; En el umbral del año 5734 [On the Threshold of the Year 5734], in: *ibid.*, 28 September 1973, 30; Comité Representativo agradece saludo de Rosh Hashaná de la Junta de Gobierno [Representative Committee Is Grateful for the Government Junta's Rosh ha-Shana Greeting], in: *ibid.*, 5 October 1973, 1.

reveal more than mere pragmatism. An editorial page in *La Palabra Israelita*, for instance, denounced the world as being “convulsed by social ideologies that minority groups of fanatical activists try to impose by violence, causing not only economic chaos but also the destruction of minimal humane coexistence.” In Chile, these ideologies had provoked nothing less than a “collapse of legality.” Nevertheless, “the experiment failed” and the country was now heading to “National Reconstruction,” a task in which “the Jewish Community commits itself to cooperate patriotically.”<sup>66</sup>

Jewish institutional leaders had the opportunity to personally express their commitment to “National Reconstruction” in October 1973, when they met with General Gustavo Leigh, an occasion on which the Jewish leaders acknowledged: “The community and all its institutions operate with absolute normality.” General Leigh replied with courtesy, addressing three issues: first, “religious freedom,” a value that the Junta would protect; second, that the Armed Forces would “not tolerate any antisemitic action”; and third, the Junta’s “unrestricted recognition of the contribution that both foreigners and their Chilean descendants have made to the nation’s progress,” a recognition that certainly included Jews.<sup>67</sup>

Two days after that meeting, institutions such as the Israelite Circle (formed by Eastern European Jews), the Society Bne Jisroel (German-speaking Jews), and Club MAZSE (of Magyar-speaking Jews) made public their first economic contribution to “National Reconstruction.” Additionally, “women’s organizations” had collected “donations of jewelry,” which would be promptly sent to the Central Bank.<sup>68</sup> Chilean Jews were far from the only ethnic group contributing to “National Reconstruction,” though. A few days before the Jewish donation, Arab Chilean institutions made their own contribution to the government campaign.<sup>69</sup> The Jewish Chilean institutions’ alignment with the Junta was not exceptional.

Another opportunity to express the Jewish institutions’ loyalty to the new authorities presented itself after accusations of antisemitism were made against the Junta by the American Congress. On 15 October 1973, New York Congresswoman Bella Abzug denounced “an alarming new aspect of the military takeover in Chile,” namely the persecution of “anyone whose name

66 “Jeshbon Hanefesh.” Alma en ponderación [Heshbon ha-nefesh. Soul in Deliberation], in: *ibid.*, 5 October 1973, 3.

67 Entrevista con un miembro de la Junta de Gobierno de Chile [Interview with a Member of the Government Junta of Chile], in: *ibid.*, 26 October 1973, 10.

68 Colectividad hizo llegar su primer aporte para la reconstrucción [The Community Made the First Contribution to the Reconstruction], in: *ibid.*, 26 October 1973, 9.

69 80 millones de escudos para la reconstrucción donaron colectividades árabes de Santiago [Arab Communities of Santiago Donated 80 Million Escudos for the Reconstruction], in: *Mundo Árabe* [Arab World], first fortnight of September 1973, 1.

indicates that they might be Jewish.”<sup>70</sup> In response to this allegation, Gil Siny addressed a telegram to Abzug stating that “the supposed persecution of Jews” denounced by her was “absolutely false.” In Chile, he stressed, “Nobody has been persecuted as a Jew.” A copy of the telegram was sent to the Junta,<sup>71</sup> whose minister secretary general, Colonel Pedro Ewing, expressed his appreciation of the gesture.<sup>72</sup>

The Jews of Hungarian origin took a further step in defending the Junta. The case of these Jews, who mostly arrived in the late 1950s, is interesting considering their mostly right-wing positions, which are generally attributed to their experience of communism in post-war Hungary.<sup>73</sup> However, as Bela Vago has shown, Jews had actively participated in Hungarian right-wing parties long before the 1950s.<sup>74</sup> In November 1973, the institution representing Hungarian Jews in Chile, Club MAZSE, addressed a letter to the World Federation of Hungarian Jews, categorically denying the accusations of anti-semitism against the Junta: “If some individuals of Jewish descent who were committed to the past government are asked to answer for their actions,” they said, “it is not because of their Judaism but because of their personal attitude and they must bear the consequences.”<sup>75</sup>

When Club MAZSE’s representatives wrote this letter, the Chilean Army had already assassinated three Jews – Ernesto Traubmann,<sup>76</sup> Georges Klein Pipper,<sup>77</sup> and Carlos Berger.<sup>78</sup> Others were in prison, like David Silberman, who was tortured to death some months later.<sup>79</sup> Others had fled the coun-

70 Congressional Record, House of Representatives of the United States, Bella S. Abzug, *The Threat to Jews in Chile*, 15 October 1973, 34176.

71 Comunicación a la Honorable Junta de Gobierno [Message to the Honorable Governmental Junta], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 2 November 1973, 9.

72 Gobierno envía notas a Colectividad Israelita [Government Sends Notes to Israelite Community], in: *Mundo Judío*, 30 November 1973, 9.

73 Sznajder, *El judaísmo chileno y el gobierno de la Unidad Popular (1970–1973)*, 141.

74 Bela Vago, *The Attitude toward the Jews as a Criterion of the Left-Right Concept*, in: idem/George L. Mosse (eds.), *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe, 1918–1945*, New Brunswick, N. J./Jerusalem 1987, 21–49, here 26–30.

75 Comunidad judeo-húngara desmiente persecución antisemita en Chile [Hungarian-Jewish Community Denies Antisemitic Persecution in Chile], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 30 November 1973, 10.

76 For a biographical overview of Ernesto Traubmann Riegelhaupt, see <[https://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-T/ernesto\\_traubmann\\_riegelhaupt.htm](https://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-T/ernesto_traubmann_riegelhaupt.htm)> (6 July 2022).

77 For a biographical overview of Georges Klein Pipper, see <[https://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-K/georges\\_klein\\_pipper.htm](https://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-K/georges_klein_pipper.htm)> (6 July 2022).

78 For a biographical overview of Carlos Berger Guralnik, see <[http://www.memoriaviva.com/Ejecutados/Ejecutados\\_B/berger\\_guralnik\\_carlos.htm](http://www.memoriaviva.com/Ejecutados/Ejecutados_B/berger_guralnik_carlos.htm)> (6 July 2022).

79 For a biographical overview of David Silberman Gurovich, see <[http://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-S/david\\_silberman\\_gurovich.htm](http://www.memoriaviva.com/Desaparecidos/D-S/david_silberman_gurovich.htm)> (6 July 2022).

try, like Volodia Teitelboim,<sup>80</sup> or had found shelter in foreign embassies, like Jaime Faivovich.<sup>81</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, these left-wing Jews are especially important. They reveal that although the Jewish Chilean institutions aligned with the Junta, this does not mean that all Jews did so. Like any other ethnic group, Jewish Chileans' diversity extended far beyond the boundaries of their institutions. Their political views were influenced by multiple factors, such as class, country of origin, family history, education level, gender, and so forth. Accordingly, adherence to either Allende's government or Pinochet's regime differed between, say, first-generation Jews from Hungary and third-generation Jews of Sephardic origin who studied in Chilean public universities.

Nevertheless, it seems indisputable that many Jews – including key Jewish institutions and their leaders – had become opponents of Allende's government. They backed the military coup and attested to how things went *back to normal* thereafter. This did not go unnoticed among Chilean rightists, who increasingly viewed Jews as key allies in "National Reconstruction." If during the 1950s influential right-wing circles had started seeing them as agents of capitalist modernization, adopting an increasingly positive stance, now these new right-wing circles embraced explicitly friendly attitudes toward Jews. Multiple expressions of respect, admiration, and friendship could now be traced among local rightists, military and civilian alike. Israel was crucial in this regard.

As was the case in other Western countries, the September 1973 military coup was condemned by the public in Israel. The young Jewish State, which had until then been governed by Mapam, had had excellent relations with the Chilean left for decades, relations that had improved further with Allende's government. As seen above, Israeli envoys provided assistance to Popular Unity in issues as important as agriculture, state planning, and housing. It was not surprising, then, that "the Israeli Labor Party expressed sorrow and shock" about the coup and requested its government "not to recognize the military regime in Santiago."<sup>82</sup> However, the Israeli government did recognize the Junta two weeks after the coup.<sup>83</sup> Despite the friendship that united Mapam and the Chilean left, pragmatism prevailed within the Israeli government.

80 Former Chilean Communist Party Senator Reported to Be in Rome, in: The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 20 September 1973.

81 Report Faivovich Given Asylum in Mexican Embassy in Santiago, in: *ibid.*, 24 September 1973.

82 Israeli Labor Party Expresses Shock, Sorrow over Military Coup in Chile, in: *ibid.*, 17 September 1973.

83 Hugo Harvey Parada, *Las relaciones entre Chile e Israel, 1973–1990. La conexión oculta* [The Relations between Chile and Israel, 1973–1990. The Hidden Connection], Santiago 2011, 156.

The Jewish State not only recognized the Junta, though. From 1974 until the mid-1980s, it became an important international ally of Pinochet's Chile. Israel gained two things from this alliance: Chile purchased Israeli arms<sup>84</sup> and backed Israel in the United Nations.<sup>85</sup> The benefits were reciprocal, as both "pariah states" helped each other. Needless to say, the Jewish Chilean institutions' support for this alliance was important. To be sure, when the UN General Assembly approved the controversial Resolution 3379, which labeled Zionism as "a form of racism and racial discrimination" in November 1975, Chile abstained, earning it the applause of the Jewish Chilean establishment. In fact, the presidents of the Representative Committee of the Jewish Community and the Zionist Federation met with the minister of foreign affairs, Vice Admiral Patricio Carvajal, to thank him for the government's decision.<sup>86</sup>

As in the rest of Latin America, in Chile there were triangular relations between the local authorities, Israel, and the local Jewry – relations that were undoubtedly influenced by Washington's hegemony as well.<sup>87</sup> The specificity of the Chilean case lay in the existence of a strong right-wing dictatorship, the cooperation between this dictatorial government and Israel, and the local Jewish institutions' support for both military rule and the alliance with Israel. In this scenario, the right-wing establishment made multiple friendly gestures toward the Jewish "community" and Israel. It was common among right-wing civilians to see expressions like those by attorney Maximiano Errázuriz Eguiguren described at the beginning of this paper.<sup>88</sup> The rector of the Catholic University, Jaime del Valle, was one of the civilian authorities embodying the right's new pro-Jewish, pro-Israel positions. The director of public affairs of government, Álvaro Puga, was another of these figures. The former visited Israel in 1974, labeling both countries victims of "communist defamation."<sup>89</sup> The latter, known for his role in concealing some of the most horrible crimes by Pinochet's secret police,<sup>90</sup> also visited Israel in the mid-1970s, following which the Zionist Federation gave a dinner in his honor.<sup>91</sup>

84 Ibid., 169–173.

85 Ibid., 163 f.

86 Comunidad judía satisfecha por la decisión chilena [Jewish Community Satisfied with Chilean Decision], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 7 November 1975, 3.

87 Arie M. Kacowicz, *Triangular Relations. Israel, Latin American Jewry, and Latin American Countries in a Changing International Context, 1967–2017*, in: *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 11 (2017), no. 2, 203–215.

88 Errázuriz Eguiguren, *El milagro israelí*, 3.

89 Festejo a Jaime del Valle organizó Federación Sionista [Zionist Federation Organized Party for Jaime del Valle], in: *Mundo Judío*, 6 December 1974, 5.

90 For a biographical overview of Álvaro Augusto Pilade Puga Cappa, see <[https://www.memoriaviva.com/criminales/criminales\\_p/puga\\_cappa\\_alvaro\\_augusto\\_pilade.htm](https://www.memoriaviva.com/criminales/criminales_p/puga_cappa_alvaro_augusto_pilade.htm)> (6 July 2022).

91 Agasajado Álvaro Puga por Federación Sionista [Álvaro Puga Honored by the Zionist Federation], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 2 April 1976, 4; Álvaro Puga recibido en seno sionista [Álvaro Puga Welcomed in the Zionist Heart], in: *Mundo Judío*, 12 April 1976, 12.



The military's friendly gestures toward Jews were mainly expressed during the Jewish High Holidays. Every Yom Kippur, General Pinochet sent envoys to Santiago's synagogues on behalf of the military authorities. The most important of these envoys was General César Mendoza, a member of the Junta.<sup>92</sup> In 1977, Pinochet personally visited the Israelite Circle's synagogue, a gesture warmly greeted by the Jewish Chilean establishment. The "community" press stressed that this was the first ever visit by a Chilean "president" to a synagogue on Yom Kippur.<sup>93</sup> On that as on multiple other occasions, the dictator expressed his appreciation for Jews. In General Pinochet's own words, Jews were "a community working for the moral and material progress of our country."<sup>94</sup>

### Final Remarks

To study Jewish Latin Americans from Eurocentric perspectives can be misleading. The differences between the two continents and their Jewries are significant enough to make such viewpoints at least inaccurate. This is especially true when studying antisemitism. Historians often interpret the local rightists' anti-Jewish discourses in light of European history, overestimating the true scope of antisemitism in Latin America. This paper argued that instead of focusing on marginal rightists and their well-known anti-Jewish positions, it is more fruitful to focus on the right-wing establishment and its changing attitudes toward Jews. Such attitudes thus work as a sort of lens through which it is possible to observe – and comprehend – broader aspects of Chilean history.

First, this perspective allows for the evolution of right-wing political self-conceptions to be studied from an original point of view. The changing approaches toward Jews reveal tensions and negotiations within the Chilean right between authoritarian and liberal tendencies on the one hand, and between nationalist and cosmopolitan forces on the other. Likewise, these

92 El General Mendoza y el Coronel Ewing asisten a oficios religiosos de Yom Kipur [General Mendoza and Colonel Ewing Attend Religious Services for Yom Kippur], in: *La Palabra Israelita*, 4 October 1974, 3.

93 Presidente Pinochet en actos Yom Kipur [President Pinochet in Yom Kippur Services], in: *Mundo Judío*, 14 September 1977, 1; Por primera vez un Presidente chileno visitó sinagoga en Yom Kipur, 1.

94 Saludo del Presidente de la República a nuestra colectividad, con ocasión del "día del perdón" [The President of the Republic Hails Our Community on the Occasion of the "Day of Atonement"], in: *ibid.*, 8 October 1976, 7.

changes expose the American influence on the rightist self-conception from the 1950s onwards.

Second, this perspective enriches the historiography of Jewish Chileans themselves, as it exposes the complex interactions between key Jewish actors and the right in a critical period. The historical evidence included in this paper not only sheds light on issues such as the Jewish opposition to Allende or the subsequent support for the Junta but also on how Jewish actions contributed to changing the right's attitudes. This challenges the widespread notion according to which antisemitism exists in a sort of transhistorical sphere, being immune to political agency. The Chilean case reveals something different. Jews did in fact impact the right, whose establishment adopted a firm pro-Jewish, pro-Israel stance. This was especially clear after 1973.

Third, this perspective raises questions about politics and ethnicity in Chile, especially in the context of the 1970s, for example: How unique was the process experienced by Jewish Chileans vis-à-vis the Popular Unity and the military coup? Were there other ethnic groups whose occupations or socioeconomic realities made them feel "panic" after Allende's election? How was the situation for Arab Chileans in comparison with Jewish Chileans? Did the former's institutions align with the military rulers after the coup? How was the situation for other ethnic groups of foreign origins, such as Italians, Yugoslavs, or Germans? Multiple questions can be posed in this regard, which call for a comparative approach that illuminates a final question hitherto neglected by historiography: Did ethnicity play a significant role in 1970s Chile?

Lukas Böckmann

## Gauchos und Guerilleros: Juden zwischen Arbeiter- und Guerillabewegung im Argentinien des 20. Jahrhunderts

Der seinerzeit unter Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen beliebte argentinische Sender Radio El Mundo strahlte am Abend des 3. Juni 1958 die erste von insgesamt vier Episoden einer Reportage aus, die in der Folge für einige Furore sorgen sollte. Wo sonst die Tangos von Astor Piazzolla, Bill Haley's *Rock around the Clock* oder Werbespots für italienischen Wermut liefen, berichtete nun der bis dato kaum bekannte argentinische Journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti (1929–1964) über eine Recherchereise, die er zu Beginn des Jahres nach Kuba unternommen hatte. Wohl um den exklusiven Charakter der Chroniken zu unterstreichen, hatte der Hauptstadtssender diesen prominenten Sendeplatz um die Zeit des in Argentinien traditionell spät eingenommenen Abendessens eingeräumt. An vier aufeinanderfolgenden Tagen präsentierte der junge Reporter zwischen 22:35 und 23:00 Uhr Material, das er unter abenteuerlich anmutenden Bedingungen auf der Karibikinsel aufgenommen hatte.<sup>1</sup> Von den Sicherheitskräften des dort herrschenden Batista-Regimes unentdeckt, war Masetti mit dem Untergrundnetzwerk des Movimiento 26 de Julio (M 26-7) in Kontakt getreten, in die von den Rebellen kontrollierten Regionen der Sierra Maestra gereist und hatte die dort versteckten Camps der Guerilla besucht. Vor allem aber gelang es ihm ein Jahr nach Herbert L. Matthews' historischem Scoop in der *New York Times*<sup>2</sup> – Matthews hatte als einer der ersten internationalen Journalisten eine Reportage über die Rebellion auf der Karibikinsel verfasst –, ausführliche Interviews mit ihren Anführern zu führen. Ungeachtet der mittelmäßigen, von Hintergrundrauschen und Knistern beeinträchtigten Qualität der Tonbandaufnahmen hatte Masettis Reportage eine geradezu elektrisierende Wirkung auf die Hörerschaft. Denn gleich akustischen Vorböten der Revolution

- 1 Sergio Pujol, *Rebeldes y modernos. Una cultura de los jóvenes* [Rebellen und Moderne. Eine Kultur der Jugendlichen], in: *Nueva historia argentina* [Neue argentinische Geschichte], 12 Bde., Buenos Aires 2000–2005, hier Bd. 9: *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo (1955–1976)* [Gewalt, Ächtung und Autoritarismus (1955–1976)], hg. von Daniel James, Buenos Aires 2003, 281–328, hier 289 f.; Hernán Vacca Narvaja, Masetti. El periodista de la revolución [Masetti. Der Reporter der Revolution], Buenos Aires 2017, pos. 918.
- 2 Herbert L. Matthews, *Cuban Rebel Is Visited in Hideout. Castro Is Still Alive and Still Fighting in Mountains*, in: *New York Times*, 24. Februar 1957, 1 (Ankündigung) und 34.

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erklangen in ihr erstmalig die Stimmen Fidel Castros (1926–2016) und Ernesto Guevaras (1928–1967) aus den Empfängern in ganz Argentinien. In Córdoba, Hauptstadt der gleichnamigen Provinz und knapp 700 Kilometer nordwestlich von Buenos Aires gelegen, hatte auch der zwanzigjährige Medizinstudent Henry Lerner die Sendung aufmerksam verfolgt. Die in lebendigen Bildern gezeichnete Begegnung Masettis mit den bärtigen Rebellen machte einen solchen Eindruck auf den jungen Mann, dass er, als die Reportage im Oktober desselben Jahres unter dem Titel *Los que luchan y los que lloran*<sup>3</sup> als Buch erschien, sofort ein Exemplar erstand und es – wie er rückblickend erklärte – zu seiner »Bibel« erhob.<sup>4</sup>

Mag die sakralisierende Metapher für eine Reisereportage auf den ersten Blick befremdlich anmuten, so scheint sie im Lichte von Lerner's weiterem Lebensweg und den politischen Konjunkturen jener Jahre weitaus weniger enigmatisch. Aufgewachsen in einer Familie jüdischer Kommunisten, deren Großeltern zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts aus dem östlichen Europa nach Argentinien emigriert waren, war der junge Medizinstudent zum Zeitpunkt der Erstausstrahlung jener Reportage noch überzeugtes Mitglied der Kommunistischen Partei Argentiniens (Partido Comunista de la Argentina – PCA). Bereits 1953 hatte Lerner zu den Gründungsmitgliedern der Sektion ihrer Jugendorganisation Federación Juvenil Comunista (FEDE)<sup>5</sup> in Córdoba gehört. Kurz nach der Veröffentlichung von Masettis Reportage setzte allerdings ein Prozess der Entfremdung zwischen ihm und der Partei ein, der 1963 in einem endgültigen Bruch mündete. Doch wandte Lerner sich nicht lediglich von der Partei und seiner politischen Vergangenheit ab. Im November ließ er ebenso seine medizinische Karriere, Córdoba und seine Ehefrau – also seine gesamte bisherige bürgerliche Existenz – zurück, um ins knapp eintausend Kilometer nördlich liegende Grenzgebiet zwischen Argentinien und Bolivien zu reisen. In der Überzeugung, der einzig gangbare Weg, einen revolutionären Umsturz in Argentinien herbeizuführen, bestünde im Aufbau ruraler Guerillagruppierungen,<sup>6</sup> begab er sich in die von dichtem Tropen-

3 Jorge Ricardo Masetti, *Los que luchan y los que lloran. El Fidel Castro que yo ví* [Jene, die kämpfen, und jene, die weinen. Der Fidel Castro, den ich sah], Buenos Aires 1958.

4 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Juan Martín Guevara/Armelle Vincent, *Mein Bruder Che*, übers. von Frithwin Wagner-Lippok und Christina Schmutz, Stuttgart 2018, 149.

5 Isidoro Gilbert, *La FEDE. Alistándose para la revolución. La Federación Juvenil Comunista 1921–2005* [Die FEDE. Sich melden für die Revolution. Die Federación Juvenil Comunista 1921–2005], Buenos Aires 2011.

6 María Cristina Tortti, *Izquierda y »nueva izquierda« en la Argentina. El caso del Partido Comunista* [Linke und »neue Linke« in Argentinien. Der Fall der Kommunistischen Partei], in: *Sociohistórica* [Sozialgeschichte] 6 (1999), 221–232; Claudia Hilb/Daniel Lutzky, *La nueva izquierda argentina, 1960–1980. Política y violencia* [Die argentinische neue Linke, 1960–1980. Politik und Gewalt], Buenos Aires 1984.

wald bewachsenen argentinischen Yungas nahe der Ortschaft Colonia Santa Rosa. Dort schloss sich Lerner am 4. November dem Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo (EGP) an, einer am kubanischen Vorbild orientierten Guerilla, die seit Juni 1963 in dem unwegsamen Gebiet der östlichen Andenausläufer operierte. Unter dem Befehl eines Mannes, der nur unter dem Pseudonym *Comandante Segundo* bekannt war, bereitete sich die Gruppe darauf vor, die erfolgreiche Revolution des kubanischen M 26-7 bis an den Río de la Plata zu tragen. Erst vor Ort sollte Lerner erfahren, dass es sich bei jenem *Comandante Segundo* um den Journalisten handelte, der 1958 das erste Radiointerview mit Castro und Guevara geführt hatte: Jorge Ricardo Masetti.<sup>7</sup>

Doch von Beginn an geriet Lerner mit Masetti und dessen autoritärem Führungsstil in Konflikt. Der Kommandant schikanierte den neuen Rekruten scheinbar grundlos, was auch bei den übrigen Guerilleros für Befremden sorgte. Dennoch zweifelte Lerner nicht grundlegend an seiner Entscheidung.<sup>8</sup> Vielmehr sah er sich, als Masetti ihm am Weihnachtsabend 1963 unterstellte, desertieren zu wollen – was gemäß dem militärischen Kodex der Guerilla mit dem Tode geahndet wurde<sup>9</sup> – zu noch rigiderem Eifer angespornt.<sup>10</sup> Kurz darauf wurde Lerner Zeuge einer Situation, in der es nicht bei Drohungen blieb: Am 18. Februar 1964 berief Masetti ein Tribunal ein, das den physisch und psychisch völlig entkräfteten Rekruten Bernardo Groszwald wegen Desertionsabsicht, Gehorsamsverweigerung, Vernachlässigung der militärischen Ausrüstung und fehlender revolutionärer Moral zum Tode verurteilte. Am darauffolgenden Morgen wurde das Urteil im Beisein aller Mitglieder der Gruppe durch ein Erschießungskommando vollstreckt.<sup>11</sup>

Nachdem der EGP im April 1964 von den argentinischen Sicherheitskräften zerschlagen worden war und man die überlebenden Guerilleros verhaftet hatte, erfuhr Lerner im Gefängnis von zwei weiteren Todesurteilen, die die Gruppe gegen Mitglieder verhängt hatte. Bereits während der Vorbereitungen

7 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

8 Ciro Bustos, *Che Wants to See You. The Untold Story of Che Guevara*, London/New York 2013, 155–161.

9 Biblioteca J. Armando Caro (nachfolgend Biblioteca JAC), Cerillos (Argentinien), Archiv, Causa Penal, asociación ilícita, intimidación pública, delitos contra la seguridad de la nación, atentado y resistencia a la autoridad con muerte misma y homicidio (nachfolgend Causa Penal), Cuerpo III, Folio 422.

10 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

11 Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo III, Folio 435 und 438; Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Sergio Bufano/Gabriel Rot, Entrevista a Héctor Jouvé [Interview mit Héctor Jouvé], in: *Lucha Armada en la Argentina [Bewaffneter Kampf in Argentinien]* 1 (2005), H. 2, 46–61; Testimonio de Héctor Jouvé [Das Zeugnis Héctor Jouvés], zit. nach Pablo René Belzagui (Hg.), *No matar. Sobre la responsabilidad [Nicht töten. Über die Verantwortung]*, Córdoba 2008, 14. Zuerst abgedruckt in: *La Intemperie* 15/16 (2004).

der Kerngruppe in Algerien war Anfang 1963 der nur noch unter seinem *Nom de Guerre* bekannte »Miguel« wegen Gehorsamsverweigerung verurteilt worden. Etwa ein halbes Jahr später fand genau in jener Nacht, in der Lerner das Basislager der Guerilla erreichte, in einem tiefer im Wald gelegenen Camp ein weiteres Revolutionstribunal statt. Vor diesem hatte sich der junge Rekrut Adolfo Rotblat zu verantworten, der – wie später Groswald – dem Leben im Dschungel nicht standgehalten hatte. Auch ihm wurden allgemeine Vergehen und Desertionsabsichten zur Last gelegt, und auch er wurde zur Höchststrafe verurteilt.<sup>12</sup> Während das Urteil gegen Rotblat am Folgemorgen vollstreckt worden war, kam Miguel, dessen Hinrichtung an die algerischen Sicherheitskräfte des Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) delegiert worden war, mit dem Leben davon.<sup>13</sup> Henry Lerner, der zu Beginn der 1970er Jahre gemeinsam mit seiner Ehefrau vor der argentinischen Militärdiktatur Rafael Videlas ins spanische Exil geflüchtet war, wurde sich jedoch Jahrzehnte später und aus der Distanz von über 10000 Kilometern eines beunruhigenden Umstandes bewusst. Im Rückblick auf seine eigene Erfahrung erkannte der ehemalige Guerillero, dass er mit Rotblat, Groswald und vermutlich auch mit Miguel<sup>14</sup> eine Gemeinsamkeit teilte: Sie alle entstammten jüdischen Familien.<sup>15</sup>

Im Verlauf der ab den späten 1990er Jahren langsam einsetzenden Aufarbeitung ihrer Geschichte machte Lerner mit einigem Unbehagen auf diese Erkenntnis aufmerksam. Ehemalige Mitstreiter verwiesen jedoch auf die hohe Anzahl von Guerilleros jüdischer Herkunft im EGP; die von Lerner erwähnte Gemeinsamkeit der Verurteilten sei eine diesem Umstand geschuldete Zufälligkeit gewesen.<sup>16</sup> Tatsächlich fanden sich im Vergleich zur Gesamtbevölkerung überproportional viele jüdische Guerilleros unter den Kämpfern Masettis. Das wirft zunächst die Frage auf, was junge, zumeist aus dem universitären Umfeld kommende Männer jüdischer Herkunft dazu bewog, ihr bisheriges Leben hinter sich zu lassen, um sich dem bewaffneten Kampf in

12 Interview des Verfassers mit Alberto Castellanos, 24. Juni 2017; Testimonio de Héctor Jouve, 14.

13 Bustos, *Che Wants to See You*, 103 f.; Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara. A Revolutionary Life*, London 1997, 554. Erst Jahre später wurde den Mitgliedern des EGP klar, dass die Algerier Miguel nicht hingerichtet hatten. Stattdessen verbrachte dieser einige Jahre in algerischen Gefängnissen, wurde 1965 ohne Erklärung nach Kuba zurückgeschickt und konnte sich dort im Kampf gegen Aufständische rehabilitieren. Nachdem seine ehemaligen Kameraden in Argentinien zu langjährigen Haftstrafen verurteilt worden waren, schickte das kubanische Regime ihn dorthin, um die Möglichkeiten eines Gefängnisausbruchs zu sondieren.

14 Anderson, *Che Guevara*, 553.

15 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Anderson, *Che Guevara*, 591.

16 Bustos, *Che Wants to See You*, 155.

einer derart entlegenen und ökonomisch rückschrittlichen Region des Landes anzuschließen? Emblematisch für diese Hinwendung und gleichfalls exemplarisch für die Geschichte des EGP steht der Lebensweg Henry Lernalers. Vermittelt über die Frage, worin für ihn und die übrigen – sehr ähnlichen Milieus entstammenden – jüdischen Guerilleros diese Anziehungskraft wurzelte, lassen sich nicht nur Erkenntnisse über jüdische Erfahrung innerhalb der argentinischen Guerillabewegung jener Jahre ziehen. An ihr zeichnet sich auch andeutungsweise ab, ob es sich tatsächlich um Zufall handelte, dass Masetti für seine erklärtermaßen zur Hebung der Moral angeordneten Exempel<sup>17</sup> mit geradezu beängstigender Präzision jüdische Guerilleros auswählte.

### Relikt der Vergangenheit – der argentinische Parteikommunismus im Angesicht der Kubanischen Revolution

In dem Jahr, als Masettis Reportage der Kubanischen Revolution eine in weiten Teilen Südamerikas vernehmbare Stimme verlieh, war Henry Lerner als Mitglied der FEDE noch tief in die Kommunistische Partei und deren Mobilisierung gegen die Bildungsreform des linksliberalen argentinischen Staatspräsidenten Arturo Frondizi involviert.<sup>18</sup> Wenige Monate nach der Erstausstrahlung von Masettis Interviews bewahrheitete sich die darin von Castro geäußerte Verheißung. Vor den Augen der Weltöffentlichkeit bewiesen sein siegreicher Einzug in Havanna im Januar 1959 und die anschließende Machtsicherung des neuen Regimes, dass eine Revolution auf dem Subkontinent gewaltsam an ihr Ziel gelangen konnte. Während Castros Triumph Lerner und viele seiner Altersgenossen faszinierte, hatte die selbsterklärte einzig legitime Vertreterin der argentinischen Arbeiterklasse, die Kommunistische Partei,<sup>19</sup> in ihrer Folge mit zunehmendem Bedeutungsverlust zu kämpfen. Nach der Absetzung Juan Domingo Peróns 1955 und dem Verbot des Peronismus, der zuvor die große Masse auch der unteren Gesellschaftsschichten hinter sich vereint hatte, war links der Mitte ein poli-

17 Anderson, Che Guevara, 578 f.

18 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Horacio Sanguinetti, *Laica o libre. Los alborotos estudiantiles de 1958* [Laizistisch oder frei. Die Studentenunruhen von 1958], in: *Todo es historia* [Alles ist Geschichte] 7 (1974), H. 80, 9–23; Juan Sebastián Califa, *Reforma y revolución. La radicalización política del movimiento estudiantil de la UBA 1943–1966* [Reform und Revolution. Die politische Radikalisierung der Studentenbewegung der UBA 1943–1966], Buenos Aires 2014.

19 Ernesto Giudici, *Neocapitalismo, Neosocialismo, Neomarxismo* [Neokapitalismus, Neosozialismus, Neomarxismus], in: *Cuadernos de Cultura* [Kulturhefte] 50 (1960), 8–44.

tisches Vakuum entstanden.<sup>20</sup> Die Leerstelle vermochte der PCA trotz seines Anspruchs nicht auszufüllen. Und so hatte sich zum Ende der 1950er Jahre aufseiten der argentinischen Arbeiterbewegung, die sich zunehmend mit dem studentischen Milieu verband, eine politische Rat- und Führungslosigkeit breitgemacht.<sup>21</sup> Mit umso größerem Interesse blickten gerade junge Intellektuelle und Studierende nach Kuba und meinten, in Castros erfolgreichem Aufstand ein leuchtendes Vorbild für eine sozialistische Revolution in Argentinien zu erkennen. Der Parteikommunismus jedoch begegnete den Wortführern der Kubanischen Revolution, die ebenso intellektuell wie voll jugendlichem Tatendrang erschienen, mit zurückhaltender Ablehnung. Unübersehbar orientierte sich die Partei damit weniger an den drängenden Entwicklungen in Lateinamerika als an der aus Moskau dekretierten Generallinie der friedlichen Koexistenz. Genauso eisern, wie sich die Partei an die außenpolitische Doktrin der Sowjetunion klammerte, sträubte sie sich gegen innerparteiliche Reformvorschläge, und hielt auch dann noch an ihrer Überzeugung fest, der Weg in den Sozialismus führe einzig über den Arbeitskampf und nicht über einen gewaltsamen Umsturz, als im März 1962 der zuvor demokratisch gewählte Arturo Frondizi durch einen neuerlichen Militärputsch als argentinischer Präsident abgesetzt wurde.<sup>22</sup> Vor dem Hintergrund jener nationalen und internationalen Ereignisse wirkte der Parteikommunismus wie ein verstaubtes Relikt der Vergangenheit.<sup>23</sup> Castro und seine Revolution hingegen stiegen nach der erfolgreichen Abwehr der Invasion in der Schweinebucht im April 1961,<sup>24</sup> dem im Dezember daraufhin erfolgten Bekenntnis

20 David Rock, *Argentina 1516–1987. From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín*, verbesserte und erweiterte Aufl., Berkeley, Calif./Los Angeles, Calif., 1987, 334–336; Monica Gordillo, *Protesta, rebelión y movilización. De la resistencia a la lucha armada, 1955–1973* [Protest, Rebellion und Mobilisierung. Vom Widerstand zum bewaffneten Kampf 1955–1973], in: *Nueva historia argentina* [Neue argentinische Geschichte], Bd. 9, 329–380, hier 333.

21 Carlos Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda* [Peronismus und linke Kultur], Buenos Aires 2011, 63–65; Tortti, *Izquierda y »nueva izquierda« en la Argentina*, 221–232.

22 Victorio Codovilla, *Informe del Comité Central sobre el 1er. punto de la orden del día. »Por la acción de masas hacia la conquista del poder«* [Bericht des Zentralkomitees zum ersten Tagesordnungspunkt. »Mit der Bewegung der Massen zur Macht«], in: *XIIº Congreso del Partido Comunista de la Argentina. Realizado en Mar del Plata desde el 22 de febrero al 3 de marzo de 1963. Informes e intervenciones* [12. Kongress der Kommunistischen Partei in Argentinien, durchgeführt vom 22. Februar bis zum 3. März 1963 in Mar del Plata. Berichte und Beiträge], Buenos Aires 1963, 59.

23 Raúl Burgos, *Los gramscianos argentinos. Cultura y política en la experiencia de »Pasado y Presente«* [Die argentinischen Gramscianer. Kultur und Politik in der Erfahrung der (Zeitschrift) »Pasado y Presente«], Buenos Aires 2004, 70.

24 O. A., *Liquidada la invasion. Aplastante derrota del enemigo* [Verhinderte Invasion. Vernichtende Niederlage des Feindes], in: *Revolución. Organo del Movimiento 26 de Julio* [Revolution. Kommunikationsorgan des Movimiento 26 de Julio], 20. April 1961, 1.



zum Marxismus-Leninismus<sup>25</sup> und Castros kurze Zeit später veröffentlichter *Zweiter Erklärung von Havanna*, die die bevorstehende Revolution in Lateinamerika zur unvermeidlichen Gewissheit erhob,<sup>26</sup> zu Lichtgestalten jener Heranwachsenden auf, die eine praxisbezogene Auseinandersetzung mit der Gegenwart forderten. Die kubanischen Revolutionäre waren der versinnbildlichte Gegenentwurf zur kommunistischen Orthodoxie. Sie verkörperten einen Voluntarismus, der entgegen der Parteidoktrin die objektiven Gegebenheiten für zweitrangig erklärte und den Willen der Subjekte zur praktischen Veränderung der Realität zum Maß der Dinge erhob.<sup>27</sup>

Katalysiert durch die Revolution Castros, kehrten zu Beginn der 1960er Jahre insbesondere junge, zumeist dem universitären Milieu nahestehende Parteimitglieder sowie Zirkel von Intellektuellen dem PCA geschlossen den Rücken.<sup>28</sup> Der wohl paradigmatischste Bruch ereignete sich in Lernalers unmittelbarem Umfeld. An seinem Studienort gründete ein Kreis von Intellektuellen um José María Aricó (1931–1991), mit dem gemeinsam Lerner 1953 die erste Ortsgruppe der FEDE ins Leben gerufen hatte, sowie um Oscar del Barco (geb. 1928) und Héctor Schmucler (1931–2018), die bereits seit ihrer Schulzeit der FEDE angehört hatten, im Frühjahr 1963 mit finanzieller Unterstützung des PCA die Theorie- und Kulturzeitschrift *Pasado y Presente* (Vergangenheit und Gegenwart).<sup>29</sup> Gleich in der Erstausgabe unternahmen die jungen Autoren, ausgehend von einer bereits seit Längerem schwelenden Debatte um das Werk des innerhalb des Kommunismus nicht sonderlich wohlgeleiteten Antonio Gramsci<sup>30</sup> eine als fundamental aufgefasste Kritik

25 Robert K. Furtak, *Kuba und der Weltkommunismus*, Wiesbaden 1967, 87.

26 Wiederabdruck der gesamten am 4. Februar 1962 von Castro gehaltenen Rede in: Fidel Castro, *Obras Escogidas de Fidel Castro* [Ausgewählte Werke Fidel Castros], 2 Bde., Madrid 1976, hier Bd. 2: 1962–1968; Deber de revolucionario es hacer la revolución. Más de un millón de cubanos votaron la II Declaración de La Habana [Die Aufgabe des Revolutionärs ist es, die Revolution durchzuführen. Mehr als eine Million Kubaner stimmten für die Zweite Erklärung von Havanna], in: *Revolución. Organo del Movimiento* 26 de Julio, 5. Februar 1962, 2 und 4.

27 Boris Goldenberg/Klaus Eßer, *Zehn Jahre kubanische Revolution*, Hannover 1969, 71.

28 Tortti, *Izquierda y »nueva izquierda« en la Argentina*, 230–232; Hilb/Lutzky, *La nueva izquierda argentina, 1960–1980*.

29 *Pasado y Presente*. Revista Trimestral de Ideología y Cultura [Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Vierteljahresschrift zu Ideologie und Kultur] 1 (1963).

30 Raúl Olivieri, *El problema del determinismo en el materialismo dialéctico* [Das Problem des Determinismus im dialektischen Materialismus], in: *Cuadernos de Cultura* 58 (1962), 11–30; Oscar del Barco, *Notas sobre Antonio Gramsci y el problema de la »objetividad«* [Anmerkungen zu Antonio Gramsci und dem Problem der »Objektivität«], in: *Cuadernos de Cultura* 59 (1962), 29–41; Raúl Olivieri, *El materialismo dialéctico y la objetividad* [Der dialektische Materialismus und die Objektivität], in: *Cuadernos de Cultura* 60 (1962), 23–39; Oscar del Barco, *Respuesta a una crítica dogmática* [Antwort auf eine dogmatische Kritik], in: *Cuadernos de Cultura* 63 (1963), 34–57.

der Partei. Vordergründig ging es dabei um die von der Partei vertretene, nach sowjetischen Vorgaben definierte Auslegung des dialektischen Materialismus. Doch im Kern zielte der Kreis um Aricó darauf, die angesichts sich überschlagender Ereignisse als Untätigkeit aufgefasste Position der friedlichen Koexistenz zu revidieren und stärker auf die Möglichkeiten eingreifender Praxis zu setzen. Als die Führung des PCA unmittelbar nach dem Erscheinen des ersten Hefts von *Pasado y Presente* mit dem Ausschluss der Redakteure reagierte,<sup>31</sup> trat der seit einiger Zeit schwelende Konflikt zwischen der orthodoxen Parteiführung und der jungen, zunehmend an Gramsci, Mao und Guevara orientierten Generation offen hervor. Nachdem der Parteiausschluss Aricós, Schmuclers und del Barcos bekannt geworden war, verließ nahezu der gesamte etwa 140 Mitglieder umfassende *Séctor Universitario* (Hochschulsektor) von Córdoba die Partei.<sup>32</sup> Eine analoge Spaltung vollzog sich kurz darauf in Buenos Aires, wo Juan Carlos Portantiero (1934–2007) aufgrund seiner Beteiligung an der Cordobeser Zeitschrift ebenfalls aus der Partei ausgeschlossen wurde.<sup>33</sup>

Etwa zeitgleich, nach der militärischen Ausbildung auf Kuba und den Zwischenstationen in der Tschechoslowakei sowie als Gäste des neuen Staatspräsidenten Algeriens Ahmed Ben Bella, begab sich Jorge Ricardo Masetti mit der Kerngruppe des späteren EGP in das nur spärlich besiedelte Grenzgebiet zwischen Argentinien und Bolivien.<sup>34</sup> Mit dem Ziel, ein urbanes Unterstützernetzwerk aufzubauen und neue Kämpfer für diese erste, von Masettis engem Freund Ernesto Guevara persönlich vorbereitete Guerilla in Argentinien zu rekrutieren, schickte der Kommandant einen seiner Vertrauten, den Maler *Ciro Bustos* (1932–2017), nach Córdoba, wo dieser Kontakt mit dem Kreis um *Pasado y Presente* aufnahm.<sup>35</sup> Auch wenn die Redakteure hinsichtlich einer direkten Beteiligung am bewaffneten Kampf zurückhaltend blieben, entwickelten sie sich doch zum zentralen Bindeglied zwischen jenem Mi-

31 Laura Prado Acosta, *El Partido Comunista argentino y la ruptura con los »muchachos« de la revista Pasado y Presente* [Die Kommunistische Partei Argentinien und der Bruch mit den »Jungs« der Zeitung *Pasado y Presente*], in: *Prismas. Revista de historia intelectual* [Prismas. Zeitschrift intellektueller Geschichte] 18 (2014), H. 2, 185–188.

32 Interview des Verfassers mit Héctor Schmucler und Oscar del Barco, 3. November 2016; Néstor Kohan, Héctor Agosti y la primera recepción de Gramsci en la Argentina [Héctor Agosti und die erste Rezeption Gramscis in Argentinien], in: ders., *De Ingenieros al Che. Ensayos sobre el marxismo argentino y latinoamericano* [Von Ingenieros zu Che. Essays über argentinischen und lateinamerikanischen Marxismus], Buenos Aires 2000, 173–188, hier 187, Anm. 22; Burgos, *Los gramscianos argentinos*, 77.

33 Estela Morales Campos, Juan Carlos Portantiero, in: *Archipiélago. Revista cultural de nuestra América* [Archipel. Kulturzeitschrift unseres Amerikas] 15 (2007), Nr. 57, 23.

34 Gabriel Rot, *Los orígenes perdidos de la guerrilla en la Argentina* [Die verlorenen Ursprünge der Guerilla in Argentinien], Buenos Aires 2010, 158–161.

35 Bustos, *Che Wants to See You*, 128.

lieu, das sich infolge der Polemik um Gramsci von der Kommunistischen Partei abgewandt hatte, und der sich im Norden des Landes etablierenden Guerilla.<sup>36</sup> Im Umfeld der Redaktion existierte bereits eine Gruppe, die in den vorangegangenen Monaten begonnen hatte, Ausrüstungs- und Waffendepots anzulegen und sich ansatzweise militärisch auszubilden.<sup>37</sup> Nachdem del Barco sich mit Masettis Vertrautem Bustos getroffen hatte, überbrachte die Zeitschriftenredaktion diesem Kreis das Angebot, nach Salta zu reisen, um sich dort dem EGP anzuschließen. Die Gruppe nahm überschwänglich an und verschaffte der Guerilla den größten Zulauf neuer Rekruten während ihres gesamten Bestehens. In einem Klima, das nach dem Schisma zwischen der entstehenden Neuen Linken und dem Parteikommunismus von politischer Orientierungslosigkeit auf der einen und der Erwartung des bewaffneten Kampfes auf der anderen Seite geprägt war, eröffnete sich für die junge Generation damit endlich die Gelegenheit, in das politische Geschehen der Gegenwart einzugreifen. Die von Ciro Bustos im August 1963 überbrachte Nachricht, die Guerilla habe begonnen, wirkte auf jenes Milieu, wie Héctor Schmucler treffend formulierte, »ebenso metaphysisch, als hätte er gesagt: ›Ein Engel ist geboren.«<sup>38</sup>

Jener Gruppe, die sich auf Vermittlung der Redaktion in den EGP eingliederte, gehörte auch Henry Lerner an. Dass er sich mit seinem Eintritt in die Guerilla endgültig vom PCA abwandte, wirkt auf den ersten Blick wie das Resultat politischer Konjunkturen jener Umbruchsjahre und legt eine ähnliche Motivlage wie bei der Mehrzahl seiner Kameraden nahe. Unter den insgesamt etwa dreißig Kämpfern, die sich der Guerilla anschlossen, fanden sich überwiegend junge Männer, die zuvor in Buenos Aires oder Córdoba studiert, sich in kommunistischen Gruppierungen engagiert, aber mit diesen unter dem Eindruck der Kubanischen Revolution gebrochen hatten. Das sechs von ihnen aus jüdischen Familien stammten<sup>39</sup> – und damit Juden bei einem Anteil von etwa 1,4 Prozent an der Gesamtbevölkerung unter den Guerilleros ungefähr 20 Prozent ausmachten – deutet auf eine spezifische

36 Kohan, Héctor Agosti y la primera recepción de Gramsci en la Argentina, 187, Anm. 22.

37 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

38 Interview des Verfassers mit Héctor Schmucler und Oscar del Barco, 3. November 2016.

39 Einbezogen werden in diese Zahl neben Henry Lerner, Bernardo Groswald und Adolfo Rotblat noch Leonardo Wertheim, Alberto Moises Korn und Marcos Szlachter. Weder die jüdischen Mitglieder des urbanen Unterstützungsnetzwerkes noch »Miguel«, dessen jüdische Herkunft nur unzureichend aus den Quellen belegt werden kann, sind hier berücksichtigt.

Dimension innerhalb dieses Bruchs.<sup>40</sup> Wie Lerner hatten die jüdischen Guerilleros mehrheitlich dem PCA angehört, sich von diesem aber zu Beginn der 1960er Jahre zu lösen begonnen. Die Anziehungskraft, die der EGP und dessen vage Ideologie der Nationalen Befreiung anstelle des Parteikommunismus gerade auf sie ausübte, scheint in ihren Ursachen mit den Tiefenschichten jüdischer Erfahrung im Argentinien des 20. Jahrhunderts in Verbindung zu stehen.

### *Gauchos judíos* – Jüdische Erfahrung in einem kulturgeschichtlichen Zwischenraum

Die Biografien der jüdischen Mitglieder des EGP lassen sich aus den Quellen nur noch bruchstückhaft rekonstruieren, und doch teilen Henry Lerner, Adolfo Rotblat, Bernardo Groswald, Marcos Szlachter, Leonardo Werthein und Alberto Moises Korn<sup>41</sup> mehr als den Erfahrungshintergrund, in eine jüdische Familie hineingeboren zu sein. Mit Ausnahme Marcos Szlachters, dessen Familie erst nach seiner Geburt im chilenischen Viña del Mar nach Buenos Aires gezogen war,<sup>42</sup> wurden sie alle in Argentinien geboren. Dennoch wuchsen sie in einem familiären Umfeld auf, das von einem gänzlich anderen Erfahrungsraum geprägt war. Ihre Großeltern waren noch in die traditionelle Lebenswelt des osteuropäischen Shtetls hineingeboren worden und mehrheitlich erst zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts an den Río de la Plata emigriert. Wirtschaftliche Modernisierung und politischer Wandel hatten in den Herkunftsorten im Russischen Reich häufig zum Verlust der Lebens-

40 Laut Sergio DellaPergola lebten im Jahr 1964 etwas mehr als 300 000 Jüdinnen und Juden in Argentinien – die weltweit fünftgrößte jüdische Gemeinschaft. Ders., *Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry*, in: Judith Laikin Elkin/Gilbert W. Merkx, *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, Boston, Mass., 1987, 85–133, hier 92. Schätzungen der Vereinten Nationen zufolge betrug die Gesamtbevölkerung Argentiniens in dem Jahr 22 045 000 Personen. Siehe United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 1964*, New York 1965, 123.

41 Zu Alberto Moises Korn und »Miguel« liegen keine Quellen vor, die ausführliche Aussagen über ihre Biografien jenseits ihrer Tätigkeit im EGP zuließen. Während von »Miguel« lediglich seine Herkunft aus dem Chacó bekannt ist, geht bezüglich Korn aus den Prozessakten zumindest hervor, dass er 1933 geboren wurde, vor seinem Eintritt in die Guerilla in Córdoba lebte, wo er als Angestellter der Banco Israelita tätig war, zunächst über seinen Kollegen Bernardo Groswald in Kontakt mit der Kommunistischen Partei kam und nach Groswalds Abkehr vom PCA mit diesem in die Guerilla eintrat. Siehe Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo II, Folio 284.

42 Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo III, Folio 540; Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo IV, Folio 679.

grundlagen und zu rapider Verarmung geführt. Zudem sahen sich die Jüdinnen und Juden dort um die Jahrhundertwende einer Welle antisemitischer Gewalt bis hin zu großräumigen Pogromen ausgesetzt.<sup>43</sup> Um den Judenheiten des östlichen Europas einen Ausweg aus dieser Zwangslage zu eröffnen, hatte der deutsch-jüdische Unternehmer und Philanthrop Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831–1896) mithilfe der von ihm geführten Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) Ländereien für landwirtschaftliche Siedlungsprojekte in Übersee aufgekauft. Gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts war Argentinien aufgrund seiner liberalen Verfassung und der offenen Einwanderungspolitik zunehmend in den Fokus der Organisation gerückt.<sup>44</sup> Begünstigt durch das intensive Engagement der JCA, entwickelte sich das südamerikanische Land in den Folgejahren zu einem der Hauptemigrationsziele osteuropäischer Juden. Bis 1914 wuchs die jüdische Bevölkerung Argentiniens von wenigen Tausend im vorangegangenen Jahrhundert auf über 115 000 an.<sup>45</sup> So entstand an der Mündung des Río de la Plata die größte jüdische Gemeinschaft auf der Südhalbkugel.<sup>46</sup>

Im Zuge jenes Einwanderungsstroms gelangten auch die Großeltern der meisten späteren EGP-Mitglieder an den Río de la Plata. Bis auf wenige Ausnahmen ließen sie sich dort jedoch nicht in der Hauptstadt, sondern wie die Großeltern Henry Lerner, Raquel Fraenkel und Pascual Lerner, in einer der durch die JCA begründeten Agrarkolonien nieder.<sup>47</sup> Gemäß der mitunter durch die JCA selbst gepflegten Metaphorik war das Projekt Baron de Hirschs jedoch mehr als aus der Not geboren. Die Emigration der unter Verfolgung und Zwang lebenden Juden aus dem östlichen Europa in die Neue Welt wurde in der Bildsprache des Exodus schraffiert, als Auszug aus der

43 Judith Laikin Elkin, 150 Jahre Einsamkeit. Geschichte der Juden in Lateinamerika, übers. von Michael Benthack, Hamburg 1996, 56 f.; Jeffrey Kopstein/Jason Wittenberg, Art. »Pogrom«, in: Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur (EJGK). Im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig hg. von Dan Diner, 7 Bde., Stuttgart 2011–2017, hier Bd. 5, Stuttgart 2014, 572–575; Dan Miron, Art. »Schtetl«, in: EJGK, Bd. 6, Stuttgart 2014, 387–395.

44 Frank Wolff, Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens. Raumkonzepte und Interessenkonflikte im jüdischen Argentinien 1889–1939, in: Jochen Oltmer (Hg.), Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration, Wiesbaden 2018, 133–164; Haim Avni, Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía 1810–1950 [Argentinien und die Geschichte der jüdischen Immigration 1810–1950], Jerusalem 1983, 131.

45 Graciela Ben-Dror, Art. »Argentinien«, in: Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart, im Auftrag des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin hg. von Wolfgang Benz, 8 Bde., Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2008–2015, hier Bd. 1: Länder und Regionen, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2008, 29–36, hier 29.

46 Wolff, Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens, 142.

47 Interview des Verfassers mit Martha Schapiro, Dezember 2017 (schriftlich); Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

Sklaverei über das Meer in die Freiheit.<sup>48</sup> In den Augen des zeitgenössischen Beobachters Paul Bettelin, dessen Bericht über die JCA 1930 in der Zweimonatsschrift *Der Morgen* erschien, zielte Baron de Hirsch darauf ab, »aus elenden Sklaven, die auf Gelegenheitsarbeiten oder auf Bettelei angewiesen waren, Ackerbauer und freie Menschen«<sup>49</sup> zu machen. Erst indem die europäischen Juden im 19. Jahrhundert – durch staatlichen Ausschluss wie durch kollektive Beschränkungen ihrer Berufswahl weitestgehend auf Kleinhandel und Handwerk begrenzt – in Argentinien durch Landarbeit zur Erde zurückkehrten, könnten sie sich endlich emanzipieren.<sup>50</sup> Auch wenn Baron de Hirsch selbst das Emigrationsprojekt pragmatischer sah, erhoben ihn viele der Migrantinnen und Migranten in den Rang eines »säkularen Moses, der die Not leidenden Juden in das neue ›Gelobte Land‹ geführt habe«.<sup>51</sup> Wie um die an sein Siedlungsprojekt geknüpften Hoffnungen auf weltliche Erlösung eines verfolgten Volkes herauszustellen, gründete die JCA ihre erste Kolonie in Argentinien unter dem verheißungsvollen Namen Moisésville.<sup>52</sup>

Ungeachtet des religiös grundierten Aufopferungswillens der ersten Siedler war dem JCA-Projekt kein anhaltender Erfolg beschieden. Die modernen Metropolen des Landes, allen voran Buenos Aires, waren auf längere Sicht deutlich attraktiver als das von körperlicher Arbeit, dauerhaften Entbehrungen und provinzieller Abgeschiedenheit bestimmte Leben in den Agrarkolonien.<sup>53</sup> Henry Lernalers Vater Jacobo etwa war 1908 in der Agrarsiedlung Colonia Mauricio geboren worden. Seine Kindheit hatte er in derart prekären Verhältnissen verbracht, dass er Zeit seines Lebens versuchte, die Härte des Lebens mit Armut, Feldarbeit und antisemitisch grundierter Diskriminierung zu verdrängen. Selbst nachdem er die Agrarkolonie verlassen, sich Ende der 1920er Jahre mit seiner Ehefrau nahe Córdoba niedergelassen und eine Familie gegründet hatte, sah er sich noch immer außerstande, mit seinem Sohn über die Erfahrungen seiner Kindheit zu sprechen. Erst ein jüngerer Onkel

48 Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, *Medio siglo en el surco argentino. Cincuentenario de la Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.)* [Ein halbes Jahrhundert auf argentinischem Ackerland. Fünfzigstes Jubiläum der Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.)], Buenos Aires 1942, 5–10 und 46.

49 Paul Bettelin, *Die Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.)*. Ein jüdisches Wohlfahrtswerk, übers. von Margarete Goldstein, in: *Der Morgen*. Monatsschrift der Juden in Deutschland 6 (1930–1931), H. 5, 466–476, hier 470.

50 Ebd., 468; Wolff, *Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens*, 143.

51 Wolff, *Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens*, 143.

52 Morton D. Winsberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonization in Argentina*, in: *Geographical Review* 54 (1964), H. 4, 487–501, hier 488; Theodore Norman, *An Outstretched Arm. A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*, London/Boston, Mass, 1985, 70 f.

53 Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit*, 231–238; Yehuda Levin, *Labor and Land at the Start of Jewish Settlement in Argentina*, in: *Jewish History* 21 (2007), H. 3/4, 341–359, hier 353–356.

habe Henry Lerner Jahre später über jene Teile der Familiengeschichte aufgeklärt.<sup>54</sup>

Trotz ihres flüchtigen Erfolgs haben sich die Agrarkolonien tief in die jüdische Geschichte Argentiniens eingeschrieben. Rückblickend erscheinen sie als in der Neuen Welt gelegener kulturgeschichtlicher Zwischenraum, in dem Restbestände der traditionellen Welt des osteuropäischen Shtetls fortlebten, bevor die große Mehrheit der Bewohner schließlich in die kosmopolitisch geprägte Hauptstadt Buenos Aires übersiedelte. Dieser Lebenswelt setzte der 1883 noch im Russischen Reich geborene argentinisch-jüdische Autor Alberto Gerchunoff mit seinem Erzählband *Los gauchos judíos* (Die jüdischen Gauchos) 1910 ein literarisches Denkmal.<sup>55</sup> Unter Rückgriff auf die ikonische Figur der argentinischen Nationalliteratur schuf Gerchunoff im Bild des jüdischen Gauchos ein ebenso anachronistisches wie wegweisendes Emblem. Anachronistisch insofern, als seine lebensweltliche Entsprechung des nomadischen, sich selbst verpflichteten Rinderhirten in den Weiten der argentinischen Pampa seit Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts durch die zunehmende Privatisierung der Viehherden und Ländereien längst im Verschwinden begriffen war<sup>56</sup> und zum Zeitpunkt von Gerchunoffs Erzählung nurmehr als romantisch verklärte Identifikationsfigur existierte.<sup>57</sup> Die vornehmlich Ackerbau betreibenden und daher sesshaften jüdischen Emigranten schienen mit den tradierten Vorstellungen des Gauchos auf den ersten Blick nichts als eine vage Orientierung auf die Landwirtschaft und die dortige Omnipräsenz von Pferden gemein zu haben. Und doch baute Gerchunoffs literarische Figur auf ein Fundament, in dem sich beide ähnelten, denn auch der Gaucho galt in seiner idealisierten Form als aus dem Aufeinandertreffen zweier Kulturkreise – des indigenen und des europäischen – hervorgegangener Typus, der seine Herkunft in der Einsamkeit der Pampa abzulegen suchte.<sup>58</sup> Das Siedlungsprojekt des Hirschs erscheint in Gerchunoffs Erzählung als utopisches Versprechen jenseits von Diskriminierung, wobei die prekären Lebensbedingungen in den Kolonien gleichermaßen gestreift werden. Meisterlich bildet Gerchunoff darin das duale Ineinandergreifen von Erlösung und Entbehrung

54 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

55 Alberto Gerchunoff, *Los gauchos judíos* [Die jüdischen Gauchos], Buenos Aires 1950, 32 f.; in dt. Übersetzung erschien ders., *Jüdische Gauchos*, hg. von Liliana R. Feierstein, übers. von Stefan Degenkolbe, mit einem Gespräch mit Jorge Luis Borges, Berlin 2010.

56 Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *Historia social del gaucho* [Sozialgeschichte des Gauchos], Buenos Aires 1982; Ezequiel Adamovsky, *El gaucho indómito. De Martín Fierro a Perón, el emblema imposible de una nación desgarrada* [Der unbeugsame Gaucho. Von Martín Fierro bis Perón, das unmögliche Sinnbild einer zerrissenen Nation], Buenos Aires 2019.

57 José Hernández, *El gaucho Martín Fierro* [Der Gaucho Martín Fierro], Buenos Aires 1872.

58 Pedro Figari, *El gaucho* [Der Gaucho], in: Pegaso. Letras, Artes, Ciencias. Revista Mensual [Pegasus. Literatur, Kunst, Wissenschaft. Monatsschrift] 10 (1919), 367–369, hier 367.

ab, das durch die in den folgenden Dekaden beginnende Mythologisierung der landwirtschaftlichen Siedlungen zu einem zentralen Motiv innerhalb der Narration jüdischer Erfahrung in Argentinien erhoben werden sollte.<sup>59</sup>

Vom Fortschreiten der Zeit in den Hintergrund gedrängt und in seiner Erscheinungsform modifiziert, wirkte jener Dualismus mittels familiärer Erinnerungen auch in die Biografien der jungen Männer hinein, die sich gut ein halbes Jahrhundert später der Guerillaoperation Ernesto Guevaras und Jorge Ricardo Masettis anschlossen. In meist unverklärter Form blieben Mangel und Deprivation jener ersten Jahre in Argentinien im familiären Gedächtnis in Erzählungen von Großeltern und Eltern präsent. Darin hallten zudem die vornehmlich in den osteuropäischen Herkunftsregionen, bisweilen jedoch auch noch in Südamerika selbst erfahrenen antijüdischen Verfolgungen und Anfeindungen nach. Gerade das Beispiel der Familie Lerner, deren Enkelgeneration bereits ein Universitätsstudium aufnehmen konnte, verdeutlicht aber auch, dass Argentinien sich nicht nur aufnahmewillig, sondern in seiner sozioökonomischen Struktur auch als durchlässig für die Einwanderer präsentierte. Hatten die jüdischen Emigrantinnen und Emigranten die Armut der Agrarkolonien erst einmal hinter sich gelassen und waren in die urbanen Zentren des Landes übergesiedelt, stiegen ihre Kinder und Enkel in die mittleren Gesellschaftsschichten auf und bekleideten bald einflussreiche Posten in Kulturinstitutionen und großen Unternehmen des Landes. Das von der JCA mit religiösem Duktus gezeichnete Bild Argentinien als Gelobtes Land offenbarte damit einen zwar profanen und verspäteten, aber durchaus nachweislichen Wahrheitsgehalt.<sup>60</sup>

- 59 Nicolás Rapoport, *La Querencia (entre arroyos y cuchillas)* [Die Zuneigung (zwischen Bächen und Klingen)], Buenos Aires 1929, 7; Haim Avni, *Argentina, »The Promised Land«*. Baron de Hirsch's Colonization Project in the Argentine Republic, Jerusalem 1973 (hebr.); Levin, *Labor and Land at the Start of Jewish Settlement in Argentina*, 345; Wolff, *Das Heilsversprechen des Ackerbodens*, 144.
- 60 Laikin Elkin, *150 Jahre Einsamkeit*, 208–229; Eugene F. Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa. A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires*, New York/London 1982, 91–123; Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines? Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2010, 21–45: Kap. 2: *Searching for Home Abroad. Jews in Argentina and Argentines in Israel*, hier 28.



## Zurückweisung und Zukunftshoffnung: Jüdische Kommunisten in der Zwischenkriegszeit

Bereits vor ihrer Emigration nach Südamerika waren viele der jüdischen Einwanderer aus dem östlichen Europa in ihren Herkunftsregionen mit den dort aufkommenden Strömungen des Sozialismus in Kontakt gekommen. Insbesondere in Buenos Aires fanden sie schnell Anschluss an die dortige Arbeiterbewegung oder gründeten – wie im Falle der Po'ale Zion, der ab 1906 einen Ableger in der Hauptstadt hatte – eigene Parteien.<sup>61</sup> Seit Beginn der Masseneinwanderung nach Argentinien zur Jahrhundertwende hatte es jedoch immer wieder antisemitische, zumeist aus dem politischen Katholizismus gespeiste Anfeindungen gegen die jüdischen Emigrantinnen und Emigranten gegeben.<sup>62</sup> Als es im Januar 1919 in Buenos Aires zu Arbeiterunruhen kam, die später als *Semana Trágica* (Tragische Woche) in die Geschichtsschreibung des Landes eingingen,<sup>63</sup> wurde den argentinischen Juden aufgrund ihrer überproportionalen Präsenz innerhalb der Arbeiterbewegung die Verantwortung für den Aufruhr zugeschrieben. Pinie Wald, einer der wohl sichtbarsten Protagonisten des argentinischen Bundismus, war als imaginiertes Anführer festgenommen worden.<sup>64</sup> Maßgeblich von katholisch-nationalistischen Gruppierungen getragen, schlugen die bislang vornehmlich publizistisch geäußerten Anfeindungen gegen die jüdische Bevölkerung in der Folge in offene Gewalt um und entluden sich in einer pogromartigen Eruption gegen jüdische Einrichtungen, Geschäfte und Bewohner der Hauptstadt.<sup>65</sup>

In den darauffolgenden Dekaden richteten insbesondere konservative Intellektuelle ihre Anstrengungen darauf, dem jungen Nationalstaat ein allgemeingültiges Narrativ aufzuprägen. Als Einwanderungsland mangelte es Argentinien jedoch an historischen Projektionsflächen, die sich zur kollekti-

61 Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa*, 36.

62 Lukas Böckmann, »An Gott glaube ich nicht mehr«. Katholische Tradition und politische Theologie innerhalb der argentinischen Guerilla der 1960er Jahre, in: *Jahrbuch des Simon Dubnow Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 14 (2015), 479–508, hier 490.

63 Edgardo J. Bilsky, *La semana trágica* [Die tragische Woche], Buenos Aires 1984.

64 Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos* [Geschichte der argentinischen Juden], Buenos Aires 2006, 198; Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 21.

65 Haim Avni, ¿Antisemitismo estatal en la Argentina? A propósito de los sucesos de la *Semana Trágica*. Enero de 1919 [Staatlicher Antisemitismus in Argentinien? Anlässlich der Vorfälle der Tragischen Woche. Januar 1919], in: *Coloquio* [Kolloquium] 4 (1982), 49–67; Victor A. Mirelman, *The Semana Trágica of 1919 and the Jews in Argentina*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (1975), H. 1, 61–73; Marcelo Dimenstein, *En busca de un pogrom perdido. Diáspora judía, política y políticas de la memoria en torno a la Semana Trágica de 1919 (1919–1999)* [Auf der Suche nach einem verlorenen Pogrom. Jüdische Diaspora, Politik und Erinnerungspolitik hinsichtlich der Tragischen Woche von 1919 (1919–1999)], in: *Sociohistórica* 25 (2009), 103–122.

ven Identifikation auch für die um die Jahrhundertwende Hinzugekommenen geeignet hätten. Zum verbindenden Moment des bald als *argentinidad*<sup>66</sup> bezeichneten Nationalbewusstseins wurde deswegen ein Element erhoben, das die auf ein Minimum dezimierte und der Kirche unterworfenen indigene Bevölkerung wie auch die kreolischen Eliten und die vornehmlich aus Spanien und Italien stammenden Einwanderer teilte: der Katholizismus.<sup>67</sup>

Dies zog die Zugehörigkeit von Jüdinnen und Juden zum argentinischen Gemeinwesen offen in Zweifel; ein Umstand, der auch für die Familien der späteren jüdischen Guerillos von einschneidender Bedeutung gewesen sein muss. Denn obwohl sie alle die Erfahrung teilten, dass ihre jüdische Herkunft durch die Umgebungsgesellschaft zumeist in pejorativer Absicht herausgestellt wurde, verstanden sie selbst sich doch vornehmlich als Argentinier.<sup>68</sup> Denn mit der Emigration nach Südamerika hatte sich nicht etwa nur ein geografischer, der im östlichen Europa erfahrenen Deprivation und Verfolgung geschuldeter Ortswechsel ereignet. Auch wenn die Moderne bereits unverkennbar Einzug in die Lebenswelt des Shtetls gehalten hatte, die Bewohnerchaft als der Kultur zugeneigte Mittelklasse wahrgenommen wurde, die sich den zeitgenössischen Denkströmungen von Zionismus oder Sozialismus zu öffnen begann, galt es ausdrücklich als jüdischer Erfahrungsraum.<sup>69</sup> Ebenso waren die in Argentinien gegründeten Agrarkolonien noch unverkennbar von jüdischen Traditionsbeständen geprägt, auch wenn sich mit der Hinwendung zur Landarbeit und der Lockerung religiöser Observanz, der Aufweichung vormaliger Speisevorschriften und Heiratsbestimmungen zugunsten einer Öffnung für die Einflüsse der neuen Umgebung, eine zunehmende Säkularisierung abzeichnete. Durch die nun einsetzende Binnenmigration aus den ländlichen Regionen in die Städte sollte sich jener in Bruchstücken in die Neue Welt übertragene traditionale Lebenszusammenhang innerhalb einer

66 Fortunato Mallimaci, *El catolicismo argentino desde el liberalismo integral a la hegemonía militar* [Der argentinische Katholizismus, vom integralen Liberalismus zur militärischen Hegemonie], in: M. Cristina Liboreiro u. a. (Hgg.), *500 años de cristianismo en Argentina* [500 Jahre Christentum in Argentinien], Buenos Aires 1992, 313–365.

67 Graciela Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews. Argentina. 1933–1945*, Lincoln, Nebr./Jerusalem 2008, 1; Michael A. Burdick, *For God and the Fatherland. Religion and Politics in Argentina*, Albany, N. Y., 1995, 13–44; Fortunato Mallimaci/Huberto Cucchetti/Luis Miguel Donatello, *Caminos sinuosos. Nacionalismo y catolicismo en la Argentina contemporánea* [Heimtückische Wege. Nationalismus und Katholizismus im zeitgenössischen Argentinien], in: Francisco Colom/Ángel Rivero (Hgg.), *El altar y el trono. Ensayos sobre el catolicismo político iberoamericano* [Altar und Thron. Essays über den politischen Katholizismus in Iberoamerika], Barcelona 2006, 155–190.

68 Interviews des Verfassers mit Ana María Kaufman, 11. November 2016; Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016 und Martha Schapiro, Dezember 2017.

69 Miron, Art. »Shtetl«, 388.

Generation zwar weitgehend auflösen,<sup>70</sup> gleichsam aber noch so präsent bleiben, dass er sich für die Eltern der späteren Guerilleros nicht mehr idealisieren ließ. Deutlich lässt sich jener fortschreitende Akkulturationsprozess, der sich auch in den Familien der späteren Guerilleros vollzog, an den Vornamen ihrer Mitglieder nachvollziehen. Während die Elterngeneration mit Sofia, Jacobo oder Samuel noch bisweilen hispanisierte Formen jüdischer Namen trug, war die familiäre Herkunft aus dem östlichen Europa an den Vornamen der späteren Guerilleros nicht länger abzulesen. Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Familien hatte sich unmissverständlich zugunsten des Landes am Río de la Plata verschoben.<sup>71</sup> Und doch blieben die Nachkommen der Einwanderer, für deren Vorfahren sich ungeachtet ihrer jeweiligen Herkunftsregion bald der Kollektivsingular *ruso* (Russe) etabliert hatte, als mit der Mehrheitsgesellschaft nicht identische Minderheit erkennbar. Denn während die großen Einwanderungsgruppen aus Italien und Spanien mit der argentinischen Aufnahmegesellschaft sowohl den romanischen Ursprung ihrer Sprache als auch die Prägung durch den Katholizismus teilten, wichen die jüdischen Emigranten durch ihren Habitus unübersehbar hiervon ab.<sup>72</sup>

Innerhalb der Familie Henry Lerner, die seit 1928 in der kleinen Ortschaft Cosquín nahe Córdoba lebte, blieb die jüdische Herkunft stets durch das Jiddisch der Großeltern, die noch immer *Di prese* und *Di yidische tsaytung* bezogen,<sup>73</sup> durch Speisen bei Familienfesten oder die zumeist auf Ausschluss basierende Abwesenheit der Kinder im katholischen Religionsunterricht präsent. Gleichzeitig hatten sich Henrys Eltern bereits weit von den Relikten der osteuropäischen Lebenswelt gelöst. Sie wählten eine säkulare Erziehung für ihre Kinder, besuchten die Synagoge nicht mehr und begingen weder jüdische Feiertage noch schlossen sie ihre Ehe vor einem Rabbiner. Zudem war Jacobo, der bereits zu Beginn der 1920er Jahre gewerkschaftlich

70 Edgardo Bilsky, *Etnicidad y clase obrera. La presencia judía en el movimiento obrero argentino* [Ethnizität und Arbeiterklasse. Die jüdische Präsenz in der argentinischen Arbeiterbewegung], in: *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* [Lateinamerikanische Migrationsstudien] 4 (1989), H. 11, 27–47.

71 Interview mit Martha Shapiro, Dezember 2017; Interview mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo III, Folio 499.

72 Bilsky, *Etnicidad y clase obrera*, 28.

73 Ausführlicher zum jüdischen Pressewesen und den genannten Publikationen siehe Lilianna Ruth Feierstein, *The New Midrash. The Jewish Press in Argentina*, in: Susanne Marten-Finnis/Michael Nagel (Hgg.), *Die PRESSA. Internationale Presseausstellung in Köln 1928 und der jüdische Beitrag zum modernen Journalismus. The PRESSA. International Press Exhibition in Cologne 1928 and the Jewish Contribution to Modern Journalism*, 2 Bde., Bremen 2012, hier Bd. 2, 559–590; Alejandro Dujovne, *Cartografía de las publicaciones periódicas judías de izquierda en Argentina. 1900–1953* [Kartografie linker Zeitungspublikationen in Argentinien. 1900–1953], in: *Revista del Museo de Antropología* [Zeitschrift des Museums für Anthropologie] 1 (2008), H. 1, 121–138.

organisiert war, in die Kommunistische Partei eingetreten. Bald stieg er in Cosquín in die lokale Parteiführung auf und gelangte zu regionaler Bekanntheit.<sup>74</sup> Gemeinsam mit einem weiteren jüdischen Genossen unterhielt Jacobo Lerner ein Haus, in dem das von staatlicher Repression betroffene Zentralkomitee der Partei um Victorio Codovilla<sup>75</sup> und Rodolfo Ghioldi<sup>76</sup> konspirative Treffen abhalten konnte. Anekdotisch fasst Lerner jene Prägung in einer Kindheitserinnerung zusammen. Anlässlich des Falls von Berlin organisierten Kommunisten und Sozialisten Anfang Mai 1945 eine große Festveranstaltung in einem typischen Freizeitklub der Mittelklasse. Es wurde gegrillt und Boccia, Fronton oder Domino gespielt. Höhepunkt der Feierlichkeiten war ein Fahnenumzug, bei dem unter dem Absingen der Marseillaise die Flaggen der Alliierten um das Fonton-Feld getragen wurden. Das rote Banner mit Hammer und Sichel schwenkte sein Vater Jacobo Lerner.<sup>77</sup>

Mit fortschreitender Akkulturation hatte sich für Jacobo und seine Frau Luisa die kommunistische Zugehörigkeit über ihre jüdische gelegt. Die hier im Speziellen aufscheinende Transformationsbewegung hin zur Arbeiterbewegung indes war keineswegs ein Einzelfall. Vornehmlich unter jenen jüdischen Emigrantinnen und Emigranten, die sich in oder nahe den urbanen Zentren ansiedelten, entfaltete insbesondere die Kommunistische Partei eine ungeahnte Anziehungskraft. Auf ganz ähnliche Weise, wie dies Detlev Claussen anhand von Isaac Deutschers Figur des Nichtjüdischen Juden für Europa nachgezeichnet hat,<sup>78</sup> fühlten sie sich offenbar von der Verheißung des Kommunismus angesprochen, die eine gleichberechtigte Teilhabe am Gemeinwesen jenseits vormaliger Zugehörigkeit in Aussicht stellte. Mehr noch als ihre nichtjüdischen Mitbürgerinnen und Mitbürger hatten die jüdischen Einwanderer in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts durchaus gute Gründe, als Träger dieser Hoffnung den Kommunismus sowjetischer Prägung zu identifizieren und sich dessen Repräsentanten in Argentinien, dem PCA, anzuschließen. Durch ihre Stellung als Landarbeiter(nachkommen) sahen sie sich mit ähnlichen ökonomischen Herausforderungen konfrontiert wie die Industriearbeiterschaft in den großen Metropolen. Überdies

74 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

75 Siehe Art. »Codovilla«, in: Horacio Tarcus/Laura Ehrlich (Hgg.), *Diccionario biográfico de la izquierda argentina. De los anarquistas a la »nueva izquierda« 1870–1976* [Biografisches Lexikon der argentinischen Linken. Von den Anarchisten zur »neuen Linken« 1870–1976], Buenos Aires 2007, 136; Lazar Jéfets/Víctor Jéfets, *La Internacional Comunista y América Latina, 1919–1943. Diccionario biográfico* [Die Kommunistische Internationale und Lateinamerika 1919–1943. Biografisches Wörterbuch], Santiago de Chile 2015, 145–149.

76 Siehe Art. »Ghioldi«, in: Jéfets/Jéfets (Hgg.), *La Internacional Comunista y América Latina, 1919–1943*, 250–252.

77 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

78 Detlev Claussen, *Entréebillet Kommunismus. Eine Erinnerung an Isaac Deutscher*, in: *Babylon. Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart* 22 (2007), 87–97.

hatten ihnen persönliche Diskriminierungserfahrungen, die *Semana Trágica* und der Aufstieg des politischen Katholizismus die Brüchigkeit des liberalen Versprechens von rechtlicher Gleichheit im Rahmen eines modernen Staatswesens demonstriert. Mit der Gründung einer jüdischen Sektion innerhalb des PCA, der aus einer Abspaltung des Bund hervorgegangenen Idsektie, in der auch Jacobo Lerner seine Parteilaufbahn begann, fand diese Affinität 1920 ihren organisationsgeschichtlichen Widerhall.<sup>79</sup> Trotz des geringen Anteils von Juden an der Gesamtbevölkerung des Landes sollte die Idsektie Zeit ihres Bestehens nach der italienischen die zweitgrößte idiomatische Sektion innerhalb des argentinischen Parteikommunismus bilden.<sup>80</sup> Doch auch wenn die Anbindung an die Partei etwa im Falle der Eltern Henry Lerners gegenüber der jüdischen Zugehörigkeit, die sich zunehmend in den Bereich des Privaten zu verlagern schien, an Bedeutung gewann, blieb Letztere weiterhin relevant. Darauf deutet zumindest hin, dass in den offiziellen Gemeindeinstitutionen, vornehmlich der *Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina* (AMIA) und der *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas* (DAIA), Delegierte der Kommunistischen Partei überaus präsent blieben. Organisiert in der Liste des *Idisher Cultur Farband* (ICUF), erhielten sie noch in den Wahlen zum Vorstandsrat der AMIA, zu denen etwa 45 000 Mitglieder aufgerufen waren, im Jahr 1953 knapp 40 Prozent der Stimmen.<sup>81</sup>

Bis zur Mitte des Jahrhunderts verfolgte die Partei in Anlehnung an die sowjetische Führung eine Politik der Integration jüdischer Einwanderinnen und Einwanderer sowohl in ihre Strukturen als auch in den staatsbürgerlichen Rahmen des Aufnahmelandes, ohne eine sofortige und umfassende Akkulturation einzufordern. Und doch war die Idsektie weniger in Anerkennung jüdischer Partikularität entstanden als in der Hoffnung, durch sie die jiddischsprachige

79 Daniel Kersfeld, *Rusos y rojos. Judíos comunistas en los tiempos de la Comintern* [Russen und Rote. Kommunistische Juden in der Zeit der Komintern], Buenos Aires 2012, 104 f.; ders., *El activismo judío en el comunismo de entreguerras. Cinco casos latinoamericanos* [Der jüdische Aktivismus im Zwischenkriegskommunismus. Fünf lateinamerikanische Fälle], in: *Nueva Sociedad* [Neue Gesellschaft] 247 (2013), 152–164, hier 156; Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, *The Jewish Communists in Argentina and the Soviet Settlement of Jews on Land in the USSR*, in: *Jews in Eastern Europe* 49 (2002), H. 3, 79–98, hier 81 f.

80 Laut Schenkolewski-Kroll waren 54 Prozent der Parteimitglieder Ausländer, wobei 28,4 Prozent der italienischen und 13,7 Prozent der jiddischen Sektion angehörten. Darüber hinaus existierten deutsche, jugoslawische, tschechoslowakische, armenische, ungarische und polnische Sektionen, die zusammen jedoch weniger als 12 Prozent ausmachten. Siehe dies., *The Jewish Communists in Argentina and the Soviet Settlement of Jews on Land in the USSR*, 82.

81 Israel Lotersztain, *La historia de un fracaso. La religión judeo comunista en los tiempos de la URSS. La prensa del ICUF en Argentina entre 1946 y 1957* [Die Geschichte eines Scheiterns. Die jüdisch-kommunistische Religion in der Zeit der UdSSR. Die Presse des ICUF in Argentinien zwischen 1946 und 1957] (unveröff. Dissertation, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, Buenos Aires, 2014), 12.

Arbeiterschaft zu erreichen.<sup>82</sup> Ebenso verbarg sich darin die Überzeugung, die völlige Emanzipation der Juden sei nur durch ihre Eingliederung in die Arbeiterbewegung denkbar, die ihrerseits mittels des Sozialismus zu befreien sei.<sup>83</sup> Die überproportionale Präsenz von Juden in der Arbeiterbewegung und das Zurücktreten ihrer religiösen Bindungen deuten indes darauf, dass diese Bindungen nicht lediglich verschwanden, sondern – ganz ähnlich wie in Europa – in mehrdeutigem Sinne aufgehoben wurden: in einem traditionellen Sinne aufgelöst, um in einer auf die Zukunft gerichteten Geschichtsphilosophie bewahrt zu werden.<sup>84</sup> Vor diesem Hintergrund muss auch die – trotz der geringen absoluten Zahl von nur sechs Kämpfern – überproportionale Präsenz von Guerilleros jüdischer Herkunft im EGP interpretiert werden.

### Jüdische Guerilleros – vom Kommunismus zur Nationalen Befreiung

Aus den Debatten um das katholische Glaubensbekenntnis als notwendige Bedingung für die Zugehörigkeit zur Nation ging im Zuge wirtschaftlicher Schwierigkeiten, in die auch Argentinien während der Zwischenkriegszeit geraten war, der noch während der vorangehenden liberalen Phase weitestgehend ins Private zurückgetretene Katholizismus neuerlich als einflussreiche politische Kraft hervor. Seine dominante Denkströmung, der *catolicismo integral*, sah im zunehmenden Einfluss von Moderne, Liberalismus und Sozialismus den gesellschaftlichen Niedergang ursächlich begründet. Insofern der *catolicismo integral* deren Aufblühen untrennbar mit den jüdischen Emigrantinnen und Emigranten in Verbindung brachte, konstituierte er sich als im Kern zutiefst antisemitische Ideologie.<sup>85</sup> Um die Neutralität Ar-

82 Bilsky, *Etnicidad y clase obrera*, 41 f.

83 Claudia Bacci, *Las políticas culturales del progresismo judío argentino. La revista »Aporte« y el ICUF en la década de 1950* [Die Kulturpolitik des argentinisch-jüdischen Progressivismus. Die Zeitschrift »Aporte« und der ICUF in den 1950er Jahren], in: *Políticas de la Memoria* [Erinnerungspolitik] 5 (2004/05), 159–168, hier 160–162.

84 Jan Gerber, *Karl Marx in Paris. Die Entdeckung des Kommunismus*, München 2018, 181; Dan Diner, *Aufklärungen. Wege in die Moderne*, Stuttgart 2017, 42 f.; Bilsky, *Etnicidad y clase obrera*, 41 f.

85 Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews*, 4; Fortunato Mallimaci/Luis Miguel Donatello, *Del desencanto con el progreso a la construcción de una hegemonía católica. Del golpe de 1930 al primer peronismo* [Von der Enttäuschung über den Fortschritt zur Konstruktion einer katholischen Hegemonie. Vom Putsch 1930 bis zum ersten Peronismus], in: Julio Pinto/Fortunato Mallimaci (Hgg.), *La influencia de las religiones en el estado y la nación argentina* [Der Einfluss der Religionen auf den argentinischen Staat und die argentinische Nation], Buenos Aires 2013, 127–148, hier 129.

gentiniens im Zweiten Weltkrieg zu wahren und dem zunehmenden Einfluss sozialistischer Positionen innerhalb der Arbeiterschaft entgegenzuwirken, putschte eine Gruppe Militärs 1943 gegen die amtierende Regierung und besetzte daraufhin Schlüsselpositionen mit katholischen Funktionären. Der antisemitische Autor Gustavo Martínez Zuviria (Pseudonym: Hugo West) revidierte als Bildungsminister ein früheres Gesetz zur säkularen Bildung und führte die katholische Lehre erneut als Pflichtfach in den Schulen ein; die Schächtung von Tieren und der Verkauf koscheren Fleisches wurden untersagt und jiddische Publikationen verboten.<sup>86</sup> Der *catolicismo integral* war damit zur Staatsdoktrin geworden. Nachdem Juan Domingo Perón 1946 als gewählter Präsident aus der Junta hervorgegangen war, begegnete ihm die jüdische Bevölkerung des Landes aufgrund seiner bisweilen offenen Sympathien für den europäischen Faschismus mit von durchaus berechtigter Furcht durchzogener Reserviertheit.<sup>87</sup>

In jenen Jahren wuchsen die späteren jüdischen Guerilleros um Henry Lerner heran, die alle zwischen 1933 und 1945 geboren wurden. Auch wenn sich die Befürchtungen gegenüber Perón auf längere Sicht nicht bewahrheiten sollten,<sup>88</sup> erlebten sie ihre Kindheit in einem gesellschaftlichen Klima, das auf nationaler Ebene von der Sorge um eine mögliche Machtübernahme durch ein faschistisches Regime durchzogen war. Weltpolitisch hingegen hatte sich durch die Ereignisse in Europa die Überzeugung verbreitet, die Sowjetunion habe im Zweiten Weltkrieg die Welt vor dem Nationalsozialismus gerettet und damit zugleich als Schutzmacht der Juden agiert.<sup>89</sup> Lerner schritt, sich der Jugendorganisation jener Partei anzuschließen, der auch sein Vater bereits angehörte, hatte also nicht nur familiäre Gründe, zumal die übrigen späteren jüdischen Mitglieder des EGP unabhängig voneinander zu

86 Ben-Dror, Art. »Argentinien«, 32.

87 Alan Metz, *Reluctant Partners. Juan Peron and the Jews of Argentina, 1946–1955*, in: *Judaism. A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 41 (1992), H. 4, 378–394; Mónica Quijada, *El peronismo y la cuestión judía. Una revisión crítica de su historiografía [Der Peronismus und die jüdische Frage. Eine kritische Untersuchung seiner Historiografie]*, in: *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes* 20 (1995), H. 39/40, 239–269; Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 67–88; ders., *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews. Peron, the Eichmann Capture and after*, Bethesda, Md., 2003, 33–105.

88 Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 133–167; Jeffrey Marder, *The »Organización Israelita Argentina«. Between Perón and the Jews*, in: *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes* 20 (1995), H. 39/40, 125–152.

89 Interview des Verfassers mit Héctor Schmucler und Oscar del Barco, 3. November 2016; Interview des Verfassers mit Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016.

einem ähnlichen Zeitpunkt der Organisation beitraten.<sup>90</sup> Und doch wirkt die Entscheidung zunächst widersinnig, denn Mitte der 1950er Jahre begannen sowohl der allgemeine Einfluss des PCA auf die Arbeiterbewegung des Landes als auch die vormalige Affinität zwischen der Partei und den Nachkommen der jüdischen Emigrantinnen und Emigranten brüchiger zu werden. In doktrinärer Bindung an Moskau forderte der Parteikommunismus die Juden des Landes immer offener dazu auf, sich zu proletarisieren, in der nationalen Arbeiterbewegung aufzugehen und ihre jüdische Zugehörigkeit gänzlich abzulegen.<sup>91</sup> Mit der Gründung des Staates Israel 1948 hatten die zionistischen Organisationen in Argentinien hingegen erheblichen Auftrieb erhalten. Der sozialistische Zionismus konnte mit dem Erkalten der Beziehungen zwischen der Sowjetunion und Israel vor allem unter jenen jungen Argentinern größere Bedeutung entfalten, die sich zwar der Arbeiterbewegung zurechneten, ihre jüdische Zugehörigkeit aber nicht in Einklang mit der Parteiposition bringen konnten.<sup>92</sup>

Zeitgleich erhielt das aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nachwirkende Bild der Sowjetunion als Schutzmacht der Juden Risse. Während der Name Stalins zehn Jahre zuvor in seiner emblematischen Verbindung mit der Schlacht um Stalingrad – in der nach verbreiteter Meinung das Schicksal der europäischen Judenheiten entschieden worden war – die bisweilen heftigen Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen Zionisten und nicht zionistischen Kommunisten zum Erliegen brachte,<sup>93</sup> schlug dessen Verbindung mit dem PCA Mitte der 1950er Jahre ins Gegenteil um. Die antijüdisch grundierten Schauprozesse in der Sowjetunion insbesondere im Zuge einer angenommenen Verschwörung der Kremlärzte<sup>94</sup> sowie in Prag gegen Rudolf Slánský<sup>95</sup> waren auch in Argentinien nicht unbemerkt geblieben und unter anderem durch den Dach-

90 Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo II, Folio 284; Interviews des Verfassers mit Ana María Kaufman, 11. November 2016; Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016; Martha Schapiro, Dezember 2017; Lucila Geralnik, 21. Dezember 2017 und Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016; zur FEDE siehe Gilbert, La FEDE.

91 Emmanuel Kahan, »Sionistas« vs. »Progresistas«. Una discusión registrada en las páginas de »Nueva Sión« en torno de la cuestión israelí y la experiencia fascista durante el affaire Eichmann, 1960–1962 [»Zionisten« vs. »Progressive«. Eine auf den Seiten von »Nueva Sión« geführte Diskussion über die israelische Frage und die faschistische Erfahrung während der Eichmann-Affäre, 1960–1962], in: Cuestiones de Sociología [Fragen der Soziologie] 3 (2006), 298–314.

92 Beatrice D. Gurwitz, *Argentine Jews in the Age of Revolt. Between the New World and the Third World*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2016, 65.

93 Interview des Verfassers mit Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016.

94 Louis Rapoport, *Stalin's War against the Jews. The Doctor's Plot and the Soviet Solution*, New York 1990; Arno Lustiger, *Rotbuch. Stalin und die Juden. Die tragische Geschichte des Jüdischen Antifaschistischen Komitees und der sowjetischen Juden*, Berlin 2002.

95 Jan Gerber, *Ein Prozess in Prag. Das Volk gegen Rudolf Slánský und Genossen*, Göttingen/Bristol, Conn., 2016.



verband der jüdischen Organisationen in Argentinien, DAIA, aufs Schärfste verurteilt worden. Der PCA, mit einer größeren Anzahl Delegierter in dem demokratisch gewählten Gremium vertreten, weigerte sich, die gemeinsame Erklärung aller in der DAIA assoziierten Organisationen mitzutragen, und wies die öffentlichen Stellungnahmen gegen die Schauprozesse als von den USA gesteuerte antisowjetische Propaganda zurück. Der nun offene Konflikt um die Moskautreue der Partei mündete 1953 in den faktischen Ausschluss sämtlicher kommunistischer Vertreter aus der – im Gegensatz zur Anmia nicht demokratisch gewählten – Gemeindeorganisation.<sup>96</sup> Jenen Argentinern, die wie Lerner hofften, ihre Herkunft in der Verwirklichung des kommunistischen Heilsversprechens positiv aufzuheben, erschien die Partei jedoch auch über jene Konfrontation hinaus weiter als kohäsives Zentrum ihrer politischen Tätigkeit. So dauerte es noch einige Jahre, bis sich angesichts der Ereignisse im Orbit des sowjetischen Kommunismus die Erkenntnis in Argentinien verfestigte, dass die Versprechen, die der PCA für Leners Eltern und die ersten Generationen jüdischer Einwanderer bereithielt, ihre Gültigkeit verloren hatten.

Zum Ende der Dekade sorgten innerhalb des Parteikommunismus und der argentinischen Linken die Orthodoxie des PCA und vor allem die geradezu autoritäre Unterbindung jedweder Diskussion um die Entwicklungen in der Sowjetunion für zunehmendes Unbehagen.<sup>97</sup> Auch nach dem Tod Stalins und selbst noch dann, als die KPdSU auf ihrem XXII. Parteitag 1961 die von Chruschtschows Rede »Über den Personenkult und seine Folgen« fünf Jahre zuvor zaghaft angestoßene Kritik der jüngeren Vergangenheit wieder aufnahm, weigerte sich die Kommunistische Partei Argentiniens weiterhin, eine Auseinandersetzung um den Stalinismus in ihren Reihen zuzulassen. In diesem Ambiente die antisemitischen Exzesse des Sowjetkommunismus zu thematisieren war schlicht undenkbar, erinnert sich der später im Unterstützungsnetzwerk des EGP tätige, ebenfalls aus einer jüdischen Familie stammende Alberto Szpunberg (1940–2020).<sup>98</sup> Tatsächlich wurde in der unmittelbaren Entstehungszeit der Guerilla der renommierte jüdische Psychoanalytiker José Bleger, nachdem er in einem längeren Artikel über seine 1962 unternommene Reise in die Sowjetunion die dortige Regierung

96 Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, *Ideology and Propaganda in the Collective Memory's Construction. Zionism and Communism in Argentina*, in: August Grabski (Hg.), *Rebels against Zion. Studies on the Jewish Left Anti-Zionism*, Warschau 2011, 124–138, hier 136.

97 Nerina Visacovsky, *El tejido icufista. Cultura de izquierda judía en Villa Lynch (1937–1968)*. *Judíos, comunistas y educadores [Das Netz des ICUF. Jüdische linke Kultur in Villa Lynch (1937–1968). Juden, Kommunisten und Lehrer]*, (unveröff. Dissertation, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2009), 107.

98 Interview des Verfassers mit Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016.

fundamental für ihren Umgang mit der jüdischen Bevölkerung kritisiert hatte, öffentlich angefeindet und durch die argentinische Parteiführung aus dem PCA ausgeschlossen.<sup>99</sup>

Zu Beginn der 1960er Jahre trat indessen drastisch zutage, dass die anti-jüdischen Ressentiments aus früheren Dekaden in der argentinischen Gesellschaft subkutan fortbestanden. Im Mai 1960 war es einer Gruppe von Zielfahndern des Mossad um Zvi Aharoni unter wesentlicher Mithilfe der vor den Nationalsozialisten nach Argentinien geflohenen Juden José Moskovits und Lothar Hermann gelungen, Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires aufzuspüren und zu verhaften.<sup>100</sup> Die nicht mit der argentinischen Staatsführung koordinierte Operation hatte den Besuch einer israelischen Delegation anlässlich der Feierlichkeiten zum 150. Jubiläum der argentinischen Unabhängigkeit genutzt, um Eichmann anschließend außer Landes zu schaffen. Die mit der Bekanntgabe der Verhaftung durch Ben-Gurion am 23. Mai 1960 einsetzende diplomatische Krise zwischen Israel und Argentinien ließ sich zwar alsbald beilegen,<sup>101</sup> doch hallte die als Verletzung der staatlichen Souveränität wahrgenommene Intervention Israels in Argentinien's Gesellschaft nach. Getragen von zumeist katholisch-nationalistischen Gruppierungen, sah sich die jüdische Bevölkerung nach den Meldungen über die Verhaftung mit einer bisweilen in offene Gewalt umschlagenden Welle antisemitischer Kampagnen konfrontiert, deren Intensität mit den Berichten über den in Jerusalem abgehaltenen Prozess, die Verurteilung und die Hinrichtung Eichmanns bis 1962 kaum nachlassen sollte.<sup>102</sup>

Jenseits des Umstandes, dass das beständig in den Fundamenten des argentinischen Katholizismus schwelende Ressentiment gegen die Juden des Landes nun in einer Phase sozioökonomischer Schwierigkeiten ein passendes Ventil gefunden hatte, oszillierten die rhetorischen Anfeindungen um den Topos der *doble lealtad* (doppelte Loyalität). Die argentinischen Juden, so der Tenor, versagten dem Land in Ausnahmesituationen ihre Loyalität und seien aufgrund ihrer verdeckten Verpflichtung gegenüber Israel keine verlässlichen Staatsbürger.<sup>103</sup> Erstmals seit der Tragischen Woche wurde damit

99 José Bleger, *Los judíos en la Unión Soviética* [Die Juden in der Sowjetunion], in: *Nueva Sión*, 17. Januar 1963, 4 f. Zu José Bleger siehe auch den Beitrag von Mariano Ben Plotkin in diesem Band.

100 Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann vor Jerusalem. Das unbehelligte Leben eines Massenmörders*, Zürich/Hamburg 2011, 401–409 und 440–450.

101 Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 184–192.

102 Ebd., 199–228; Daniel Gutman, *Tacuara. Historia de la primera guerrilla urbana argentina* [Tacuara. Geschichte der ersten argentinischen Stadtguerilla], Buenos Aires 2003, 85–87 und 132–141; Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* [Antisemitismus in Argentinien], Buenos Aires 2<sup>a</sup> 1989, 9–104, hier 33–43.

103 Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 169–193; ders., *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 197–228.

die Zugehörigkeit der Juden zum argentinischen Staatswesen grundlegend infrage gestellt. Sekundiert von bisweilen heftigen Gewaltakten, löste jenes gesellschaftliche Klima die größte Auswanderungswelle von Juden in der Geschichte des Landes aus. Zwischen 1960 und 1965 verließen insgesamt 12 900 Juden Argentinien.<sup>104</sup>

Die antisemitische Kampagne im Nachgang der Verhaftung Eichmanns machte der jüdischen Bevölkerung Argentiniens deutlich, wie unzuverlässig das Versprechen auf gleichberechtigte Teilhabe am nationalen Gemeinwesen noch immer war. Damit leistete sie dem Argument zionistischer Gruppierungen Vorschub, einzig der israelische Staat könne die Sicherheit jüdischen Lebens dauerhaft garantieren. Zeitgleich begannen die Vorkommnisse im sowjetischen Machtbereich ausgerechnet jene Argentinier zu erschüttern, die gehofft hatten, ihre jüdische Zugehörigkeit im Kommunismus aufheben zu können. So führt auch Lerner die Prager Prozesse als einen der Gründe für seine ab den 1960er Jahren wachsende Enttäuschung an, auch wenn er nicht auf die spezifisch jüdische Dimension der Prozesse eingeht.<sup>105</sup> In Argentinien blieben Fälle wie der Blegers zwar die Ausnahme, doch dürften sie für diese Entfremdung, die auch die anderen Guerilleros zu Beginn des Jahrzehnts durchliefen, eine nicht zu unterschätzende Rolle gespielt haben. Auch wenn sie selbst sich kaum noch als Juden verstanden, sondern zuerst als der Studentenbewegung zugehörige Argentinier, hatten sie mehrheitlich immer wieder antijüdische Diskriminierung erfahren.<sup>106</sup> Eine Partei, die jede Kritik an der Sowjetregierung vehement tadelte, musste so immer unattraktiver werden. Selbst wenn dies nur einer der Gründe für ihre Abkehr war, wandten sie alle sich daraufhin doch in eine Richtung, in der Erlösung nicht mehr im Exodus, sondern in der Nationalen Befreiung aufschien und jüdische Zugehörigkeit nicht ins Private verlegt wurde, sondern Herkunft schlicht keine Rolle mehr spielen sollte.

104 Sebastian Klor, *Between Exile and Exodus. Argentinian Jewish Immigration to Israel, 1948–1967*, übers. von Lenn Schramm, Detroit, Mich., 2017, 50 f.; Rein, Argentina, Israel, and the Jews, 227.

105 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

106 Ebd.; Interview des Verfassers mit Alberto Szpunberg, 25. Oktober 2016. Der wohl drastischste Fall ist jener von Marcos Szlachter. Vor seinem Eintritt in die Guerilla hatte Szlachter an einer privat geführten Sekundarschule in Buenos Aires unterrichtet. Dort war bald der Vorwurf gegen ihn erhoben worden, marxistischer Gesinnung zu sein. Als Szlachter der daran anschließenden Aufforderung, seine Lehrtätigkeit niederzulegen, nicht nachkam, tauchten an den Wänden der Toilette die Schriftzüge »MUERA SLACTER [sic]« [Stirb, Slacter] und »FUERA LOS JUDIOS« [Juden raus] auf. Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo IV, Folio 669; ebd., Cuerpo V, Folio 887.

## Fazit: Neue Menschen und Guerilleros

Wie sämtliche Rekruten, die sich dem EGP anschlossen, tauschte auch Henry Lerner bei seiner Ankunft im Dschungel Saltas im November 1963 seine Zivilkleidung gegen die olivgrüne Uniform der Guerilla, händigte einem der Führungskader seine Ausweisdokumente aus und nahm anstelle seines dort registrierten Namens einen Decknamen an.<sup>107</sup> Den hygienischen Bedingungen im Dschungel geschuldet, ebenso aber ästhetische Referenz an die ikonischen Vorbilder aus Kuba, bedeckte bald ein dichter Bart das Gesicht des Neuankömmlings. Seine äußerliche Angleichung an die übrigen Mitglieder und die Auslöschung aller Spuren seines früheren Lebens entsprachen vordergründig den geläufigen Sicherheitsmaßnahmen subversiver Organisationen. Zugleich aber markierte der damit verbundene Initiationsakt den endgültigen Bruch mit der vormaligen Existenz. Dem symbolischen Tod des bürgerlichen Individuums folgte nach einer mehrwöchigen Bewährungsphase die Auferstehung als Guerillero, der sich durch den ihm zeremoniell abgenommenen Schwur »Revolution oder Tod« mit seinem eigenen Leben auf den EGP und dessen Statuten vereidigte.<sup>108</sup>

Für die Entscheidung, sich dem EGP anzuschließen und damit diese Zäsur zu vollziehen, lieferte Lerner im Rückblick die ebenso knappe wie weitreichende Begründung: »weil wir an [die Revolution] glaubten, wir glaubten an den Neuen Menschen, wir glaubten an das Beispiel Ches [...], dessen Bildnis wie ein Kreuzifix, wie die Jungfrau Maria ist.«<sup>109</sup> Er resümierte damit eine Geisteshaltung, die damals – nicht zwangsläufig mit derselben Konsequenz – ein Großteil der politisch engagierten Jugend Argentiniens teilte. Die traditionellen Organisationen der Arbeiterbewegung, zuvorderst die Kommunistische Partei in ihrer starren Bindung an die sowjetische Generallinie, wurden zunehmend als jener zahnlose Papiertiger wahrgenommen, als den Mao Zedong damals Nikita Chruschtschow bezeichnet hatte.<sup>110</sup> Castro und Guevara hingegen war es gelungen, den Glauben an die Revolution neu zu entfachen. Ihre spezifische Interpretation der Vorstellung eines Neuen Menschen, auf die auch Lerner sich berufen sollte, rückte die subjektive Hingabe des je Einzelnen ins Zentrum des gesellschaftlichen Umsturzes. Zwar hatte auch der sowjetische Kommunismus gerade in den Anfangsjahren das Ideal des Neuen Menschen als Fernziel der gesellschaftlichen Neuordnung

107 Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo II, Folio 285; Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

108 Biblioteca JAC, Causa Penal, Cuerpo III, Folio 436; Bufano/Rot, Entrevista a Héctor Juvé, 53.

109 Interview des Verfassers mit Henry Lázaro Lerner, 2. April 2016.

110 O. A. (Autorenkürzel »el«), Papiertiger, in: Die Zeit, 28. Februar 1964.

ausgegeben, doch hatten die autoritären Züge des Stalinismus die Ziele der Revolution in den Augen vieler jüngerer argentinischer Parteimitglieder desavouiert. So schärften die Ereignisse im Machtbereich Moskaus während der frühen 1950er Jahre auch am Río de la Plata das Bewusstsein, dass sich in der Sowjetunion nicht ein aus den Zwängen der Herkunft befreiter Neuer Mensch zu entwickeln begonnen hatte, sondern diese Herkunft auf tragische Weise erneut eine entscheidende Rolle spielte. Demgegenüber war nahezu zeitgleich in Lateinamerika mit der Kubanischen Revolution Ernesto Guevara zu einer politischen Ikone aufgestiegen, die wie die konsequente, auf den dortigen Kulturkreis übertragene Fortführung des Ideals des Neuen Menschen wirken musste.

Guevara selbst hatte die Denkfigur des Neuen Menschen kurzerhand zu einem der kohäsiven Zentren seiner erratischen Revolutionstheorie erhoben. Zu Beginn der 1960er Jahre kreisten seine theoretischen Anstrengungen – neben strategischen Überlegungen zum Guerillakrieg – vermehrt um den Gedanken, der gegenwärtige Kommunismus müsse in seinem Streben nach politischer Veränderung auf die materielle und auf die ideelle Sphäre zielen. Sofern er das Bewusstsein der Menschen vernachlässige, könne er zwar als ökonomische Verteilungsmethode dienen, jedoch nicht als das, was Guevara eigentlich vorschwebte: eine allumfassende revolutionäre Moral.<sup>111</sup> Héctor Schmucler, Zeitgenosse Guevaras und als Redakteur der Zeitschrift *Pasado y Presente* unmittelbar am urbanen Unterstützungsnetzwerk des EGP in Córdoba beteiligt, brachte das von Guevara hier nur Angedeutete Anfang 1964 auf diese Formel:

»Die Revolution (daran hat Che Guevara uns kürzlich in einer Reportage über Algerien erinnert) hat nicht die Umverteilung zum Ziel, sondern die Erschaffung eines neuen, nicht-entfremdeten, freien Menschen (mit der Vorannahme, dass eine größere Umverteilung notwendig ist).«<sup>112</sup>

In seinem 1965 als offener Brief an die uruguayische Wochenzeitschrift *Marcha* verfassten Artikel *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* skizzierte Guevara rückwirkend den idealtypischen Neuen Menschen als ebenso arbeitsames wie von allen niederen Begierden gereinigtes Wesen.<sup>113</sup> Die Revolutionsfüh-

111 Jean Daniel, Une affaire de famille, où en est Cuba? Che Guevara a répondu à Jean Daniel [Eine Familienaffäre, oder: Was ist mit Kuba? Che Guevara antwortete Jean Daniel], in: L'Express, 25. Juli 1963, 9.

112 Héctor Schmucler, Problemas del Tercer Mundo [Probleme der Dritten Welt], in: *Pasado y Presente* 4 (1964), 234–290, hier 288.

113 Ernesto Guevara, El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba [Der Sozialismus und der Mensch auf Kuba], in: *Marcha* [Marsch], 12. März 1965, 14 f. und 20. Eine erste ins Deutsche übertragene Version erschien im Trikontverlag: Ernesto Guevara, Partisanenkrieg. Eine Methode. Mensch und Sozialismus auf Cuba. Zwei Studien. Mit einem Nachruf von Peter Weiss, übers. von R. Führer, München 1968.

rung, so sein Fazit, müsse die gesamte Gesellschaft umwälzen, das auf dem Boden des revolutionären Staates »gewachsene Unkraut [...] jäten« und so einen Menschen erschaffen, »der weder die Ideen des 19., noch die unseres dekadenten und krankhaften Jahrhunderts vertritt. Es ist der Mensch des 21. Jahrhunderts, den wir erschaffen müssen.«<sup>114</sup>

Seine Vorwegnahme fand jener gemäß ökonomischen Notwendigkeiten entworfene Neue Mensch für Guevara in der Figur des Guerilleros. Prototypisch verkörpert von ihm selbst, hatte er in seinen methodologisch-taktischen Grundlegungen *La guerra de guerrillas* das Bild eines ebenso heroischen wie asketischen Kämpfers gezeichnet,<sup>115</sup> der bereit sei, jedes erdenkliche Opfer auf sich zu nehmen angesichts der historischen Aufgabe, als Teil der revolutionären Avantgarde die Voraussetzungen für eine grundlegende Transformation der Gesellschaft zu schaffen.<sup>116</sup> Der Guerillero, dessen individuelle Willenskraft, Selbstdisziplin und militärischer Gehorsam ebenso Triebkraft der Revolution seien, wie sie die bereits vollzogene Verwandlung des alten in den Neuen Menschen auswiesen, wird im Denken Guevaras gleichzeitig Träger der Revolution und Vorbote ihres Telos.

Insbesondere im Topos der Askese, aber auch in seinem Streben nach Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit, der Existenzweise in einer unwirtlich-wilden Natur und der Devianz gegenüber der bestehenden Ordnung lassen sich durchaus Parallelen zwischen der Figur des Guerilleros und einer ähnlich ikonischen Figur des südlichen Amerika ziehen. Nicht zufällig entlehnten sowohl Masetti als auch Guevara ihre Decknamen der gauchesken Literatur. Während Guevara sich nach der Hauptfigur im wohl bekanntesten Nationalepos Argentiniens benannte, dem sozialkritischen Gedicht *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872) von José Hernández, spielte Masettis Nom de Guerre *Comandante Segundo* auf den 1926 erschienenen Roman *Don Segundo Sombra* von Ricardo Güiraldes an, dessen Held ebenfalls ein idealtypischer Gaucho in den Weiten der argentinischen Pampa ist. Mit der leicht ironisch gebrochenen Rezeption desselben verwiesen Guevara und Masetti nicht nur auf eines der wirkmächtigsten nationalen Embleme. Es ist gleichfalls eine Figur, deren Herkunft weitaus weniger entscheidend ist als ihre Gegenwart. Mit

114 »[...] que no sea el que represente las ideas del siglo XIX, pero tampoco las de nuestro siglo decadente y morboso. El hombre del siglo XXI es el que debemos crear.« Guevara, *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba*, 20.

115 Erstmals erschienen als Ernesto Che Guevara, *La guerra de guerrillas*. A Camilo [Der Guerillakrieg. Für Camilo], Havanna 1960. Unter dem Titel *Der Partisanenkrieg* wurde der Aufsatz im Militärverlag der DDR publiziert: ders., *Der Partisanenkrieg*, übers. von Fred Herms, Berlin 1962.

116 Ders., *Guerilla. Theorie und Methode*. Sämtliche Schriften zur Guerillamethode, zur revolutionären Strategie und zur Figur der Guerilleros, hg. von Horst Kurnitzky, Berlin 1968, 52.

der Adaption als *Jüdischer Gaucho* wurde diese Figur gerade auch für jene anschlussfähig, deren Familien das Land zunächst über die Agrarkolonien der Pampa kennengelernt hatten. Zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts musste der Guerillero, wie Guevara ihn vorgezeichnet hatte, wie ihre zeitgenössische Entsprechung anmuten.

Lerner und die übrigen Rekruten des EGP hatten durchaus Grund zu der Annahme, dass mit dem Eintritt in die Guerilla und der damit vollzogenen Transformation Vergangenheit und Herkunft ihre Bedeutung verlieren würden. Nicht zuletzt Masetti selbst hatte, wie sich später herausstellte, eine noch tiefgreifendere Verwandlung vollzogen. In den Jahren vor seiner Reise in die Sierra war Masetti nicht lediglich ein unpolitischer Nachwuchsjournalist gewesen, dessen Karriere nur schleppend in Gang kam. Vielmehr hatte er voller Inbrunst dem *catolicismo integral* nahegestanden. Als 15-jähriger Schüler war er Mitglied der Unión Nacional de Estudiantes Secundarios (Nationale Union der Sekundarschüler) gewesen, der Jugendorganisation der ebenso profaschistischen wie zutiefst katholischen Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN), die in den 1940er Jahren die gewalttätige Auseinandersetzung mit dem politischen Gegner auf den Straßen von Buenos Aires suchte.<sup>117</sup> Die Organisation votierte 1945 aus unverhohlener Sympathie mit den Achsenmächten für die Bewahrung der argentinischen Neutralität im Zweiten Weltkrieg und unterstützte vom nationalistischen Standpunkt aus die Machtergreifung Peróns. In dem *caudillo* sah sie ein Bollwerk sowohl gegen den verhassten angelsächsischen Imperialismus wie gegen den ebenso abgelehnten Kommunismus. Doch fungierte die ALN damit nicht nur als entscheidende Schnittstelle zwischen Katholizismus, Nationalismus und Peronismus.<sup>118</sup> Indem ihr Vordenker Ramón Doll neben Materialismus und Intellektualismus auch das Judentum als »Geschwür des Landes«<sup>119</sup> verurteilte, war sie maßgebliche Triebkraft des nationalistischen Antisemitismus im Argentinien der Nachkriegsjahre. Auf der Straße versammelten sich die Mitglieder der Alianza unter den fast synonym verstandenen Parolen »Lang lebe

117 Rubén Furman, *Puños y pistolas. La extraña historia de la Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista, el grupo de choque de Perón* [Fäuste und Pistolen. Die merkwürdige Geschichte der Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista, Peróns Schlägertruppe], Buenos Aires 2014, 11 f. und 279. Zur spezifischen Entwicklung der Organisation siehe Marcus Klein, *Argentine Nationalism before Perón. The Case of the Alianza de la Juventud Nacionalista, 1937 – c. 1943*, in: *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20 (2001), H. 1, 102–121.

118 Michael Goebel, *A Movement from Right to Left in Argentine Nationalism? The Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista and Tacuara as Stages of Militancy*, in: *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26 (2007), H. 3, 356–377.

119 Ramón Doll, *Acerca de una política nacional* [Zur nationalen Politik], Buenos Aires 1939, 63.

Jesus Christus!« und »Tod den Juden«. <sup>120</sup> Dem auf zahlreichen Wänden der Hauptstadt prangenden Aufruf »Erschaffe das Vaterland, töte einen Juden«, der ebenfalls der Gruppierung zugeschrieben wurde, hatten ihre Mitglieder im Oktober 1945 Taten folgen lassen und allem Anschein nach Anschläge auf Synagogen in Buenos Aires, in Villa Lynch und in Córdoba verübt. <sup>121</sup>

Dass Masetti selbst an den Taten beteiligt gewesen ist, lässt sich aus den Quellen nicht ableiten. Doch steht außer Frage, dass er als Mitglied ebendieser Organisation deren ideologisches Fundament teilte. Zudem begann er seine journalistische Karriere als Chronist der aus jenem Milieu hervorgegangenen Tageszeitung *Tribuna* und arbeitete bis in die 1950er Jahre hinein für Publikationen, die wie *Cabildo* ein klar antisemitisches oder wie *Pre-gón* ein radikal rechtsnationalistisches Profil aufwiesen. <sup>122</sup> Sein Weggefährte Rogelio García Lupo, der später gemeinsam mit ihm für die Kubanische Revolution arbeitete, aber auch die frühe Militanz in der ALN teilte, drückte es so aus: Masetti war »nicht nur kein Kommunist, sondern während einer Etappe seines Lebens militanter Nationalist und suchte auf der Straße mit der all seinen Aktivitäten eigenen Passion die direkte Konfrontation mit den Kommunisten«. <sup>123</sup>

Als die Gruppierung begann, sich in den Peronismus einzugliedern, dessen Abkehr von allzu rechtsnationalistischen Positionen nachzuvollziehen und mit den Autoritäten des Katholizismus zu brechen, wandte Masetti sich von ihr ab. Zwar verlegte er sein Engagement zunehmend darauf, journalistisch jenseits des nationalistischen Spektrums Fuß zu fassen, doch behielt er bis zu seinem Aufbruch nach Havanna sein tief empfundenes Bekenntnis zum Katholizismus bei. Hatte er bis zu seiner Abreise ohne Ausnahme die sonntägliche Messe besucht, so eröffnete er seiner Schwägerin nach seiner Pilgerreise zu Castros Rebellen: »Ich weiß nicht, ob ich noch an einen Gott glaube.« <sup>124</sup> Seine einstige religiöse Inbrunst hatte sich jedoch nicht einfach aufgelöst. Vielmehr hatte sie sich in den Bereich des Politisch-Profanen übertragen. Möglich wurde dies insbesondere durch die strukturelle Ähnlichkeit zwischen der jenseitigen Erlösungshoffnung des Katholizismus und

120 Michael Goebel, *Argentina's Partisan Past. Nationalism and the Politics of History*, Liverpool 2011, 73; Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews*, 103, 164 und 227 f.

121 Furman, *Puños y pistolas*, 193.

122 Zu *Cabildo* siehe Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews*, 103, 164 und 227 f.; Furman, *Puños y pistolas*, 279; Rot, *Los orígenes perdidos de la guerrilla en la Argentina*, 36–38.

123 »No solamente no fue comunista, sino que durante una etapa de su vida fue militante nacionalista y se enfrentó a los comunistas en las calles, con la pasión que siempre desplegaba en sus actos.« Rogelio García Lupo, *El misterio de dos olvidos [Das Mysterium zweier Vergessen]*, in: *Clarín [Flügelhorn]*, 23. März 1997.

124 Rot, *Los orígenes perdidos de la guerrilla en la Argentina*, 57.



der ins Diesseits verlagerten Heilserwartung der revolutionären Bewegung. Mit dem ersten Flug, den Ernesto Guevara am 9. Januar 1959 nach dem triumphalen Einzug der Rebellen in Havanna aus Buenos Aires kommen ließ, reiste neben Guevaras Mutter auf dessen persönliche Einladung auch Jorge Ricardo Masetti erneut nach Kuba und begann von da an, gemeinsam mit seinem Landsmann für den Aufbau der Revolution zu arbeiten.<sup>125</sup>

Die von Masetti geführte Guerilla und mehr noch die von ihr geschürte Hoffnung auf Revolution und nationale Befreiung zog junge Männer aus unterschiedlichen Erfahrungshintergründen in ihren Bann. So ließ sich das Bild des asketischen und tugendhaften Neuen Menschen und dessen Verkörperung durch den heroischen Guerillero sowohl mit der katholischen Prägung des Kommandanten als auch mit der jüdischen Erfahrung im Zeichen des Dualismus von Entbehrung und Erlösung verbinden. Letztlich sollte die eschatologische Hoffnung, die sich mit den Idealen des EGP verband, insbesondere für die jüdischen Guerilleros auf tragische Weise dementiert werden. Zwar legen die Quellen nahe, dass nicht ihre jüdische Zugehörigkeit ausschlaggebend war für die Anklageerhebung, sondern vielmehr ihre physische und psychische Schwäche. Durch ihr subjektives Scheitern offenbarten sie die Fiktionalität des zentralen Narrativs vom Guerillero als Vorbote des Neuen Menschen und stellten damit ein Kernelement der revolutionären Ideologie der Gruppe insgesamt infrage. Die inhärente Logik jenes Ideals musste Masetti nachgerade dazu herausfordern, jene Guerilleros zu opfern, die durch ihren Habitus und ihre Herkunft am sichtbarsten von den christlichen Grundierungen des Neuen Menschen abwichen.

125 Furman, *Puños y pistolas*, 281; Rot, *Los orígenes perdidos de la guerrilla en la Argentina*, 84.



Emmanuel Nicolás Kahan

## The Jewish Youth in Times of Political Radicalization: Argentina, 1960/1970

The March 1973 issue of the Socialist Zionist weekly newspaper *Nueva Sión* (New Zion) dealt with the upcoming presidential election on 11 March. It was a peculiar situation within the context of the Argentine political process, as the Peronist party was granted to participate in the election once again after a ban that had lasted for eighteen years. The reader could find in this issue of *Nueva Sión* a statement of the Juventud Sionista Socialista (Zionist Socialist Youth; JSS)<sup>1</sup> about the current dictatorship and the immediate political future:

“We know that every election held in a bourgeois State happens under different conditions. The last seventeen years of Argentine history confirm the absence of the working class and the will of the people from the country’s political orientation [...]. Electoral conditionings, repressive legislations, fraudulent and proscriptive attempts, confirm the widespread feeling among the people who, through its liberation, seek to participate in the construction of a free socialist American continent, pioneered by the peoples of Cuba and Chile [...]. At this moment of truth for all Argentines who yearn for untying the knots of dependence, the Zionist movement, as well, has the right to be heard within the community, in order to cut the specific dependence suffered by the Argentine Jews as an extra-territorial national minority. We believe that our active solidarity with local progressive movements manifests itself in our Jewish national struggle, the only one that places us in the trench shared by all peoples who fight against monopolistic capitalism, colonial warfare, imperialist exploitation, misery, and the new forces of multinational oligopolistic penetration.”<sup>2</sup>

This paper seeks to characterize this self-proclaimed revolutionary militant narrative upheld by youth groups within the Jewish Argentine community. To which extent did the exaltation of national liberation set these groups closer to the aspirations of national left-wing organizations? Did in fact all actors across the communitarian spectrum follow this path, or proclaim themselves “revolutionaries”? How did the relationship between Zionist activism and the political ideology of the New Left come to be constructed during the long odyssey of the 1960s and 1970s?

- 1 This organization was an umbrella for left-wing Zionist youth movements such as Hashomer Hatzair, Juventud Mordejai Anilevich, Baderekh, and others.
- 2 El sionismo socialista frente a la realidad actual [Socialist Zionism in Light of the Current Reality], in: *Nueva Sión*, 2 March 1973, 1.

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In its endeavor to answer these questions, the essay follows the unfolding and development of a series of controversies, practices, and representations of the forms assumed by Jewish participation in Argentina's national political process. Jewish youth, mostly affiliated with left-wing Zionism, participated in different youth movements gathered first in the Liga Sionista Socialista (Zionist Socialist League) and then in the JSS. They found a voice through the weekly *Nueva Sión*. This publication, which belonged to the Hashomer Hatzair movement, was the space where Zionist Socialist ideas and values condensed themselves and circulated (not without conflicts and contradictions).

But these were not the only organizations or print media shaping the thought of the Argentine Jewish community. Young Jewish people participated in various Zionist factions, such as Betar, Ha-bonim, and Dror, in cultural and athletic institutions the like of Club Náutico Hacoaj and Sociedad Hebraica, as well as in student unions from the Jewish Education Network's lay schools. This diversity was complemented by possible involvements in alliances such as Idisher Cultur Farband (ICUF), a federation of institutions linked to the Argentine Communist Party.<sup>3</sup> The same was true for the Jewish community's press. As noted by Alejandro Dujovne, the profusion and heterogeneity of periodicals from diverse ideological backgrounds edited in different languages was one of the most singular features of the Jewish experience in the country: *Mundo Israelita* (Israelite World) was a newspaper of the Avodá Party in Argentina, *La Luz* (The Light) a weekly of the Herut followers and Sephardic population, and *Voz Libre* (Free Voice) the publication of a dissident faction of Communist Jews.<sup>4</sup>

The historical period covered in this paper is marked by a series of events with a strong impact on the local political arena. These include, first of all, the capture in Argentina of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann (1960), which sparked long-standing tensions between various figures in national politics. Two outstanding milestones of the Arab-Israeli conflict during those years were the Six-Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). Even if these conflicts were not necessarily the first nor the most relevant in the Palestinian-Israeli territories, Eli Lederhendler points out that they shook the meanings, solidarities, and representations that different actors – on the political

3 See Nerina Visacovsky, *Argentinos, judíos y camaradas. Tras la utopía socialista [Argentines, Jews, and Comrades. Beyond the Socialist Utopia]*, Buenos Aires 2015.

4 See Alejandro Dujovne, *Cartografía de las publicaciones periódicas judías de izquierda en Argentina, 1900–1953 [Cartography of Jewish Leftist Newspaper Publications in Argentina, 1900–1953]*, in: *Revista del Museo de Antropología [Journal of the Museum of Anthropology]* 1 (2008), no.º1, 121–138.

left in general – associated with the existence and legitimacy of the State of Israel.<sup>5</sup>

These developments ingrained themselves into a particularly sensitive period of Argentine history, stretching from the presidency of Arturo Frondizi<sup>6</sup> (1958–1962) to the dictatorship, or self-proclaimed “Argentine Revolution” (1966–1973), to the return to power of Peronism after an 18-year ban from presidential elections, in the shape of Héctor J. Cámpora (1973) and – six months later – Juan Domingo Perón himself. Finally, these developments found their echo in international events: the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War, the decolonization of Africa and Asia, the May 1968 Paris revolts, Salvador Allende’s electoral triumph in Chile, and others; all of them contributed to the process of worldwide “political radicalization” and the rise of a new collective actor designated as the New Left.

Linger on this list of seminal events one is bound to notice the contextual complexity in which Jewish youth acted. And while this essay delves deeper into the debates and tensions facing Argentine Jews during the 1960s and 1970s and the ways in which they defined their Jewish affiliation on a stage that claimed them as part of the national liberation movement, an awareness that their definitions were not forged under the heat of local conflicts alone is important.

However, as Beatrice Gurwitz points out,<sup>7</sup> the Socialist Zionist narrative offered by Jewish central organizations at the time provided a legitimate alternative to the left-wing discourse, on the basis of two strategic considerations: to counteract the anti-Zionist perspective that characterized the public rhetoric of the left; and to contain those deserting the Jewish youth movements, seduced by the more radical and emancipatory ideology of leftist organizations.

This paper will reflect on the practices of joining – mostly left-wing Zionist – Jewish youth movements and the tensions that occurred alongside. It will set those against the backdrop of a political activism dominated by national liberation that required Jewish youth to take a stand not only as Argentine citizens but as opinion lenders on Israeli policies and the “Palestinian cause” at the same time.

5 See Eli Lederhendler, Introduction. *The Six-Day War and the Jewish People in the Diaspora*, in: idem (ed.), *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*, Bethesda, Md., 2000, 1–11.

6 Arturo Frondizi was the leader of the Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente (a party then at the center of the political spectrum), who got to power by winning the presidential elections while Peronism was banned.

7 See Beatrice D. Gurwitz, *Argentine Jews in the Age of Revolt. Between the New World and the Third World*, Boston, Mass., 2016.

“I’m a Jew, but I Don’t Practice”:  
A Debate on Jewish Identity during the Sixties

At the dawn of the sixties, an event took place that brought “Jewish identity” into the debate in Argentina: the capture of Adolf Eichmann by Israeli intelligence agencies on 11 May 1960. Amongst the celebrations of Argentina’s 150th anniversary of Independence, the Argentine Jewish community became the target of a fear-mongering Nationalist offensive whose goal it was to put into question Jewish citizens’ loyalty to the Argentine Republic.<sup>8</sup> The spearhead of this campaign was the Tacuara Nationalist Movement,<sup>9</sup> which tried to turn the Jewish community into a scapegoat for all ills of the time.<sup>10</sup> These Nationalist groups enjoyed the support of part of the Catholic Church, including Father Julio Meinville and Cardinal Antonio Caggiano, as well as of the Buenos Aires branch of the Arab League, represented by Hussein Triki; they also benefited from the passivity, connivance, or sympathy of state officials handling the complaints of Jewish representatives.<sup>11</sup> Within this context, Leonardo Senkman points out that

“the generation of the Jewish community’s young intellectuals who lived the experience of Eichmann’s capture and trial as well as the emergence of antisemitic nationalism and anti-Jewish violence of the years 1960 to 1965, for the first time felt the need to comment on their Jewishness.”<sup>12</sup>

8 See Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos. Encuentros y desencuentros, mitos y realidades* [Argentina, Israel, and the Jews. Encounters and Disagreements, Myths and Realities], Buenos Aires 2001.

9 On Tacuara, see Juan Manuel Padrón, *¡Ni yanquis, ni marxistas! Nacionalistas. Nacionalismo, militancia y violencia política en el caso del Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara en Argentina (1955–1966)* [Neither Yankees nor Marxists! Nationalists. Nationalism, Militancy, and Political Violence in the Case of the Tacuara Nationalist Movement in Argentina (1955–1966)], La Plata 2017; María Valeria Galván, *Militancia nacionalista en la era posperonista. Las organizaciones Tacuara y sus vínculos con el peronismo* [Nationalist Militancy in the Post-Peron Era. The Tacuara Organizations and Their Ties with Peronism], in: *Nuevo mundo, mundos nuevos*, 24 May 2013, <<http://nuevomundo.revues.org/65364>> (20 July 2022).

10 See *Nuevos desmanes de los nazis criollos* [New Excesses of the Creole Nazis], in: *Nueva Sión*, 1 July 1961, 1.

11 On antisemitism during the 1960s, see Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* [Antisemitism in Argentina], 2nd, revised edition, Buenos Aires 1989, 11–193; Rein, *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* [Argentina, Israel, and the Jews].

12 Leonardo Senkman, *El ejercicio y el escamoteo de la condición judeo-argentina en los años 60* [The Practice and Concealment of the Jewish-Argentine Condition in the 1960s], in: Eliahu Toker, *Cuaderno Moshé Roit* [Moshe Roit’s Notebook], Buenos Aires 1983, 11–25, here 11.

*Nueva Sión* would be the first paper to address new tendencies such as this. Edited by León Pérez, its pages included a number of regular columns that dealt with problems considered important by its editors: “The Critical Eye” challenged other newspapers’ takes on certain issues; “Pandora’s Box” was reserved for satire; “Topicality in a Few Words” focused on news about the State of Israel; there were further the sections “Letters from Our Readers” and “Last Fortnight’s Antisemitic Assaults.”

Israel was a central topic of the paper, its politics but also daily life making the front page of most issues. This was not a minor factor, since the State was being constantly presented as the solution to the “Jewish identity” in the Diaspora: “The dispersion made the Jews into an abnormal people, and the rise of the State of Israel will avert its annihilation for good.”<sup>13</sup> *Nueva Sión* led an incessant campaign in favor of the settlement – “repatriation” – of Argentine Jews in Israel.

One of the main questions that preoccupied Jewish intellectuals at the time was what some considered “the loss of Jewish values and traditions” in favor of causes that were supposedly “alien” to the community. In other words: the “assimilation” to Argentine national culture. Tensions arose particularly around the debate of “non-practiced” Judaism, as condensed in the expression “I’m a Jew, but I don’t practice.” From the early 1960s it was a matter addressed explicitly in numerous articles and correspondences.

In the *Nueva Sión* issue of 19 May 1961, the expression was described by an author called Iudain<sup>14</sup> as one heard frequently among the young generation which “has integrated in Argentine life”; which felt that Judaism was some sort of “accident” they could “renounce willingly to feel as a part of a certain community.”<sup>15</sup> This “will,” he argued, could only ever manifest itself within the Jewish community itself, since the Jewish condition was not going to be called into doubt by those who joined the ranks of right-wing nationalism: “When a young Jew – one of those who claim that they are, but don’t practice – passes by a wall on which is scrawled ‘Death to the Jews,’ is he not included among those condemned to die, whether he practices or not?”<sup>16</sup>

This issue acquired a central significance during the period, since Adolf Eichmann’s capture was followed by an increase in antisemitic incidents in the country, as mentioned before. Contemporaneous with the publication of Iudain’s article, for example, was one major antisemitic attack carried out

13 Op-ed, in: *Nueva Sión*, 19 May 1961, 3.

14 This is the pseudonym of Yehuda Adín, the leader of the Hashomer Hatzair youth in Argentina.

15 Iudain (Julio/Yehuda Adín), Soy judío, pero no ejerzo. Reflexiones sobre una problemática actual [I’m a Jew, but I Don’t Practice. Reflections on a Current Problem], in: *Nueva Sión*, 19 May 1961, 2.

16 Ibid.

against students at a ceremony at Sarmiento National High School in Buenos Aires (1960), where one of them, Edgardo Trilnik, was injured in gun fire.<sup>17</sup>

For the editors of *Nueva Sión* it was impossible to be indifferent to anti-semitism, its “othering gaze” on Jewishness, and wide disregard for any existing differences within Jewish life in Argentina. These antisemitic assaults, they pointed out, were a lesson for “those assimilated Jews who felt safe from anti-semitism. Now they know they are not.” Resorting to an apparently literal level – “Until today I believed that I was Argentinian, but now they forced me to understand that I just happen to be in Argentina.”<sup>18</sup> – the paper was calling to close ranks behind Zionist activism, considering it the only viable option to deal with “Jewish identity.”<sup>19</sup>

*Nueva Sión’s* editors were mainly concerned with Argentina’s youth. “Assimilation” was understood as the manifestation of certain juvenile groups who showed interest in national political causes to the detriment of the “national cause of the Hebrew people.”<sup>20</sup> This perspective was rejected by some voices. During the month of June 1961, one newspaper reader called Néstor Braunstein sent a letter with the provocative title *Letter from a Non-Practicing Jew*.<sup>21</sup> The young man criticized the “old Zionists” who, in his eyes, had resigned from dealing with this country’s problems in favor of “their” national struggle. Turning the tables on *Nueva Sión’s* editors, he wrote:

“When one of those young or old Latin Americans, which is what they are, even if they do not practice, look at a magazine or stumble across a UN publication that states the average life expectancy in some Latin American country is 35 years; or when they read that 100 percent of all homes in the Argentine Province of Chaco are infested with *vinchuca* bugs, which carry the parasite that leads to the deadly Chagas disease: Do they think that their fate is tied to that of all Latin Americans or do they believe that such issues do not concern them anymore since they have chosen to have nothing to do with all the other Latin Americans? When events like the recent US invasion of Cuba take place, are those of their concern or not?”<sup>22</sup>

The author was clear in his letter that he saw anti-semitism indeed as a problem, but, according to him, it was not the central one: “We do oppose these [Nationalist right-wing] movements because of their anti-semitism; but we

17 A novel that depicts the tensions of this period through the fictionalization of this case is Samuel Tarnopolsky, *La mitad de nada* [Half of Nothing], Buenos Aires 1988.

18 5722. El pueblo judío en la Argentina, en Israel y en el resto del mundo [5722. The Jewish People in Argentina, in Israel, and in the Rest of the World], in: *Nueva Sión*, 28 September 1962, 1.

19 See *Eferescencia y su contenido* [Turmoil and Its Content], in: *Nueva Sión*, 2 August 1962, 1.

20 *Palabras a los judíos* [Words to the Jews], in: *Nueva Sión*, 1 June 1962, 1.

21 Néstor Braunstein, *Carta de un judío que no ejerce* [Letter from a Non-Practicing Jew], in: *Nueva Sión*, 8 June 1961, 2.

22 *Ibid.*



oppose them even more because of everything else that comes with it.” Braunstein’s letter received an answer by Iudain in *Nueva Sión*’s following issue, where he called into question the position of those favoring a just cause over the option of national belonging. In Iudain’s view, Zionism allowed for both:

“Zionism has much more in common with the struggles of Latin American peoples than what Braunstein suspects, because it is nothing else than the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. It is thanks to this movement that hundreds of thousands of the Jewish people could be rescued from misery, denigration, persecution, and even death, providing them with the living conditions of a normal and sovereign people.”<sup>23</sup>

This version of Zionism as a national liberation movement paved, in the early sixties, the way for tying together Zionist demands and action programs towards Nationalist and anti-Imperialist left-wing goals later in the decade. The centrality of this debate can be traced through a series of *Nueva Sión* interviews with Jewish Argentine public intellectuals discussing Jewish identity. The weekly considered these public figures “partly responsible for the ideological and intellectual formation of our community,” giving voice to a wide spectrum of opinions by professionals deeply committed to the Jewish tradition: José Isaacson, Bernardo Kordon, Arnoldo Liberman, Máximo Simpson, Simón Kargierman, Samuel Tarnopolsky, Boleslao Lewin, Humberto Constantini, David José Kohon, and Simja Sneh. Those interviewees – most of them writers, journalists, and social scientists – were to answer the following questions: What does it mean to be a Jew?; What does Israel mean to you?; and what does “Jewish culture” mean to you?<sup>24</sup>

A comparison of their answers reveals similarities and shared perspectives beside few disagreements, on the one hand, and an evident distance to the views held by *Nueva Sión*, on the other, particularly regarding the notion and experience of “being a Jew.” Closer to Braunstein’s statements than to Iudain’s, these intellectuals agreed on the Sartrean premise that Jewish identity persisted because of the “inquisitor’s” insistence on blaming Jews for all troubles in the world.

José Isaacson, for example, pointed out that “it would be interesting to ask the antisemites for their definitions.”<sup>25</sup> Máximo Simpson quoted Sartre’s assessment that “a Jew is, above all, a man placed in a situation, the situation of being a Jew. In many cases, forced to be a Jew. Even if he does not want it,

23 Iudain, Respuesta a un judío que no ejerce [Answer to a Non-Practicing Jew], in: *Nueva Sión*, 17 June 1961, 2.

24 Una encuesta a intelectuales judíos [A Survey among Jewish Intellectuals], in: *Nueva Sión*, 16 December 1961, 2.

25 Ibid. (Interview with José Isaacson).

he will continue to be a Jew by the antisemite's decision."<sup>26</sup> And in the same vein, Humberto Constantini explained,

"My Judaism is a reactive Judaism. I believe that it exists as an answer to antisemitism. In the face of such demonstration of stupidity and barbarism, my attitude is quite similar to that of him who says: 'I am a Jew ... So what?'"<sup>27</sup>

Arnoldo Liberman, for his part, proclaimed that it is

"the situation, in a Sartrean style, that defines us: I am sure that the tar bomb thrown at the walls of a synagogue does more for Jewish authenticity than the prayers of the faithful who, at that very moment, are inside the Temple."<sup>28</sup>

Samuel Tarnopolsky presented a more differentiated view on the Sartrean premise:

"Now everybody relies on Sartre: A Jew is a man placed in the situation of being Jew, forced to be a Jew. That is in part true, but not all the truth [...]. This becomes a problem for those who suffer for being Jews and feel it is unfair, since they are not to blame for having been born into that tradition."<sup>29</sup>

While Tarnopolsky acknowledged that antisemitic discrimination and persecution were a reality for all Jews, he proposed that this being based on Jewish identity was only a problem for those "Jewish individuals" who "did not want to be Jewish or not assume their Jewishness any longer."

It was Simja Sneh who was to conclude the interview series, canalizing the statements of his fellow intellectuals towards the Zionist cause. Against the grain of their previous statements, he offered an essentialist perspective, referring to a "long tradition, sufferings, and commonalities among our People":

"I am a Jew, just because I do not want to, nor could I, in any way, not be one; because I live with my whole soul all the joys and all the sufferings of my People in every corner of the world. Being a Jew is to belong to the Jewish People, which is the only experience that preserves the features and attributes of a people, even when it is dispersed."<sup>30</sup>

This survey of Jewish intellectuals shows a certain urgency on the part of young Jews, also identified by Senkman. They felt summoned by their "Jewishness" in light of the antisemitic assaults triggered in Argentina by the Eichmann affair. While *Nueva Sión's* editors had envisioned to give the particularity and legitimacy of such identity a voice through their interviewees, we find that most of them were inclined to see the commitment to Jewishness

26 Ibid., 30 December 1961, 2 (Interview with Máximo Simpson).

27 Ibid., 17 February 1962, 2 (Interview with Humberto Constantini).

28 Ibid., 16 December 1961, 2 (Interview with Arnoldo Liberman).

29 Ibid., 30 December 1961, 2 (Interview with Samuel Tarnopolsky).

30 Ibid., 27 July 1962, 2 (Interview with Simja Sneh).

as a matter of each individual's free will (Issacson, Kargieman); or proposed, as per Sartre, that it was an identity externally imposed by antisemites (Isaacson, Liberman, Simpson, Tarnopolsky).

### “We Have Never Attempted to Play Hide and Seek with History”: Jewish Youth Activism during the Political Radicalization Process

With debates about Jewish identity being linked in the early and late 1960s to growing antisemitism, incited by groups such as Tacuara and the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista (Nationalist Restorative Guard), the conflict took a different shape at the turn of the 1970s. The return of Peronism to power, the military coup in Chile,<sup>31</sup> and the Yom Kippur War – all three occurring in 1973 – would add new fuel to the controversy. But at its center were no longer notions of identity à la Sartre, but political ascriptions, revolving around the conceptualization of Zionism as a form of imperialism within the Middle East.

An open letter to the Centro Editor de América Latina (Latin American Publishing House), published in October 1974 in *Nueva Sión* and signed by journalist Herman Schiller,<sup>32</sup> is illustrative of the conflicts experienced by those who sympathized with left-wing ideas and publicly identified as Jews. Schiller's call on representative figures and respected intellectual spokespersons within the “progressive field” indicates, first, how widespread the condemnation of the State of Israel was and, second, the urgency felt by Zionists to establish and redefine the legitimacy of their mobilization effort both inside and outside the Jewish community. At the same time, his call reflected

31 On the reception of the Chilean military coup among the Jewish youth, see Emmanuel Kahan, *Entre Cámpora, Perón y Pinochet. La radicalización del discurso de las organizaciones judías argentinas* [Between Cámpora, Peron and Pinochet. The Radicalization of the Discourse of Argentine Jewish Organizations], in: *Judaica Latinoamericana* 7 (2013), 487–510.

32 Herman Schiller would gain public recognition years later as a consequence of his role as editor-in-chief of the weekly *Nueva Presencia* (New Presence) during the last Argentine military dictatorship (1976–1983). On *Nueva Presencia*, see Emmanuel Kahan, *La construcción de íconos en torno a la resistencia dictatorial. El semanario “Nueva Presencia” y la resistencia a la dictadura militar en Argentina, 1977–1983* [The Construction of Icons around the Resistance to the Dictatorship. The Weekly “Nueva Presencia” and the Resistance to the Military Dictatorship in Argentina, 1977–1983], in: Osvaldo Barreneche/Andrés Bisso, *El tiempo pasa, la historia queda. Ayer, hoy y mañana son contemporáneos* [Time Goes By, History Stays. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow are Contemporaries], La Plata 2010, 133–162.

the widespread perception of too simplistic a portrayal of the Israeli-Arab conflict on the part of many Argentine left-wing organizations.<sup>33</sup>

This open letter shows that the debates in which Zionism engaged with the left were intended to assert legitimacy by linking itself to the struggle of other national liberation movements as well as capitalizing on the intellectual sources upon which these movements drew; hence the inclination among representatives of Jewish organizations to reference texts and authors dear to the traditions of the left, such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels,<sup>34</sup> Frantz Fanon,<sup>35</sup> and Leon Trotsky.<sup>36</sup> Many also concluded their open letters, speeches, and various documents with calls to recognize the legitimacy of the Zionist cause, its proximity to the left, and the complexity of the Middle East conflict. On the occasion of an event on 3 June 1973 celebrating the 25th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel, organized by the Confederación Juvenil Judeo-Argentina and Hashomer Hatzair, *compañero* Guioráh Melman wrote,<sup>37</sup>

“We must show the world the image of our progressive Zionism. We must make the international left, which only twenty-five years ago stood in solidarity with our fight against the British invaders and colonization, understand that we have not turned ourselves into imperialists. We must show them that ideology must not be turned into demonology. We have never attempted to play hide-and-seek with history. We have not underestimated existing national movements. To label Israel or the Palestinians is not only prejudicial, but ill-fated ... We, progressive Zionists, stand alongside Latin American countries in their new revolutionary expression, because we share it.”<sup>38</sup>

This process within the Zionist movement is significant: Not only were those who abandoned its ranks radicalized in the pursuit of the Argentine “national cause,” but the emancipation rhetoric and the characterization of Zionism as a “movement of national liberation” accompanied to a large degree the polemics and pronouncements of its activists. In order to illustrate this point, it is sufficient to review briefly the press coverage of the so-called “dialogues”

33 See Herman Schiller, Carta abierta al Centro Editor [Open Letter to the Publishing House], in: Nueva Sión, 1 October 1974, 2. Schiller’s motivation for the letter was to complain about the alterations made to a text about the State of Israel he had been commissioned to write by the publishing house for the *Siglo Veintiuno* collection.

34 Un significativo artículo de Berl [A Significant Article by Berl], in: Avodá’s Bulletin, 12 September 1974.

35 See Frantz Fanon y su hermandad con el sionismo [Frantz Fanon and His Affiliation with Zionism], in: Nueva Sión, 8 October 1973, 6 f.

36 See Trotsky ante la cuestión judía [Trotsky on the Jewish Question], in: Nueva Sión, 10 July 1974, 7.

37 “*Compañero*” was the address preferred by Peronist sympathizers, while “*camarada*” was used among Communists.

38 Guioráh Melman, Gran acto de la juventud [Great Youth Event], in: Nueva Sión, 29 June 1973, 3 and 11.

organized by Jewish youth groups and left-wing militants: a lecture by the priest Carlos Mujica (1930–1974) on 8 September 1973 in Tzavta Community Center,<sup>39</sup> where Hashomer Hatzair operated; an interview with the Catholic Bishop Alberto Devoto (1918–1984), member of the Movement of Priests for the Third World and founder of Argentina’s movement of “slum priests”;<sup>40</sup> and a course held at the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano on “national reality.”<sup>41</sup> This all came in addition to the formation of two new Zionist groups, Coordinadora de Agrupaciones Universitarias Sionistas de la Argentina (CAUSA) and Frente de Bases de la Izquierda Sionista Realizadora.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, as will be seen below, the dialogue between Zionist and left-wing organizations led to a long series of conflicts. For example, in May 1973, when there was supposed to be a celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the State of Israel, the ceremony was delayed due to the refusal of the youth to extend invitations to non-Jewish groups that were “pro-Israel demo-liberals.” Instead, they proposed to share the Luna Park Stadium stage with those they felt closer to: the Peronist youth.<sup>43</sup>

As pointed out by Adrian Krupnik, towards the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, some groups belonging to Jewish youth movements initiated a process of political radicalization that, in some cases, ended in a breakup with the Zionist organization that had sheltered them. The Amós group, for example, was a dismembered branch of Hashomer Hatzair. Starting on a course of self-recognition as “Zionist Revolutionary Socialists,” its members would end up joining many of the local left-wing organizations.<sup>44</sup>

This passage of members between organizations would create a rift between old *compañeros* in activism. For example, during an exchange of letters between youth activists in response to criticism from the periodical

39 See Carta abierta al sacerdote Mujica [Open Letter to the Priest Mujica], in: Nueva Sión, 25 July 1973, 7.

40 See Entrevista al Obispo Devoto [Interview with Bishop Devoto], in: Nueva Sión, 25 July 1973, 4 and 11.

41 See Columna. Hechos y resonancias [Column. Events and Resonances], in: Mundo Israelita [Israelite World], 7 September 1974, 5.

42 See Nucleamiento estudiantil sionista [Student Zionist Gathering], in: Mundo Israelita, 23 November 1974, 14; Primer Congreso de la JSS [First Congress of the Zionist Socialist Youth], in: Nueva Sión, 3 November 1973, 5.

43 See ¿Por qué la comunidad no festejó todavía los 25 años de Israel? [Why Has the Community Still Not Celebrated Israel’s 25th Anniversary?], in: Nueva Sión, 2 June 1973, 6.

44 See Adrian Krupnik, Cuando camino al kibbutz vieron pasar al Che. Radicalización política y juventud judía. Argentina 1966–1976 [When on the Way to the Kibbutz They Saw Che Passing By. Political Radicalization and Jewish Youth. Argentina 1966–1976], in: Emmanuel Kahan et al., Marginados y consagrados. Nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina [Marginalized and Consecrated. New Studies on the Jewish Life in Argentina], Buenos Aires 2011, 311–327.

*Noticias*<sup>45</sup> over Israeli actions in the Middle East, discord would become evident between those who had abandoned the Zionist cause and those who remained within its ranks.<sup>46</sup>

One “Letter from an Anti-Zionist,” signed by Marcos Blank, who claimed to have been a Zionist before becoming a member of the Peronist *Tendencia Revolucionaria*,<sup>47</sup> accused the editors of *Nueva Sión* of being opportunists. He wrote, “[A]t the time *Noticias* or *El Mundo* had nothing to say about the Middle East, they received *Nueva Sión*’s support. But when they published an anti-Zionist article, the label of revolutionaries that had previously been so blithely granted to them was afterwards revoked.”<sup>48</sup>

Blank pointed out that,

“between 1966 and 1973, *Nueva Sión* did not publish a single article on torture, repression, or grassroots initiatives like the Córdoba uprising, parts one and two, or the Tucumán uprising [...].<sup>49</sup> Everything was directed at combating antisemitism in an abstract manner, in order to draw Jewish youth away from a concrete struggle for the definitive liberation of our country and our people. There is something comforting in the fact that Zionism is not growing, and that it will not even attain the magnitude it had in previous years. Jewish youth, today more than ever, realizes that their definitive liberation as Jews and as men involves pursuing the revolutionary path, both in Argentina and Latin America, as well as in Israel.”<sup>50</sup>

A reply would come in the form of a letter signed by David Ben-Ami, arguing that Zionism included diverse tendencies and that the JSS was a left-wing faction within the ranks of the movement. By the same token, he stressed that even if *Nueva Sión* did discuss topics related to “Jewish national expression from a Socialist Zionist perspective,” whenever there was a crucial event in the life of the country, “we have never failed to report it and take a position.” He then listed events such as the Córdoba uprising, the Trelew Massacre,<sup>51</sup> assaults on freedom of the press, and the death of Juan Domingo Perón, among others.<sup>52</sup>

45 *Noticias* was a newspaper linked to the Peronist left-wing guerrilla organization Montoneros.

46 See Carta a la redacción de “Noticias” [Letter to the Editorial Board of *Noticias*], in: *Nueva Sión*, 10 July 1974, 6.

47 *Tendencia Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Tendency) was part of a group of self-proclaimed revolutionary Peronist organizations.

48 Carta de un antisionista [Letter of an Anti-Zionist], in: *Nueva Sión*, 9 September 1974, 5.

49 These were grassroots uprisings that took place in 1969 in the capital cities of the provinces of Córdoba and Tucumán, in which both workers and students played a key role.

50 Carta de un antisionista, 5.

51 The Trelew Massacre was an assassination of 16 militants by the military after their failed attempt to escape the prison in the city of Rawson in the Chubut Province on 22 August 1972.

52 See David Ben-Ami, Respuesta de un sionista [Answer of a Zionist], in: *Nueva Sión*, 9 September 1974, 6.

This controversy served to establish the frame of reference for the problems of youth activism and political radicalism that were taking place within the Jewish-Argentine community. As Blank points out – despite Ben-Ami’s objection – the perception of a “loss” of activists among the ranks of Zionism was felt to be a sign of the times.

These dialogues, as it became evident in previous allusions, illustrate the ways in which the radicalization process permeated Jewish youth activism during the period. The self-proclaimed revolutionary narrative of activism in Jewish youth spaces in Argentina brought these groups closer to the aspirations of the national organizations of the left.<sup>53</sup> However, during the Yom Kippur War (1973) the left’s perspective on the conflict was considered too simplistic. According to *Mundo Israelita*’s writers, Manichaeism and the left’s support for the “Arab cause” were a consequence of a certain fascination with the irrationality of their demands in contrast to Israeli positions.<sup>54</sup>

*El Descamisado*, a publication linked to the left-wing Peronist guerrilla organization called Montoneros, insisted, for example, on denouncing Israel as the “armed wing of Imperialism.”<sup>55</sup> Responding to *El Descamisado*, which referred to the Arab countries’ fight against Israel as a “just war,”<sup>23</sup> members of the Juventud Mordejai Anilevich, a youth group in Rosario, drafted an open letter to the publication’s subscribers, mostly associated with the Peronist left. The young Socialist Zionists emphasized that there were parts of Israeli society committed to national liberation and to the establishment of Socialism and that what local leftist sectors had not denounced was the oppression, domination, and hindrance of “class struggle” that existed in the Arab states.<sup>56</sup> Arguments of a similar nature were put forth by the JSS in the wake of articles that Rodolfo Walsh published under the title *The Palestinian Revolution*.<sup>57</sup>

These letters demanded a more complex and comprehensive reading of the Israeli phenomenon among the activists of the local left. Zionist-affiliated youth – especially those close to the JSS – characterized it as a “movement of national Jewish liberation” and, in that sense, they saw the cause of na-

53 See El sionismo socialista frente a la realidad actual [Socialist Zionism in the Face of the Current Reality], in: Nueva Sión, 2 March 1973, 6.

54 See Columna. De semana en semana [Column. From Week to Week], in: Mundo Israelita, 23 February 1974, 3.

55 Penetración ideológica antisionista y antisemita [Ideological Anti-Zionist and Antisemitic Penetration], in: Boletín informativo de la DAIA [DAIA Bulletin], October 1973.

56 A los compañeros de “El Descamisado” [To the Comrades of *El Descamisado*], in: Nueva Sión, 3 December 1973.

57 Carta a la redacción de “Noticias” [Letter to the Editors of *Noticias*], in: Nueva Sión, 10 July 1974. Rodolfo Walsh was a celebrated Argentine journalist and member of the Peronist left-wing guerrilla organization Montoneros. He forcedly disappeared at the hands of the military dictatorship on 24 March 1977.

tional liberation developed by the youth of Argentina and the one advanced by young Israelis akin to their own.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the call to grassroots figures, leaders, and well-known intellectuals is evidence of the extent to which condemnation of the State of Israel had spread and explains the urgency of the Zionist movement to establish and redefine from both within and without the legitimacy of its mobilization.

Events during and after the Yom Kippur War led various youth organizations to rally and publicize their positions with respect to the conflict. Activists of the student union at ORT School, for example, distributed a flier in which they underscored how, “in this war, workers are fighting against workers” and that this “maneuver was enough to bring a halt to the revolutionary process in both countries.” According to the students, the right of the Palestinians to have a state of their own was legitimate, while understanding that “their liberation cannot mean the destruction of our State of Israel.”<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, a rally was held at the Paso Street Temple, in Buenos Aires.<sup>60</sup> According to *Boletín informativo de la DAIA*, the event was well attended.<sup>61</sup> Moshe Roit, acting secretary of DAIA, who addressed the participants, accused the Soviet Union of being responsible for the political instability of the region, stating, “the USSR has armed the Arab governments to their teeth because they know that peace will not give them access to the Middle East.”<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the dynamics of the Middle East conflict produced a series of reactions, statements, and rallies. The 18 May 1974 issue of *Mundo Israelita* featured the sensationalist headline *Inhumane and Pointless* following the terror attack perpetrated by the People’s Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Ma’alot, Israel.<sup>63</sup> Club Náutico Hacoaj, Sociedad Hebraica, Macabi, and the Club Atlético Sefaradí Argentino (CASA) decided to suspend their activ-

58 See 10 reflexiones sobre sionismo, izquierda y acción [10 Thoughts on Zionism, the Left, and Action], in: Nueva Sión, 24 August 1974, 6; Peretz Merjav, Apuntes para un movimiento de liberación [Notes for a Liberation Movement], in: Nueva Sión, 3 September 1975, 7; Tzvi Talmid, Israel frente a la dicotomía derecha-izquierda [Israel in the Face of the Right-Left Dichotomy], in: Avodá’s Bulletin, 5 November 1974, 10; Sionismo es autodeterminación del pueblo judío [Zionism Means Self-Determination of the Jewish People], in: Avodá’s Bulletin, 22 November 1975, 7.

59 La movilización del Ischuv [The Mobilization of the Yishuv], in: Boletín informativo de la DAIA, October 1973, 3 f.

60 The participating organizations were the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas de Argentina (DAIA), the Asociación Mutual Israelita de Argentina (AMIA), the Organización Sionista Argentina (OSA), and the Confederación Juvenil Judeo-Argentina (CJJA).

61 See El acto en el templo de Paso [Event in the Paso Temple], in: Boletín informativo de la DAIA, October 1973, 5.

62 Manifestación ante la Embajada Soviética [Demonstration in front of the Soviet Embassy], in: *ibid.*, 7.

63 This was a terrorist attack on a high school in the Israeli city of Ma’alot carried out by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine on 15 May 1974.



ities on 19 May. For its part, the CJJA<sup>64</sup> organized a demonstration at which they chanted: “Down with terrorism / We’re fighting for peace”; “Come on, come on, come on! / Come on my friend! / What we’re fighting for here / is peace for the whole world!”; “The Jewish people / will never be defeated!”; “Peace and socialism / the paths to Zionism!”; “Hear me, Palestinian! / Peace is the way!”<sup>65</sup>

The latter event began with a march through the streets of Buenos Aires passing by the Israeli embassy, the Syrian embassy, and the intersection of Tucumán and Ayacucho streets, where the Jewish Education Center was located. During the demonstration, Zionist youth groups distributed fliers to bystanders stating their positions regarding the Ma’alot attack and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, the high point of mobilization regarding the Middle East conflict took place toward the end of 1975. On 10 November of that year, the UN approved Resolution No. 3379 in which Zionism was held to be a form of racism and discrimination. The discrediting of Zionism on the international stage gave rise to the rapid mobilization of Jewish organizations in Argentina. The call for a rally at the Coliseo Theater, organized by DAIA, OSA, CJJA, and the Ente Coordinador Sefaradí Argentino (ECSA), counted on a huge turnout and the support of former president Arturo Frondizi, the historian José Luis Romero, the writers César Tiempo and Ernesto Sábato, and Judge Carlos Fayt.<sup>67</sup> Speakers included the Israeli Ambassador to Argentina, Ram Nigrad, DAIA Secretary Juan Gurevich, and a representative from the CJJA, Luis Feld. While everyone denounced the resolution, they maintained that its approval had less to do with the dynamics of the Cold War than with the pressure from Arab states who, through their possession of oil, held Western countries in their grip.

The central community institutions also appealed to the state authorities to oppose the resolution,<sup>68</sup> while followers of Socialist Zionism called attention – negatively – to the traditional policy of Argentine abstentions in in-

64 CJJA was an institution that gathered different factions of the Jewish youth movements.

65 Columna. Hechos y resonancias [Column. Events and Resonances], in: *Mundo Israelita*, 25 May 1974, 3. See also Masiva manifestación de solidaridad [Mass Demonstration of Solidarity], in: *Nueva Sión*, 24 May 1974, 6; and Ante el atentado terrorista en Israel [In the Face of the Terrorist Attack in Israel], in: *Nueva Sión*, 24 May 1974, 2.

66 Columna. Hechos y resonancias [Column. Events and Resonances], in: *Mundo Israelita*, 25 May 1974, 3.

67 Multitudinario acto de adhesión de la comunidad judía a Israel y el sionismo [Mass Event of the Jewish Community Supporting Israel and Zionism], in: *Boletín informativo de la DAIA*, November 1975, 6; Vibrante repudio al oportunismo de la ONU [Strong Condemnation of the UN’s Opportunism], in: *Nueva Sión*, 22 November 1975, 4.

68 Telegrama de DAIA a canciller argentino (Vignes) [DAIA’s Telegram to the Argentine Foreign Minister (Vignes)], in: *Boletín informativo de la DAIA*, November 1975, 3.

ternational forums.<sup>69</sup> Finally, under the slogan “We are all Zionists!” Jewish organizations proposed a massive affiliation campaign to OSA, in response to “international provocation”<sup>70</sup> and the “antisemitic oil aggression.”<sup>71</sup>

### Final Considerations

The study of positions and tensions that arose within the field of Socialist Zionist youth activism during the 1960s and 1970s allows us to observe, on the one hand, the preponderance of certain topics in each of those decades. While in the early 1960s, the youth was prompted to respond to the attacks of Nationalist right-wingers on their Jewish identity, they would engage in critical discussions with left-wing organizations on Zionism and the State of Israel in the following decade. Israel also featured in the narrative of right-wing groups such as Tacuara, accusing Jews of dual loyalty to Argentina and Israel. However, the disagreements with the left pertained to the fact that they saw Israel as an Imperialist State in the Middle East and, therefore, disputed claims that Zionism was a national liberation movement.

On the other hand, as we saw, these debates served young Jews to formulate publicly their considerations on the legitimacy of Zionist activism. The rise of diverse contenders in each decade, however, allowed us to discern a meaningful rhetorical displacement on the part of Zionist organizations. This displacement, during the 1970s, manifested itself in the political radicalization seizing Argentina, the attribution of a new meaning to Peronism as a national liberation movement – at least from the perspective of some left-wing groups – and the influence of other emancipation processes, *id est*, the Cuban Revolution and Salvador Allende’s electoral victory in Chile, which shaped the definition and practices of young Jews in Zionist youth movements. The analysis of expressions in the third section of this essay allowed to attest not only a radicalization of the young Jews deserting the youth movements, but probably – judging by the activist terminology and political programs ex-

69 La abstención también trae sus consecuencias [Abstention Also Has Its Consequences], in: Nueva Sión, 3 November 1975, 3.

70 La mejor propuesta a la provocación internacional: afiliarse masivamente a la Organización Sionista Argentina [The Best Answer to the International Provocation: Join the Argentine Zionist Organization in Masses], in: Avodá’s Bulletin, 7 November 1975, 24.

71 Frente a la agresión petrolera-antisemita respondemos con la afiliación masiva a la OSA [We Respond to the Antisemitic Oil Aggression with Mass Affiliation to the OSA], in: Avodá’s Bulletin, 12 January 1976, 24.

amined here – of the organizations themselves, with the difference that they attended to their own political and ideological agendas.

The debates and ideas considered in this essay should not be understood as exclusive to the Jewish community, but are reflected in the circles of non-Jewish Argentine public intellectuals, as well. They, too, were strongly influenced by Jean Paul Sartre's theory of political engagement, describing social agents, particularly public intellectuals, as immersed in a situation that, even if not by choice, ineluctably implicated them.<sup>72</sup>

72 See Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas. La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual argentina, 1956–1966* [Our 1960s. The Formation of the New Intellectual Left in Argentina, 1956–1966], Buenos Aires 1993, 22.



# Gelehrtenporträt



Annette Winke

## When Irrationality Shapes Reality: John H. Herz's Anthropomorphizing Analysis of Nazi Legal Concepts of World Order

In 1985, John H. Fried, an Austrian American émigré lawyer and nephew of Hans Kelsen, sent a personal letter to his fellow emigrant John H. Herz. Referring to Herz's autobiography, which had just come out with a German publisher under the title *Vom Überleben* (On Survival),<sup>1</sup> Fried wrote:

“After waiting for months for your *Überleben* book, I had this time the leisure really to read and to ponder your story and thought. [...] The overriding feeling stimulated in me is how incomprehensively little we have known about each other, [...] although much has been parallel in our lives. [...] I lived in Princeton [...] partly at the same time you were at the Institute [for Advanced Studies] there. My first ‘job’ after arriving in the US from Vienna in 1938 was with the Horkheimer Institute [Institute for Social Research] [...]. Later on, Franz Neumann proposed me to the State Department to head the evaluation project of the huge Nazi documentation collection at the former submarine factory in Alexandria – which, however, I eventually did not because I preferred to stay in N. Y. at the U. N.”<sup>2</sup>

The dominant sentiment conveyed in Fried's letter was thus bewilderment over what he perceived as the apparent parallels in their lives. What seemed most perplexing to him was the insight that there were more shared experiences, joint interests, and overarching themes than he had previously assumed. After 1945, Herz became a leading expert in the newly emerging discipline of International Relations (IR), while Fried, himself a professor of political science at the City University of New York, remained close to the networks and debates of International Law (IL) and the Law of War or Law of Armed Conflict. The narrative according to which a bifurcation between the two disciplines of IL and IR took place during the last years of World War II, which was then accelerated by the political and ideological antagonisms of the Cold War, developed

- 1 John H. Herz, *Vom Überleben. Wie ein Weltbild entstand*, Düsseldorf 1984. An abbreviated English translation, *On Survival*, dates from May 1988. However, it remains unpublished. It can be found in Herz's personal papers at the University at Albany, N. Y., M. E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, John H. Herz Papers, 1917–2005 (henceforth GER015).
- 2 GER015, Box 34, John H. Fried to John H. Herz, 10 August 1985.

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into something like a popular founding myth reproduced over and over again by IR theorists and in numerous textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

Only recently have these historical images and stereotypes been convincingly challenged, as the previously sealed borders between the two disciplines have become more porous just in the past few years. Due to a parallel “historiographical turn” in IL and IR, inspired by influential works like those of Martti Koskenniemi and Nicolas Guilhot, the often simplistic plotlines have been replaced by a more nuanced picture.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, some specificities of US academic cultures in the early Cold War, like its continuous interaction with different sectors of the American foreign policy establishment, have increasingly come to the forefront. With the advent of the particular historical constellation of 1945, characterized by America as a new superpower and the existence of at least three competing variants of internationalism, embodied by the liberal internationalism of the United States, the “revolutionary” internationalism of the Soviet Union, and the so-called “Third World”-internationalism,<sup>5</sup> there was not only a heightened demand for theoretical and practical expertise in the fields of foreign and military policymaking, but also for a new, emboldened type of political scholar that combined a profound theoretical education with a distinct internationalist outlook.<sup>6</sup>

- 3 Duncan Bell, *Writing the World, Disciplinary History and Beyond*, in: *International Affairs* 85 (2009), no. 1, 3–22; Ken Booth, *Navigating the “Absolute Novum.” John H. Herz’s Political Realism and Political Idealism*, in: *International Relations* 22 (2008), no. 4, 510–526; Jens Steffek/Leonie Holthaus, *Einleitung. Der vergessene “Idealismus” in der Disziplin Internationale Beziehungen*, in: idem (eds.), *Jenseits der Anarchie. Weltordnungsentwürfe im frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a. M. 2014, 11–24.
- 4 Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations. The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870–1960*, Cambridge/New York 2002; Nicolas Guilhot (ed.), *The Invention of International Relations Theory. Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*, New York 2011; Jan Stöckmann, *The Architects of International Relations. Building a Discipline, Designing the World*, Cambridge/New York 2022.
- 5 Glenda Sluga/Patricia Clavin (eds.), *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History*, Cambridge 2017. On liberal internationalism, see Daniel Joyce, *Liberal Internationalism*, in: Anne Orford/Florian Hoffmann (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Theory of International Law*, Oxford 2016, 471–487.
- 6 Isabella Löhr, *Lives beyond Borders, or: How to Trace Global Biographies, 1880–1950*, in: *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 23 (2013), no. 6, 6–20.



This essay follows some of the traces laid out in the correspondence between Fried and Herz. It is part of a larger inquiry into exiled German-speaking international lawyers in the United States and the United Kingdom before, during, and after World War II.<sup>7</sup> One of the overarching questions this project seeks to address is whether these scholars can be conceptualized as a particular group characterized by professional and private interactions, a lifelong desire for direct and indirect intellectual exchange with other group members, similarities in their research agendas and visions of world order, and a pronounced self-understanding as academic outsiders. With regard to the specific cohort of Jewish legal scholars it also focuses on whether and how their socialization as German or Austrian academics in combination with very specific, mostly traumatic experiences played out in their intellectual orientation or even a common “thinking style” of concepts, patterns of arguments, and interpretations.<sup>8</sup>

On the one hand, this epistemology relates to historiographical debates engaged with the merits of collective biographies for the analysis of global, transnational, and translocal intellectual histories.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, it concentrates on a discussion that has recently gained steam under the label of “Jewish lawyering.” Following the yardsticks of her academic mentor Martti Koskenniemi, who advanced the concept of “deep structures” in international law,<sup>10</sup> the Israeli legal historian Reut Paz is one of the pioneers of this fairly new strain of scholarship. Departing from the historical observation that “Jewish emancipation, German colonialism, but also the project of international law were commenced by Germans at approximately the same time,” Paz describes the formation of a cosmopolitan but not necessarily liberal Jewish legal identity as a long-term process, in which Jewish international lawyers were eager to use their outsider status in order to broaden the discipline’s structures of argumentation.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that – with the excep-

7 The project title is “Lobbyisten des Rechts. Transatlantische Völkerrechtler und Menschenrechtsaktivisten im 20. Jahrhundert.” In 2017, the Thyssen Foundation in Cologne funded an international conference on the role of European Jewish émigré lawyers in the twentieth century, which the author organized together with Leora Bilsky. The results have been published in the following anthology: Annette Weinke/Leora Bilsky (eds.), *Jewish-European Émigré Lawyers. Twentieth Century International Humanitarian Law as Idea and Profession*, Göttingen 2021.

8 The terms *Denkstil* and *Denkkollektiv* were first advanced by the Polish Jewish microbiologist Ludwig Flek in the mid-1930s and have since been rediscovered in the historiography of knowledge production and knowledge transfer.

9 See Levke Harders, *Legitimizing Biography. Critical Approaches to Biographical Research*, in: *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 55 (2014), 49–56.

10 Martti Koskenniemi, *From Apology to Utopia. The Structure of International Legal Argument*, Cambridge 2005, 3.

11 Reut Yael Paz, *A Gateway between a Distant God and a Cruel World. The Contribution of Jewish German-Speaking Scholars to International Law*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2013, 126 and 355.

tion of Hersch Lauterpacht – none of her protagonists made their identification with Jewish ideas and matters explicit, Paz nonetheless claims that their special experiences and sensibilities as German Jews, which had furnished them with the “profession’s paradox,” had not only amplified their “inherited belief in the power of law” but had moreover enabled them to incorporate “their social-historical reality into international law.”<sup>12</sup>

While Paz’s study has been widely acclaimed as a stimulating trailblazer for a more nuanced approach to Jewish legal biographies, critics have also called her assumptions of a collective subconscious “Jewish psyche” essentialist, elusive, and difficult to corroborate on the basis of the given evidence.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, her socio-psychological approach bears the risk of reifying rather than deconstructing dichotomous images about purported intellectual centers and peripheries of international law. Contemplating the methodological challenges of identifying a Jewish imprint on the discipline’s evolution, James Loeffler and Moria Paz choose the experimental framework of a compilation of biographical sketches, each one written and commented upon by a dual team of a historian and a lawyer. With this interdisciplinary format, their anthology reflects the fact that applying the lens of “Jewish biographies” and “Jewishness” on the history of modern international law does not allow for conclusive insights and clear-cut answers. Rather, these concepts are employed as a heuristic tool that helps to lay open the many overlapping, crisscross features, and inconsistencies of Jewish international lawyering in the dramatic and tumultuous twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

Given these methodological and empirical difficulties in establishing a linkage between Jewish legal agency and intellectual reasoning on ideas and practices of international law, this article intends to address the historical problem of Jewish lawyering in an indirect manner. First, it is worth highlighting the ambiguities in the biography of a relatively unknown German-Jewish jurist who, at least according to the self-identification reflected in his letters and writings, officially deserted the international lawyers’ community without, however, abandoning it completely and who even in his old age still rejected the idea that his Jewishness had ever affected his pro-

12 Ibid., 259, 356, and 11.

13 Robert Howse, Reut Yael Paz. A Gateway between a Distant God and a Cruel World. The Contribution of Jewish German-Speaking Scholars to International Law (book review), in: *European Journal of International Law* 26 (2015), no. 2, 557 f.

14 James Loeffler/Moria Paz, Introduction, in: idem (eds.), *The Law of Strangers. Jewish Lawyers and International Law in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 2019, 1–20, here 18. On the role of Jewish emigrant lawyers after World War II, see also Miriam Rürup, *Legal Expertise and Biographical Experience. Statelessness, Migrants, and the Shaping of New Legal Knowledge in the Postwar World*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43 (2017), no. 3, 438–465.

fessional achievements. In the second section, one of Herz's prewar works on National Socialist notions of International Law will be discussed in order to make the argument that this text can be read as a forerunner of an academic pattern of thought that would become known as the hallmark of American realism a few years later. The distinctiveness of this approach, which some scholars have dubbed the "liberalism of fear"<sup>15</sup> or "global pluralism of fear,"<sup>16</sup> was to use ideas about collective emotions and intuitive assumptions about irrational human nature as epistemological departure points for investigating international affairs, thereby seeking to renew the discipline and to reconceptualize a liberal global world order.<sup>17</sup> By inscribing his own experiences of marginalization and displacement into his analysis, Herz's book contributed to the emergence of a discourse on international affairs that was built on anthropomorphizing interpretations of international history and the role of states in the international sphere. With its discursive coupling of a symbolic role of *Zeitgenossenschaft* (contemporaneity) and a Manichean international *Schicksalsgeschichte*<sup>18</sup> of states and people, the text anticipated

- 15 Jan-Werner Müller, Fear and Freedom. On "Cold War Liberalism," in: *European Journal of Political Theory* 7 (2008), no. 1, 45–64. Müller borrowed the term from the Latvian Jewish émigré scholar and political scientist Judith Shklar. Due to its connection to states and governments as sources of coercion and cruelty, Shklar understood the "liberalism of fear" first of all as a political concept: "The liberalism of fear in fact does not rest on a theory of moral pluralism. It does not, to be sure, offer a *summum bonum* toward which all political agents should strive, but it certainly does begin with a *summum malum*, which all of us know and would avoid if only we could. That evil is cruelty and the fear it inspires, and the very fear of fear itself. To that extent the liberalism of fear makes a universal and especially a cosmopolitan claim, as it historically always has done [...]" See Judith N. Shklar, *The Liberalism of Fear*, in: Nancy L. Rosenblum (ed.), *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1989, 21–38, here 29. For a discussion of this subject from the perspective of political theory, see Samantha Ashenden/Andreas Hess, *Republican Elements in the Liberalism of Fear*, in: *Zeitschrift für Politische Theorie* 9 (2018), no. 2, 209–221.
- 16 Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism. Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950*, Princeton, N. J., 2017, 268–271.
- 17 In his autobiography, Herz claimed that he wrote his first book under the influence of the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero (1871–1942), who also taught at the Geneva Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales after his emigration from Fascist Italy. Herz, *Vom Überleben*, 109. As a conservative liberal thinker, Ferrero made the argument that the era between the French Revolution and the Empire was one of "great fear." Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Principles of Power. The Great Political Crises of History*, New York 1942. This seems to be a later projection since there are no references to Ferrero's writings in Herz's work.
- 18 See Catherine Epstein, *Schicksalsgeschichte. Refugee Historians in the United States*, in: Hartmut Lehmann/James J. Sheehan (eds.), *An Interrupted Past. German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933*, Washington, D. C./Cambridge 1991, 116–135.

not only a prominent feature of postwar American foreign policy discourses but also foreshadowed the author's later departure from international law.<sup>19</sup>

### Cologne, Geneva, Washington

In the last two decades, a growing disillusionment with the fallacies of neo-conservative interventionism has provoked a continuous stream of literature reconsidering and rehabilitating mid-century "classical" realism. Though still overshadowed by his more pronounced and influential fellow realist Hans J. Morgenthau, John H. Herz's broad oeuvre has also experienced an astonishing revival.<sup>20</sup> Born in 1908 as Hans Hermann Herz into a liberal Jewish upper-class family from Düsseldorf, he belonged to the German "war youth generation." Having been too young to have participated directly in World War I, these men often tried to compensate for their lack of combat experience by embracing an ultra-militant masculinity.<sup>21</sup> German-Jewish students with left-liberal leanings and a cosmopolitan outlook, however, remained not only excluded from the fantasy worlds of paramilitary organizations but also felt negatively provoked by the glorification of a warrior culture and the revanchist atmosphere prevailing at many German universities during the Weimar years. In contrast to the more prestigious and more conservative German *Staatsrecht*, International Law became one of the expanding disciplines that opened up to younger German-Jewish scholars and offered promising career perspectives, not least of all in the context of

- 19 Nicolas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment. Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 2017, 13; Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment. Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust*, New York 2002, 2.
- 20 William E. Scheuerman, *The Realist Case for Global Reform*, Cambridge 2011; Peter Stirk, John H. Herz. Realism and the Fragility of the International Order, in: *Review of International Studies* 31 (2005), no. 2, 285–306; idem, *International Law, Émigrés, and the Foundation of International Relations*, in: Felix Rösch (ed.), *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations. A European Discipline in America?*, London 2014, 61–80; Casper Sylvest, John H. Herz and the Resurrection of Classical Realism, in: *International Relations* 22 (2008), no. 4, 441–455; Booth, *Navigating the "Absolute Novum"*; Jana Puglierin, John H. Herz. *Leben und Denken zwischen Idealismus und Realismus, Deutschland und Amerika*, Berlin 2011; idem, *Towards Being a "Traveller between All Worlds,"* in: *International Relations* 22 (2008), no. 4, 419–425; Richard Ned Lebow, *German Jews and American Realism*, in: Rösch (ed.), *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations*, 212–243.
- 21 Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*, Hamburg 2002; Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land. War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914–1918*, Cambridge, Mass., 2010.

the various legal obligations deriving from the Versailles Peace Treaty.<sup>22</sup> In spite of a slightly more pluralistic social profile, German *Völkerrecht* was dominated by professors who belonged to the national conservative and nationalistic spectrum of the bourgeois elites. Many of these legal scholars contributed to the ongoing politicization of their discipline by openly demanding the revision of the Versailles Treaty, calling it a “dictate” and a “law of historical injustice” (*Unrechtsgesetz*).<sup>23</sup> Only a few liberal and pacifist jurists, such as Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Walter Schücking, Hans Wehberg, and Hans Kelsen, were staunch supporters of Stresemann’s conciliatory foreign policy course. Hence, they advocated for Germany’s inclusion into the League of Nations, which, in 1926, was eventually achieved.

Due to Herz’s affinities for liberal internationalism it was only a logical step to study law at Cologne University, where he would then become Hans Kelsen’s first doctoral student upon the latter’s arrival in late 1930.<sup>24</sup> After finishing his dissertation on the identity of states during revolutions,<sup>25</sup> he was dismissed from the German public service and followed his mentor to the prestigious Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales (Graduate Institute of International Studies) in Geneva. In Switzerland, Herz embarked on his first large book project, which would deal with the National Socialist international legal doctrine. It came out in 1938 under Herz’s pseudonym Eduard Bristler with the Swiss Europa Verlag, including a foreword by his former teacher, the renowned French international legal scholar Georges Scelle.<sup>26</sup> Herz dedicated the publication to his close friend Ossip Flechtheim, who, in 1934, had written his dissertation with Kelsen’s successor Carl Schmitt.<sup>27</sup> As in the case of many other publications by German and Austrian

22 See Ingo Hueck, *Die deutsche Völkerrechtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus. Das Berliner Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht, das Hamburger Institut für Auswärtige Politik und das Kieler Institut für Internationales Recht*, in: Doris Kaufmann (ed.), *Geschichte des Kaiser-Wilhelm-Instituts im Nationalsozialismus. Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven der Forschung*, 2 vols., Göttingen 2000, here vol. 1, 490–527, here 492; Dan Diner, *Norms for Domination. Nazi Legal Concepts of World Order*, in: idem, *Beyond the Conceivable. Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust*, Berkeley, Calif., 2000, 49–77. Between 1933 and 1939, 40 percent of all German international lawyers were dismissed on racial and/or political grounds.

23 Hueck, *Die deutsche Völkerrechtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus*, 513.

24 For biographical data, see Puglierin, John H. Herz; Lebow, *German Jews and American Realism*.

25 See Hans-Hermann Herz, *Die Identität des Staates*, Düsseldorf 1931.

26 Eduard Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus. Mit einem Vorwort von Georges Scelle*, Zurich 1938. On Scelle see the introduction by Achim Seifert, in: Georges Scelle, *L’Organisation internationale du travail et le B. I. T.*, Paris 2020, 5–33.

27 After being briefly imprisoned for his resistance activities, Flechtheim also fled to Switzerland. In 1938, the University of Cologne revoked Flechtheim’s doctorate, justifying this with his temporary absence from Germany during his Swiss exile from 1935 to 1939.

émigré scholars who escaped to Anglo-Saxon countries, Herz was not able to find an English-language publisher for his treatise.<sup>28</sup> The fact that the original German edition was published only a few months prior to the Sudeten Crisis and Munich Agreement of 1938 also seriously hampered its reception in the anglophone world. In spite of being the most comprehensive work dealing with National Socialist conceptions of International Law during peacetime,<sup>29</sup> it received only little attention among European and American foreign policy circles.<sup>30</sup> This was due to the dominant perception at the time that its core theses were already outdated and contradicted by the British appeasement course.

In August 1938, Herz left Switzerland for the United States. Although he later claimed in his autobiography that his brother Gerhard, who had emigrated before him, was responsible for his employment at the Princeton-based Institute for Advanced Studies,<sup>31</sup> this was only half the truth. Like many other German and Austrian exiled scholars, Herz benefitted from the transnational networks and organizations that had been constituted to contain the emerging refugee crisis. Due to recommendations from his former doctoral advisor Kelsen and the Polish economist Marie Ginsberg, a famous activist for universal women's rights, assistant librarian at the League of Nations in Geneva, and member of the Comité international pour le placement des intellectuels réfugiés (International Committee for Securing Employment to Refugee Professional Workers),<sup>32</sup> he was first accepted by Stephen Duggan, chairman of the executive committee of the New York-based Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, and then transferred to Columbia University.<sup>33</sup> After having worked for several months for the renowned American

28 The English version submitted at the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales as part of the doctorate remained unpublished. Herz, *Vom Überleben*, 112.

29 See Detlev F. Vagts, *International Law in the Third Reich*, in: *American Journal of International Law* 84 (1990), no. 30, 661–704.

30 Among the few exceptions was an article by the German emigrant historian Ernst Engelberg, who also spent the prewar years in Geneva and probably knew Herz personally. See Ernst Engelberg, *Les bases idéologiques de la nouvelle conception de Droit International de M. Alfred von Verdross* [The Ideological Basis of Alfred von Verdross's New Conception of International Law], in: *Revue générale de Droit International Public* [General Journal of Public International Law] 46 (1939), 37–52, here 42.

31 Herz, *Vom Überleben*, 120.

32 LONSEA.org (League of Nations Search Engine), Marie Ginsberg, <<http://www.lonsea.de/pub/person/7443>> (21 May 2022).

33 The New York Public Library, Archives & Manuscripts, American Committee for the Guidance of Professional Personnel, Box 14, Folder John H. Herz, Marie Ginsberg, LoN [League of Nations] to Stephen Duggan, EC [Emergency Committee], 8 August 1938. On the role of the political scientist Stephen Duggan and the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, see Christian Fleck, *Etablierung in der Fremde. Vertriebene Wissenschaftler in den USA nach 1933*, Frankfurt a. M. 2015; idem, *The Role of Refu-*

IL expert and diplomat Philip Jessup, he transferred to Princeton, where he also worked as a research assistant at the Institute for Advanced Studies and at the Political Science Department of Princeton University. A crucial broker for Herz's swift and successful integration into the American academic environment seemed to have been Edwin Borchard, Sterling Professor at Yale Law School and a driving force behind the aid activities for persecuted European colleagues.<sup>34</sup> In Princeton, Herz established contacts with Edward Mead Earle, Albert Weinberg, Charles A. Beard, and the latter's son-in-law, the German historian Alfred Hermann Friedrich Vagts, an SPD member and committed anti-Fascist.<sup>35</sup>

In 1941, after a guest semester at Trinity College in Hartford, Herz became a lecturer at the Political Science Department of Howard University, a federal institution of higher education and at that time one of the most famous of the so-called HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities). There, he met Ralph Bunche, a civil rights activist, political analyst, and public intellectual. In 1941, shortly before the German attack on the Soviet Union, Bunche assigned Herz to write a longer article for the *Journal of Negro Education*. There, he described National Socialism as a new form of "organized nihilism" designed to eradicate all achievements of "Western civilization."<sup>36</sup> While Herz maintained in his memoirs that his article had reached only a few readers among the African American audience, it very likely also attracted the interest of Washington's political, military, and administrative elites. From 1943 to 1945, Herz was employed as a full-time analyst for the Research and Analysis Branch (R&A) at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Washington, D. C., the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>37</sup> As a Weimar émigré and expert in German administrative and legal affairs, Herz was quickly ushered into a larger community of scholars, bureaucrats, and pundits who sought to rebuild a liberal global order according to the then reigning American political imagery based on anti-totalitarianism

gee Help Organizations in the Placement of German and Austrian Scholars Abroad, in: Edward Timms/Jon Hughes (eds.), *Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation. Refugees from National Socialism in the English-Speaking World*, Vienna 2003, 21–36, esp. 27–30.

34 On Borchard, see Jens Steffek/Tobias Heinze, *Germany's Fight against Versailles and the Rise of American Realism*, in: Jens Steffek/Leonie Holthaus (eds.), *Prussians, Nazis and Peaceniks. Changing Images of Germany in International Relations*, Manchester 2020, 100–122.

35 Herz, *Vom Überleben*, 121.

36 Idem, *Alternative Proposals to Democracy. Nazism*, in: *Journal of Negro Education* 10 (1941), no. 3, 353–367.

37 Frank Schale, *The Government Advisor. John H. Herz and the Office of Strategic Services*, in: *International Relations* 22 (2008), no. 4, 411–418.

and human rights.<sup>38</sup> Since the interventionist approach of an “American Century”<sup>39</sup> required intimate knowledge of America’s enemies abroad, German social scientists were seen as first-class experts for this purpose.

Together with a group of European and German-speaking Jewish emigrants – among them Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse, and Otto Kirchheimer,<sup>40</sup> who had been scholars at Max Horkheimer’s and Theodor Adorno’s Institute for Social Research – and backed by international and American Jewish organizations, Herz became involved in the theoretical and practical preparation of the envisaged military occupation of Germany and the war crimes trials program.<sup>41</sup> As Anne Kornhauser writes, these postwar trials

“presented scholars and policymakers with unprecedented examples of the rule of law having to function under extraordinary conditions. [...] Reconstruction and war crimes trials became another proving ground for the legitimacy of the growing administrative state.”<sup>42</sup>

In 1945, when the United States turned its attention to Germany, Herz briefly worked for the American prosecutor at Nuremberg before returning to Washington to take up a job as a political analyst at the State Department. Among his many assignments during these years were the reconstruction of the German civil service and judiciary, including the exclusion of former Nazi members, and the re-establishment of the “rule of law.” When the US government prematurely abandoned the social experiment of denazification,<sup>43</sup> Herz accepted a position at the City College of the City University of New York, where he taught until his retirement in 1977.

Starting in the early 1950s, he also conducted several field studies for the Social Science Division of the RAND Corporation, which under the leadership of the German émigré Hans Speier “advocated a historically focused social science in line with the work of international relations theorists such as

38 Rosenboim has argued that globalist debates of the time circled very much around the idea that democracy should be reconceptualized on a global scale to defend people from totalitarianism. Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*, 268.

39 Henry Luce, *The American Century*, in: *Life*, 7 February 1941, 61–65.

40 On Kirchheimer, see Annette Weinke, *A Case of Schmittian-Marxian Syndrome? Criminals, Enemies, and other Foes in Otto Kirchheimer’s Reflections on Nazi Law and Nazi Criminality*, in: Austin Sarat/Lawrence Douglas/Martha Merrill Umphrey (eds.), *Criminals and Enemies*, Amherst/Boston, Mass., 2019, 44–72.

41 On the work of the OSS and Jewish legal think tanks and their contributions to American postwar planning, see Annette Weinke, *Law, History, and Justice. Debating German State Crimes in the Long Twentieth Century*, Oxford/New York 2018, 74–92.

42 Anne M. Kornhauser, *Debating the American State. Liberal Anxieties and the New Leviathan, 1930–1970*, Philadelphia, Pa., 2015, 130 f.

43 John H. Herz, *The Fiasco of Denazification in Germany*, in: *Political Science Quarterly* 63 (1948), no. 4, 569–594.



E. H. Carr, William T. R. Fox, Hans Morgenthau, and Reinhold Niebuhr.”<sup>44</sup> During his research trips to West Germany, where he was accompanied by his former OSS colleague and friend Otto Kirchheimer, Herz conducted interviews with selected members of the reconstituted German civil service. The aim of the project, which was later published under the title *West German Leadership and Foreign Policy*, aimed at exploring mental changes and continuities in the West German *Beamtenapparat*.<sup>45</sup> Although he noticed a significant transformation with regard to militarist and expansionist ideas, based on a trend described as “new sobriety,” he was nevertheless convinced that the apolitical attitude prevailing among a large majority of West German civil servants would become an ongoing hurdle on the path to a less formal, deeper democratization.<sup>46</sup> While Herz considered the American denazification policy in Germany a complete failure, this apparently did not diminish his faith in the transformative potential of applied social sciences and social engineering. Especially the idea that states and their elites are able to learn from historical “lessons” seemed to have been a constant in his otherwise changing research agendas, which might also explain his later engagement as a leading American scholar of “survival research” and as a transitional justice expert in the 1990s.<sup>47</sup>

In 1951, Herz published his monograph *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, which received the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Book Award.<sup>48</sup> Together with Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations* (1948), it laid the foundation for an American brand of postwar “realism” that was liberally oriented, anti-behaviorist, and philosophically minded. In their attempt to camouflage their direct and indirect indebtedness to a German philosophy of history, these émigré thinkers presented themselves as the legitimate heirs of Anglo-Saxon predecessors who had purportedly challenged the dominant “idealist” mainstream of the interwar era in a so-called “First Debate.” Among contemporary IR scholars, there is a growing suspicion that this First

44 Daniel Bessner, Weimar Social Science in Cold War America. The Case of the Political-Military Game, in: German Historical Institute, Bulletin Supplement 10 (2014), 91–109, here 94; idem, Democracy in Exile. Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual, Ithaka, N. Y., 2018.

45 Hans Speier/W. Philipps Davison (eds.), *West German Leadership and Foreign Policy*, Evanston, Ill., 1957; John H. Herz, German Officialdom Revisited. Political Views and Attitudes of the West German Civil Service, in: *World Politics* 7 (1954), no. 1, 63–83.

46 Ibid., 75: “Quite generally, the Bonn Republic strikes one as a more sober, pragmatic version of something déjà vu; good sense but little esprit; Weimar minus Tucholsky,” cit. in Herz, *Vom Überleben*, 153.

47 See Weinke, *Law, History, and Justice*, 168.

48 John H. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism. A Study in Theories and Realities*, Chicago, Ill., 1951.

Debate probably never took place at all.<sup>49</sup> This notwithstanding, Herz and other refugee scholars successfully managed to transplant their epistemologies and methods to the American academic environment. According to Martti Koskenniemi, the

“‘realism’ that German jurists such as Morgenthau, Herz or Karl Deutsch (1912–1992) inaugurated in the international relations academia, espoused a Hobbesian anthropology, an obsession with the marginal situation, the pervading sense of a spiritual and political ‘crisis’ in the (liberal) West, and constant concern over political collapse.”<sup>50</sup>

Although recent historiography has made clear that American postwar realism was more diversified and nuanced than previously assumed, it also needs to be stressed that the émigré scholars successfully contributed to the discipline’s self-mythologization.

### The Emergence of “Lessons Literature”: Herz’s Analysis of National Socialist Concepts of International Law

Peter Stirk, who juxtaposed Herz’s study with Edward Hallett Carr’s famous account of the international system in the interwar period,<sup>51</sup> noted that in contrast to Carr, Herz had no reason to be embarrassed about his earlier judgments, nor were there any particular “lessons” he should have learned from the experiences of the Western appeasement policy toward the Nazi regime.<sup>52</sup> While most other Western writers either denied that there was anything specifically National Socialist about German thinking on International Law or were confused by the fluidity and vagueness of newly emerging

49 Brian C. Schmidt, *Anarchy, World Politics and the Birth of a Discipline*. *American International Relations, Pluralist Theory and the Myth of Interwar Idealism*, in: *International Relations* 16 (2002), no. 1, 9–31; Lucian M. Ashworth, *Did the Realist-Idealist Great Debate Really Happen? A Revisionist History of International Relations*, in: *International Relations* 16 (2002), no. 1, 33–51; John Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory. The Genealogy of an American Vocation*, Chicago, Ill., 1993.

50 Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 467.

51 Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London 1939.

52 Stirk was here referring to what he called Carr’s misperception of “Munich” and the events of 1938, which Carr temporarily and in line with British foreign policy considered a diplomatic success. See Peter M. R. Stirk, *John H. Herz and the International Law of the Third Reich*, in: *International Relations* 22 (2008), no. 4, 427–440, 429.

concepts like “Volk” and “race,”<sup>53</sup> Herz provided the first in-depth analysis of the changes that had affected the discipline in the course of the political and ideological *Gleichschaltung* (synchronization) that followed the Nazi accession to power.<sup>54</sup> By addressing entanglements between governmental foreign policy and academic theoretical discourses taking place after 1933, he argued that German debates on law and morals should be taken seriously and carefully scrutinized in the international sphere. He subjected German legal literature to an immanent critique, “eschewing at least initially any external evaluation.”<sup>55</sup>

Unlike most Western critics of National Socialist IL, who focused on aspects of German legal thinking they saw as manifestations of an older, more familiar “radical particularism”<sup>56</sup> or of a national legal *Sonderweg* (legal exceptionalism), Herz explicitly warned against underrating the impact of ideology on the field of academic study. Although he admitted his difficulties in assessing the influences of the ideological factor adequately, he also believed that the German understanding of IL had already been fundamentally altered according to National Socialist standards. In his view, there was an interconnectedness between an increasingly aggressive and revisionist foreign policy on the one hand and a theoretical and philosophical legal discourse oscillating between seemingly traditional concepts and the radical new language of *völkisch* internationalism. In contrast to the eminent American expert Lawrence Preuss, who had reduced the Nazification of German legal discourses to its racist and *völkisch* aspects,<sup>57</sup> Herz vehemently rejected the separation between “old school” traditionalists and a younger generation of fanatical ideologists, considering this an untenable minimization of the extent to which the discipline as a whole had transformed itself according to

53 See David Fraser, “The Outsider Does Not See All the Game.” Perceptions of German Law in Anglo-American Legal Scholarship, 1933–1940, in: Christian Joerges/Navraj Singh Ghaleigh (eds.), *Darker Legacies of Law in Europe. The Shadow of National Socialism and Fascism over Europe and Its Legal Traditions*, Oxford 2003, 87–111.

54 In the historiography of the Nazi legal system, it has not been fully reflected that it was mostly exiled German-Jewish authors who provided the first critical assessments and interventions as early as the 1930s and 1940s, most prominently Karl Löwenstein, Otto Kirchheimer, and Ernst Fraenkel. One of the few studies that deals with the history of scholarship on the legal aspects of the Nazi dictatorship is Jens Meierhenrich, *The Remnants of the Rechtsstaat. An Ethnography of Nazi Law*, Oxford 2018.

55 *Ibid.*, 429.

56 Isabel V. Hull applied this term especially to the stipulations of the international law of armed conflict and the German demand “that the exception be added to virtually every rule at the Hague Convention,” including *Notstand* and weapons positivism. See *idem*, *A Scrap of Paper. Breaking and Making of International Law during the Great War*, Ithaca, N. Y./London 2014, 328.

57 Lawrence Preuss, *National Socialist Conceptions of International Law*, in: *American Political Science Review* 29 (1935), no. 4, 594–609.

the needs of the Nazi regime.<sup>58</sup> In the same vein, he also discarded the Marxist-Leninist approach, which treated Nazi international law discourse and its racial doctrines as an epiphenomenon, characterized by irrational ephemeral aspects. Hence, he remained skeptical about the deterministic belief that the irrational forces within National Socialism would sooner or later yield to the rational demands of an economically highly developed power in Europe's geopolitical center.

In order to rebuke traditional liberal and Marxist approaches, Herz employed an argumentation which – in light of the generally held assumptions of classical realism<sup>59</sup> – appeared decidedly un-realist. His main point was that the same irrational myths and doctrines which had previously secured the National Socialist path to power could easily transcend that function by developing into an unexpectedly dynamic whirl. Referring critically to Georgi Dimitrov's famous definition of fascism as the last stage of capitalism,<sup>60</sup> he stated:

“It may be possible to vindicate the thesis that National Socialism qua fascism is the most logical or at least comprehensible political form for a European country having reached late capitalism. It might also be true that the ideological basis of racial thought and its related doctrines could have been a precondition for the Nazi seizure of power. Yet that does not imply that this particular doctrine, which has now become the ruling one, could not entail consequences that alter the material foundations of politics. [...] Seen from this perspective, ‘false’ terms, myths, and doctrines can shape reality as much as those true factors adapted to conditions and ‘circumstances.’ On a domestic level, the National Socialist racial myth manifested itself in anti-Jewish measures and ‘eugenics.’ The whole politics of *Aufartung* (racial improvement) is as viable as the myth of a *Volks-gemeinschaft* (people's community). [...] From a purely ‘economic’ angle, all these aspects of National Socialist policy are difficult to explain because of their downright

58 Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus*, 72.

59 In his analysis of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* in Hans J. Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations*, the American IR scholar Robert Keohane summed up what he considered to be the essential features of the classical realist research program: “The three most fundamental Realist assumptions are evident in these books: that the most important actors in world politics are territorially organized entities (city-states or modern states); that state behavior can be explained rationally; and that states seek power and calculate their interests in terms of power, relative to the nature of the international system that they face.” Robert O. Keohane, *Theory of World Politics. Structural Realism and Beyond*, in: Ada W. Finifter (ed.), *Political Science. The State of the Discipline*, Washington, D. C., 1983, 503–540, here 503.

60 The communist notion that fascists had to be seen as lackeys of capital was first formulated in Georgi Dimitrov's famous definition in December 1933. According to the Secretary of the Communist Third International (Comintern), fascism was primarily “the openly terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, and imperialistic elements of finance capital,” cit. in Fernando Esposito, *Fascism. Concepts and Theories*, Version: 1.0, in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 31 August 2017, <[http://docupedia.de/zg/Esposito\\_fascism\\_v1\\_en\\_2017?oldid=128262](http://docupedia.de/zg/Esposito_fascism_v1_en_2017?oldid=128262)> (21 May 2022).

harmfulness to the principles of national interest and rational instrumentality; the detrimental repercussions to Germany's foreign relations and parts of its domestic life also come to mind. Although one might take the standpoint that such a policy is irrational and doctrinaire, one has to concede that this is actually the course German policy is currently taking."<sup>61</sup>

In his analysis of the "irrational" strands of German IL discourses, Herz used an interpretative framework that took National Socialist racial doctrines as a departure point. Given the fact that no further explanations for the perceived "irrationality" were given by Herz, we may assume that this assessment reflected subjective experiences of marginalization, persecution, and the ongoing "liminal existence" of forced exile on the municipal level.<sup>62</sup> Understandably enough, this was a perspective which seemed to have been shared by a majority of German or Austrian Jewish academics who were forced to leave their country in the 1930s and 1940s. As already argued, one of the objectives of Herz's account was to question the rationality of Marxist thinking, criticizing the way it dismissed the exclusion of ethnic minorities and "unfit" people as a means for channeling revolutionary passions that could hinder imperialist expansion. Then again, it was an approach which opposed the standpoint of Western liberals, who tended to explain away the racist elements in National Socialism by characterizing them as a transitory regression that would either fade away or lead to the regime's demise. While Herz developed the epistemological devices for deconstructing National Socialist legal thinking in a continuous intellectual dialogue with his much-admired mentor,<sup>63</sup> it was also of far-reaching consequence for his eventual turn away from Kelsen and toward "anti-totalitarianism" and "realism." On the one hand, references to "anarchical tendencies" in international law seem to have precipitated his later critique of Kelsen's theory of legal monism.<sup>64</sup> On the other, he insisted that the writings of Nazi jurists like Carl Schmitt, Helmut Nicolai, and Heinrich Rogge were indeed science and not pseudo-science, despite their many inconsistencies and illogical deductions.

Rather than simply dismissing these discourses as "unscientific," Herz tried to unravel their genealogies and ponder their possible ramifications.

61 Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus*, 191 (translation by the author).

62 Lebow has pointed out that structural discrimination and antisemitism at US institutions of higher education became a considerable impediment to the integration of many European Jewish emigrants. Lebow, *German Jews and American Realism*, 221.

63 See Stirk, John H. Herz and the International Law of the Third Reich.

64 Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus*, 216; Hans H. Herz, *Einige Bemerkungen zur Grundlegung des Völkerrechts*, in: *Revue internationale de la théorie du droit [International Journal of Legal Theory]* 13 (1939), 275–300. On the semantics of "anarchy," see also Jack Donnelly, *The Discourse of Anarchy in IR*, in: *International Theory* 7 (2015), no. 3, 393–425.

Given his later development into an unconventional “realist” thinker or, as Jack Donnelly has claimed, into a “hedged realist” in the brand of E. H. Carr,<sup>65</sup> Herz’s sensibility for the role of emotions and socio-psychological mechanisms in international relations is striking and must certainly be understood as a key to his broad spectrum of intellectual interests.<sup>66</sup> In his view, National Socialist constructions of IL were characterized by a distinct vagueness and, contrary to the Schmittian mantra of concrete order thinking,<sup>67</sup> by a lack of concreteness. While he was convinced that such vagueness was a deliberate strategy to deceive the international community, he saw this also as the outcome of a collective syndrome. He believed that the German academic IL establishment was trapped in a worldview that propelled it into an endless circle of self-victimization and counterattack. This mentality manifested itself most of all in the apologetic thesis that the Versailles Powers would minimize their power aspirations, veiling them behind legal formalities and subjecting the vanquished country to scientific encirclement.<sup>68</sup> Paradoxically, the negation of and struggle against the existing international legal order was combined with a position that stylized Nazi Germany as a forerunner of and standard bearer for a renewed and more just international legal order.<sup>69</sup> Against this background, the prospects regarding the willingness for self-moderation were rather dim:

“There is much which points in the direction that one day these imperial tendencies will be harmonized with ideological and racial objectives like the ‘struggle against Jewish Bolshevism,’ which would then lead to German expansion in Eastern, possibly also in Southeastern Europe, designated to establish Aryan rule over inferior races and people.”<sup>70</sup>

Considering the discursive and praxeological centrality of “lessons” and “cases” in twentieth-century IL/IR discourses,<sup>71</sup> the question arises how the selection and framing of those particular “lessons” and “cases” impacted the discipline’s approaches. How did Herz’s analysis of the German academic field of International Law shape his understanding of international affairs in the present and future? As Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen reminded us, “lessons literature” uses cognitive psychology as an epistemological device in order

65 *Idem*, *Realism and International Relations*, Cambridge 2000, 12. On this discussion, see also Puglierin, John H. Herz, 304.

66 It is conspicuous that he tackled the roles of states, interstate relations, and supra-state organizations only cursorily, although they are usually seen as natural entities in the “realist” approach.

67 William E. Scheuerman, Carl Schmitt. *The End of Law*, Lanham, Md., 1999, 122–137.

68 *Cit.* in Preuss, *National Socialist Conceptions of International Law*, 597.

69 Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus*, 76.

70 *Ibid.*, 192.

71 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The History of a Lesson. Versailles, Munich and the Social Construction of the Past*, in: *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003), no. 4, 499–519.

to “restate, in ‘scientific’ terms, the realist notion of international relations as a tragedy,” with the “lessons” of Versailles and Munich as the most pivotal examples.<sup>72</sup> The anthropomorphizing assumption that states can have perceptions like individuals and that these perceptions structure their actions leads to the conclusion that states are also able to make decisions by meditating on *historical lessons*. Since states and state decision-makers often get the past wrong or apply the wrong lessons of the past to the present, “lessons literature” paints international affairs history as a continuous sequence of tragic plots.<sup>73</sup> Either because they are the victims of misperceptions or because they do not realize that their time for a “lesson” is up, states tend to repeat their history and consequently end up in security dilemmas. This pessimistic perspective on the trajectories of international affairs is coupled with an optimistic one on the role of IR experts. Due to their expertise, the latter can help states to break out of this vicious circle. By teaching them how to identify “lessons” in the indeterminism of history and how to reflect upon them, the discipline of political sciences enables them to make an “informed choice between lessons.”<sup>74</sup>

Herz’s early account of the National Socialist understanding of International Law illustrates the emerging “lessons” discourse because of the way patterns of cognitive psychology were elevated onto an international plane. Not only were states treated like individual actors. It was also assumed that they were bearers of a common mindset and of a coordinated psychological strategy. This approach allowed presuppositions about possible motives and far-reaching assessments about future behavior. Like his British fellow realist Carr, Herz used this approach both in an ontological and an epistemological sense by describing a certain configuration and then identifying policy options. Unlike Carr, however, who even after the Munich Agreement was still convinced that national self-interest would induce Germany to adhere to international rules at least to a superficial degree, Herz came to different conclusions. He maintained that the discrepancies between an official attitude of self-moderation and the radicalism in legal literature in fact indicated that the German political and legal elites were determined to delude the international community about the true foreign policy objectives of the regime.

From this point of view, *Völkerrecht* was not seen as a contested ground where various individuals and schools competed with each other in order to assess the true essence of Nazi foreign policy. Instead, legal thinking under National Socialism was depicted as part of a larger façade that the regime had erected for the purpose of deception. It was a “German” way of legal

72 Ibid., 501.

73 Ibid., 502.

74 Ibid., 504.

thinking because it undermined established traditions of reasoning about stability in international affairs, and it was considered typically “National Socialist” because its ultimate aim was that of subterfuge. Yet it was only in the last chapter of Herz’s book that the anthropomorphizing concept of subterfuge was fully put on display. In order to make this point, Herz employed a psychological approach for a synchronic comparison between the National Socialist and Bolshevik legal systems and their doctrines of International Law. After discussing some similarities and differences, his account concluded that both states rejected the idea of subjecting their power to a coercive system of international norms, but that only Nazi Germany would use legal theories and doctrines in order to veil its true foreign policy motives and intentions. The notion of subterfuge finds its most explicit expression in the following statement:

“In contrast to Bolshevism, which really seeks to establish the creation of a true community, National Socialism is fully aware of the fact that its idea of an international community based on racial categories only means a simulated homogeneity, one that would explode if applied in reality.”<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusion

The last years have seen a steep rise in scholarly interest in the disciplinary history of International Law and International Relations in the “extreme” twentieth century. Challenging popular founding myths like the First Debate, the historiography of IR has also illuminated the discursive construction of a disciplinary identity which occurred in the early postwar years in form of a (self-)reinvention as an American brand of realism. In the course of this ongoing historicization process, the contribution of European and German-Jewish émigré lawyers has increasingly moved into focus. Given their joint educational and cultural background in the Weberian and Schmittian tradition and their shared experiences of persecution, flight, and exile, the question arises how their “otherness” and outsider status as “edge people”<sup>76</sup> have left characteristic imprints on American academia and the evolution of the discipline. Although members of this intellectual group differed in their epistemological interests, they seemed to respond to political and intellectu-

75 Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus*, 213 (translation by the author).

76 Tony Judt, *Edge People*, in: *The New York Review of Books*, 23 February 2010, <<https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2010/02/23/edge-people/>> (21 May 2022).



al problems by challenging long-held orthodoxies and research agendas.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the emigrant's politics of knowledge were the outgrowth of a specific German *Weltanschauung* (worldview) and its pessimistic rendering of human nature and the possibilities of human progress.<sup>78</sup> As the American diplomatic historian Michael J. Hogan has put it, this “pessimistic line of thinking, which [...] started to emerge in the late 1930s,” would soon become the “dominant motif” in historical and political writing on American foreign policy in the nascent Cold War.<sup>79</sup>

While manifestations of this gloomy outlook on the past and present of international affairs took different forms and nuances, they were bound together by the common notion that typical “Weimar” experiences of political instability and chaos could be projected onto a global level. With this approach, émigré scholars played a crucial role in informing and legitimizing American aspirations as the global hegemon in the nuclear age.<sup>80</sup> Due to the growing impact of totalitarian theorizing in American academic life in the 1940s and 1950s, they promoted a terminology that circulated around Manichean concepts such as good and evil, sovereignty and anarchy, “idealism” and “realism.” It was a worldview in which members of the newly emerging “realist” school such as Herz portrayed themselves as “children of darkness,” acknowledging the importance of “original sin” and “depravity” in human life, whereas the “children of light” were described as advocates of a “facile optimism,” blind to the irrational drives in human nature.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, they understood their research as part of a larger engagement against dangerous political forces that tended to undermine the principles of impartial and objective scholarship.

This brief discussion of John H. Herz's biography and his early treatment of National Socialist legal thinking aimed to shed some light on Herz's gradual transformation from an advocate of International Law to one of the most prolific thinkers of American “classical realism.” In his monograph on National

77 Andreas Hess, *The Political Theory of Judith N. Shklar. Exile from Exile*, New York 2014, 13. On Shklar, see also Samantha Ashenden/Andreas Hess (eds.), *Between Utopia and Realism. The Political Thought of Judith N. Shklar*, Philadelphia, Pa., 2019.

78 Robbie Shilliam has pointed out that after 1945 this particular pessimism “clashed directly and personally with the optimism of American ideas of progress through abstract rationalism within the halls of academia and, ultimately, government.” See idem, *German Thought and International Relations. The Rise and Fall of a Liberal Project*, Basingstoke/New York 2009, 184.

79 Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron. Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954*, Cambridge 1998, 420.

80 Bessner, *Weimar Social Science in Cold War America*, 108.

81 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness. A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense*, New York 1944, cit. in Booth, *Navigating the “Absolute Novum,”* 513.

Socialist doctrines of International Law, Herz passionately refuted Western liberal and Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the National Socialist “new” legal world order as an undue underrating of the irrational in international affairs. Unlike most contemporary commentators, he considered the growing influences of *völkisch* thinking in Nazi legal theorizing and doctrines not as a “children’s disease” but as a distinct, scientized feature that helped boost the regime’s integrative functions even within German academia. Although he neglected to explain his understanding of “irrationality” in international affairs, we may fairly assume that this assessment reflected his subjective experiences of marginalization, persecution, and forced exile. Even though in retrospect this approach appears distinctively unrealistic, Herz’s implicit turn to cognitive psychology anticipated the epistemological strategies and methods of Anglophone IR literature. While his meticulous analysis of National Socialist legal thinking seemed to have been overtaken by events at the time of its first publication, the imbued pessimism and urgency of his early writings endured beyond the downfall of Nazism. Together with the anthropomorphizing approach towards states and their decision-makers, it was this bleak worldview regarding international affairs that would become the émigrés’ most distinguishable imprint on the American variant of international relations’ “lessons literature.”

# Dubnowiana



## Zwischen Ablehnung und Anerkennung: Simon Dubnow als Literaturkritiker

Simon Dubnow nahm zeit seines Lebens – im Besonderen während der Revolution von 1905 – als Historiker und politischer Denker unter jüdisch-russischen Intellektuellen eine prominente Stellung ein, und doch drängten ihn seine Ansichten bisweilen ins Abseits.<sup>1</sup> Vor dem Hintergrund der Unruhen und Pogrome im östlichen Europa zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts und der zunehmend divergenten Strömungen jüdischer Interessensvertretungen, erscheint es anachronistisch, dass Dubnow an den Werten des Liberalismus und eines humanistischen Nationalismus, vor allem aber am Glauben an eine gemeinsame jüdische Politik festhielt. Seine teilweise marginalen Positionen zu Lebzeiten beeinflussten auch die Rezeption seiner Arbeit an einer nationaljüdischen Historiografie. Erst Jahrzehnte nach seiner Ermordung im Ghetto Riga 1941 erhielt er einen zentralen Platz in der akademischen Forschung.<sup>2</sup>

Tatsächlich lässt sich seit gut einem Jahrzehnt im hebräisch-, englisch-, russisch- und deutschsprachigen Raum beobachten, wie dem Werk Dubnows, der längst als einer der Gründerväter jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung in der Moderne anerkannt ist, kanonischer Rang verliehen wird.<sup>3</sup> Gleichwohl fehlt in diesem beeindruckenden Forschungskorpus eine umfassende Beschäftigung mit Dubnows Tätigkeit als Literaturkritiker der russisch-jüdischen Zeitschrift *Woschod* (Sonnenaufgang), die er zwischen 1883 und 1893

- 1 Der vorliegende Artikel erschien zuerst in hebräischer Sprache und wurde für die Veröffentlichung im *Jahrbuch des Dubnow-Instituts/Dubnow Institute Yearbook* von Sebastian Schirmeister ins Deutsche übersetzt. Siehe Rafi Tsirkin-Sadan, *From Revision to Rehabilitation. Simon Dubnov as a Literary Critic*, in: Dimitry Shumsky/Jonathan Meir/Gershon David Hundert (Hgg.), *Am ve-Olam. A Tribute to Professor Israel Bartal*, Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar 2019, 97–116. Jahrbuch-Herausgeberin und Redaktion danken Verlag und Herausgebern der Festschrift für ihr Einverständnis.
- 2 Jonathan Frankel, *Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews*, Cambridge/New York 2009, bes. Kap. 10: S. M. Dubnow. *Historian and Ideologist*, 239–275.
- 3 Siehe hierzu den Sammelband Alfred Abraham Greenbaum/Israel Bartal/Dan Haruv (Hgg.), *Writer and Warrior. Simon Dubnov, Historian and Public Figure*, Jerusalem 2010 (hebr.), ein Themenheft der hebräischen Vierteljahresschrift *Zion*, das dem Wirken Dubnows gewidmet ist (*Zion* 77 [2012], H. 3) sowie die feste Rubrik »Dubnowiana« im *Jahrbuch des Dubnow-Instituts/Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, die sich mit Dubnows historiografischem Denken befasst.

ausübte, bevor er beschloss, sich bevorzugt seinen historischen Forschungen zuzuwenden.<sup>4</sup> In dieser Zeit veröffentlichte Dubnow unter dem Pseudonym »Kritikus« kurze Rezensionen zu hebräischer und jiddischer Literatur sowie längere Schriftstellerporträts wie etwa Perez Smolenskin, Jehuda Leib Gordon, Mosche Chaim Luzzatto und Immanuel ha-Romi. Diese Artikel erhoben ihn neben David Frishman (1859–1922) zum bekanntesten Kritiker jüdischer Literatur der 1880er Jahre.<sup>5</sup>

Anders als Frishman, der seine Rezensionen mehrheitlich auf Hebräisch veröffentlichte, publizierte Dubnow seine Beiträge auf Russisch und ließ sich bei der Bewertung literarischer Werke von ihrem nationalen Geist leiten. Das Schreiben auf Russisch und das russische Literaturverständnis nahmen dabei entscheidenden Einfluss auf die Ausgestaltung seiner Kritikerpersönlichkeit. Mehr noch: Dubnows Engagement für das Projekt einer jüdischen Renaissance und für einen Literaturkanon, der hebräisch-, jiddisch- und russischsprachige Werke vereinte, bedeutete aus seiner Sicht keine Absage an die Prinzipien der Haskala (jüdische Aufklärung) und noch weniger den Verzicht auf die Einbindung der Juden in den russischen Kulturraum. Eine Beschäftigung mit Dubnow als Literaturkritiker muss daher drei Diskurse einbeziehen, die sein literarisches Denken geprägt haben: den nationaljüdischen Diskurs, den literarischen Diskurs der Haskala und den russischen Literaturdiskurs.

An diesem Punkt ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass Dubnows integrative Herangehensweise, die in seinen beständigen – wenn auch gelegentlich gegensätzlichen – Versuchen Ausdruck fand, diese drei Diskurse miteinander zu verknüpfen, von Beginn an kritische Reaktionen hervorrief. So befürwortete etwa Achad Ha'am (1856–1927), der zu seinen engen Freunden zählte und seine literaturkritischen und erzieherischen Initiativen unterstützte, einzig das Hebräische als Sprache nationalen Kulturschaffens – eine Haltung, die im Widerspruch zu Dubnows pluralistischer Auffassung von jüdischer Kultur stand. Auch die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit Dubnows literarischem Denken begleitet zuweilen eine offene Ambivalenz, wodurch die Bandbreite kulturellen und literarischen Gespürs, die dieses Denken charakterisiert, unberücksichtigt

- 4 Die ausführlichste Beschäftigung mit Dubnows literaturkritischer Arbeit findet sich in den Forschungsarbeiten von Viktor E. Kelner, dem Verfasser von *Simon Dubnow. Eine Biografie* (Göttingen/Oakville, Conn., 2010), und Batia Valdman, die zur russisch-jüdischen Presse forsch. Allerdings bieten diese Studien eher einen Überblick und keine kritische Analyse. Siehe Victor Kelner, Literaturnyj kritik Semën Dubnov [Der Literaturkritiker Simon Dubnow], in: Oleg V. Budnitskij (Hg.), Russko-evrejskaja kultura [Russisch-jüdische Kultur], Moskau 2006, 54–70; Batia Valdman, Russko-evrejskaja žurnalistika (1860–1914). Literatura i literaturnaja kritika [Russisch-jüdische Presse (1860–1914). Literatur und Literaturkritik], Riga 2008, 288–323.
- 5 Iris Parush, National Ideology and Literary Canon. Frishman's Literary Criticism Compared with Klausner's and Brenner's, Jerusalem 1992 (hebr.).

bleibt. So befasst sich etwa auf der einen Seite Shmuel Niger (1883–1955), einer der wichtigsten Kritiker jiddischer Literatur, ausschließlich mit Dubnows Beitrag zur jiddischen Literaturkritik, ohne auf seine Beschäftigung mit hebräischer Literatur einzugehen.<sup>6</sup> Auf der anderen Seite argumentiert Jehuda Sluzky (1915–1978), Experte für die Geschichte des russischen Judentums und der Hagana, in seinem Artikel über Dubnows Wirken für *Woschod* gegen die Kontinuität aufklärerischer Prämissen in Dubnows nationalem Denken und nimmt dabei selbst einen klaren national-zionistischen Standpunkt ein.<sup>7</sup> Dan Miron hat einen polemischen Artikel über Dubnows Wirken als Literaturhistoriker veröffentlicht, in dem er sich auf die literaturgeschichtlichen Abschnitte in dessen Monumentalwerk *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* konzentriert. Darin zieht Miron gegen Dubnows fragwürdige ästhetische Urteile ebenso zu Felde wie gegen dessen Unkenntnis wichtiger literarischer Phänomene, etwa des Beitrags der Erzählungen von Rabbi Nahman von Braclav zur Entstehung eines modernen jüdischen Kanons oder einer neuen jüdischen Subjektivität in den Werken von Chaim Nachman Bialik, Yitskhok Leybush Peretz und Micha Josef Berdičevskij.<sup>8</sup>

Diese Aufsätze, und insbesondere der Text von Miron, der vom ästhetischen Standpunkt der Moderne aus aufklärerische und positivistische Grundlagen dubnowschen Literaturverständnisses kritisiert, regen eine ausführliche Auseinandersetzung mit den in *Woschod* veröffentlichten Rezensionen und seiner einzigartigen Position unter jüdischen Gelehrten an. Denn auch wenn Dubnow zentrale literarische Entwicklungen, die nicht zu seinem positivistischen Denkmodell passten, außer Acht ließ, so ist darin nichts anderes zu sehen als eine Reaktion auf die literarischen Normen seiner Zeit. Mit anderen Worten: Dubnows Literaturverständnis muss im Kontext des allgemeinen intellektuellen Klimas untersucht werden, in dem er als Literaturkritiker, Historiker und nationaler Denker agierte. Wie im Folgenden gezeigt wird, unterscheiden sich seine literarischen Werturteile – etwa die Ablehnung bestimmter Bewegungen in der hebräischen Literatur gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts wie *Hibbat Zijon* (Zionsliebe) und *ha-Mahalach he-Ḥadasch* (Der neue Kurs) ebenso wie die Affinität für die Literatur der Haskala – nicht wesentlich von denen Frishmans, dessen literarisches Denken durch die Anwendung von Kriterien nationaler Tragweite und einen romantischen Ästhetizismus charakterisiert ist.<sup>9</sup>

6 Samuel Niger-Charney (Shmuel Niger), Simon Dubnow as Literary Critic, in: YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science 1 (1946), 305–317.

7 Jehuda Sluzky, Kritikus, in: He-Avar [Die Vergangenheit] 8 (1961), H. 3, 43–59 (hebr.).

8 Dan Miron, Simon Dubnow as a Literary Historian, in: Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 10 (2011), 431–443.

9 Parush, National Ideology and Literary Canon, 9–13; Dan Miron, From Continuity to Contiguity. Toward a New Jewish Literary Thinking, Stanford, Calif., 2010, 23 f.

Obwohl Dubnow konsequent am positivistischen Denkmodell festhielt, dessen Einfluss bis in seine früheste Jugend zurückreicht, enthält seine Weltansicht auch explizit romantische Elemente. Tatsächlich ist die Kombination dieser beiden Prinzipien in Dubnows Denken jedoch keinesfalls einzigartig, vielmehr spiegelt sich hierin ein typisches Muster jüdischer Literatur und jüdischen Denkens im östlichen Europa in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. So finden sich in den Schriften von Vertretern der radikalen Haskala aus den 1860er Jahren – etwa Avraham Ja'akov Papernas (1840–1919) und Avraham Uri Kovners (1841/42–1909) – Schemata wie der Hang zur romantischen Intensivierung und zur hohen Literatursprache Seite an Seite mit positivistischer Rhetorik und der Forderung, die gesellschaftliche Realität abzubilden. Diese Verquickung ist auch bei Literaturkritikern wie Josef Chaim Brenner (1881–1921) zu erkennen, die zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts aktiv wurden, als der Zionismus seinen Aufstieg erfuhr und hebräische Literatur und zionistische Ideologie eine Symbiose eingingen. Bei allen Unterschieden zwischen den drei Ansätzen literaturkritischen Schreibens – radikale Haskala von Paperna und Kovner, nationale Einheit bei Dubnow und das hebräisch-zionistische Modell von Brenner – lässt sich mit Blick auf die Aufgaben von Literatur und Literaturkritik in der jüdischen Gemeinschaft doch eine Gemeinsamkeit erkennen. Diese leitet sich aus dem Kritikverständnis im russischen Realismus ab.

Ähnlich wie Kovner und Paperna vor ihm und Brenner nach ihm, gründete Dubnows Literaturverständnis auf den Ideen von Vissarion Belinskij (1811–1848), einem der Gründerväter der russischen Intelligenzija und wichtigsten Theoretiker der realistischen Schule. In seiner Autobiografie *Buch des Lebens* bezeugt Dubnow den enormen Eindruck, den die Schriften Belinskis auf ihn gemacht hatten – und ebenso die seiner radikalen Nachfolger in den 1860er Jahren: Nikolaj Dobroľjubov (1836–1861), Nikolaj Černyševskij (1828–1889) und Dmitrij Pisarev (1840–1868). Zusammen mit den Thesen von John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) und Ernest Renan (1823–1892) habe diese Lektüre einen entscheidenden Beitrag zu seiner vom positivistischen Geist durchdrungenen Bildung geleistet.<sup>10</sup> Die Literaturkritik des russischen Realismus betont den praktischen Nutzen von Literatur und ihren Beitrag zum gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt; und dennoch steht der politische und soziale Nutzen einer literarischen Schöpfung (insbesondere in den Augen Belinskis) nicht im Widerspruch zu ihrem künstlerischen Wert, im Gegenteil: Be-

10 Siehe etwa Simon Dubnow, *Buch des Lebens. Erinnerungen und Gedanken. Materialien zur Geschichte meiner Zeit*, hg. im Auftrag des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur von Verena Dohn, 3 Bde., Göttingen 2004–2005, aus dem Russ. übers. von Vera Bischoitzky, hier Bd. 1: 1860–1903, Göttingen 2004, Kap.: »Als Einsiedler in Smolensk. Beginn meines Positivismus (1879–1880)«, 138–145.



linskij zufolge ist die Erfüllung der gesellschaftlichen Funktion von Literatur von der Erfüllung ihrer ästhetischen Funktion abhängig. Literatur muss die Wirklichkeit widerspiegeln und zugleich der subjektiven künstlerischen Vision des Autors oder der Autorin treu bleiben. Die objektivere Bewertung der Realität bleibt jenen überlassen, deren Aufgabe es ist, die soziale Denkweise des literarischen Textes zu identifizieren. Nach diesem Verständnis kommt der Literaturkritik eine zentrale Rolle in der Bewertung des kollektiven Lebens zu. Sie ist bedeutsamer als Lyrik und Prosa: Der Kritiker deckt das »politisch Unbewusste«<sup>11</sup> des Autors und die gesellschaftlichen und politischen Bezüge des literarischen Werkes auf.

In Reaktion auf die Lektüre Belinskijs und Pisarevs postulierte Avraham Uri Kovner in seinem bekannten Aufsatz *Die Zeit Mendelssohns*, die Literaturkritik sei »ein Eckpfeiler jeder Literatur«.<sup>12</sup> Die russische Auffassung von Literaturkritik wurde von den hebräischen Kritikern in den 1860er Jahren – und danach auch von Dubnow – zwar übernommen, jedoch an die ab der Haskala existierende Vorstellung vom »Wächter über das Haus Israel« (Ez 3,17) angepasst. Diese taucht zum ersten Mal Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts in den Schriften des aus Galizien stammenden Aufklärers und Satirikers Yizḥak Erter (1791–1851) auf.<sup>13</sup> Ungeachtet der Tatsache, dass sich beide Modelle – das russisch-realistische einerseits und das jüdisch-aufklärerische andererseits – in unterschiedlichen Textkulturen entwickelten, lassen sich in Bezug auf das jeweilige Verhältnis zu literarischen Traditionen und zu modernen Konventionen einige Gemeinsamkeiten feststellen. Im russischen Modell der Literaturkritik, das sich im letzten Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts zu formieren begann und mit dem Aufstieg der materialistischen Schule der 1860er Jahre seine endgültige Gestalt annahm, wurde dem Literaturkritiker die Rolle des Biblexegeten in russisch-orthodoxer Tradition zugewiesen.<sup>14</sup> Die moralische und intellektuelle Autorität des »Wächters über das Haus Israel« wiederum basiert zu großen Teilen auf dem hohen Ansehen talmudischer Gelehrsamkeit in der jüdischen Tradition. Beide Modelle verkörpern die Ideen der europäischen Aufklärung und huldigten Vernunft, Rationalität und Säkularisierung als Konzepten literarischen Denkens. Es nimmt daher nicht wunder, dass sich die Figur des Kritikers in der modernen jüdischen Literatur durch die Verschmelzung des russischen Modells mit dem der Has-

11 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca, N. Y., 1981.

12 Avraham Uri Kovner, *Zeman Mendelsohn [Die Zeit Mendelssohns]*, in: Israel Zmora (Hg.), *Kol kitve Avraham Uri Kovner [Avraham Uri Kovners sämtliche Schriften]*, Tel Aviv 1947, 37.

13 Yizḥak Erter, *Ha-zofe le-vet Jisra'el [Der Wächter über das Haus Israel]*, Jerusalem 1996 (1. Aufl. Wien 1858).

14 Juri Lotman, *Karamzin*, St. Petersburg 1997, 57 (russ.).

kala zur Figur des engagierten Intellektuellen und wichtigsten Repräsentanten der nationalen Geschichtsauslegung wandelte.<sup>15</sup>

### Eros, Realismus und die Geburt des nationalen Subjekts: Dubnows Rezensionen hebräischer Literatur

In Dubnows Beiträgen für *Woschod* scheinen aufklärerische Konzepte, realistische Ästhetik und soziologische Kritik fortdauernd auf. Die allumfassende Dimension seines Schreibens, die auch in seinen historiografischen Arbeiten und seiner Publizistik zum Ausdruck kommt, erlaubt es nicht, Dubnows literaturkritische Beiträge ausschließlich als ästhetische Äußerungen zu besprechen. In dem ausführlichen Porträt *Der jüdische Nekrassow. Die Lyrik von Jehuda Leib Gordon* (1884)<sup>16</sup> demonstriert Dubnow erstmalig eine interpretatorische Herangehensweise, die ein literarisches Werk im nationalen und gesellschaftlichen Kontext untersucht. Gordon habe eine regelrechte Revolution in der Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur ausgelöst, indem er das wirkliche Leben zum Hauptgegenstand der hebräischen Lyrik erhoben habe. Inspiriert – der Titel des Beitrags deutet es an – von der bürgerlichen Lyrik Nikolaj Nekrassows habe Gordon eine neue Konvention in der hebräischen Dichtkunst erschaffen.<sup>17</sup> Angesichts der spärlichen Errungenschaften der Lyrik während der Haskala erhält Gordons poetische Revolution in Dubnows Augen zusätzliches Gewicht. Die künstlerischen Leistungen zentraler Dichter der jüdischen Aufklärung, die ihm vorausgingen, etwa Avraham Dov Lebensohn (1794–1878) und dessen Sohn Mikha Yosef (1828–1852), hätten sich hauptsächlich auf die Verfeinerung von Sprache und Klang, also auf die literarische Form, konzentriert. Dennoch sah Dubnow in ihren Werken keinen inhaltlich gewichtigen Beitrag und zweifelte an ihrem gesellschaftlichen und nationalen Wert. Avraham Dov Lebensohn habe »Gelegenheitsstücke« geschrieben, so Dubnow, habe es aber nie gelernt, »aufrichtige« lyrische Gedichte oder historische Poeme zu verfassen. Seine Lyrik sei auch zu blumig,

15 Amir Banbaji/Hannan Hever, Mavo'. Historia sifrutit ve-bikoret ha-safrut [Einleitung. Literaturgeschichte und Literaturkritik], in: dies. (Hgg.), *Literature and Class. Towards a Political Historiography of Modern Hebrew Literature*, Tel Aviv 2014, 12–101 (hebr.).

16 Simon Dubnow, *Ewrejskij Nekrasow [Der jüdische Nekrassow]. The Poetry of Yehuda Leib Gordon*, in: *Woschod* 3 (1884), H. 7, 20–43.

17 Vergleichbar mit Dubnows Bewertung von Gordons Werk als nächster Stufe in der Geschichte der hebräischen Lyrik, zeigten auch die russischen Formalisten großes Interesse an Nekrassows bürgerlicher und volkstümlicher Dichtung; sie sahen darin gar eine neue Phase in der Evolution der Gattungen innerhalb des russischen Literatursystems.

das heißt, nicht angemessen mimetisch. Sein Sohn Mikha Yosef Lebensohn habe wunderbare lyrische Gedichte geschrieben, aber aufgrund seines frühen Todes im Alter von nur 24 Jahren ein relativ schmales Korpus hinterlassen – wenngleich überaus bedeutsam für die weitere sprachliche und künstlerische Entwicklung hebräischer Lyrik.

In der Tat besteht Einigkeit darüber, dass die Lyrik der Haskala im Allgemeinen und im Besonderen die von Mikha Yosef Lebensohn entscheidenden Einfluss auf die Prosodie der modernen hebräischen Lyrik nahm.<sup>18</sup> Dubnows Diagnose beweist somit eine scharfe literarische Wahrnehmung und ein Bewusstsein für die Vielfalt der Strömungen in der europäischen Dichtung. Die Charakterisierung der Gedichte von Avraham Dov Lebensohn als »Gelegenheitsstücke«, also schulmäßige Lyrik, die bedeutenden Persönlichkeiten oder besonderen Ereignissen gewidmet ist, bezeugt die Kenntnis der Schriften von Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, John Milton und Gawriil Derschawin. Die These, Gordons bedeutendste Leistung sei der Übergang von sentimentaler zu realistisch-bürgerlicher Dichtung, lässt auf die Kenntnis der Werke von Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock und Friedrich Schillers schließen – zwei sentimentale Dichter, die auch im Russland der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts überaus populär waren. Interessanterweise hinderte die Identifikation mit der »bürgerlichen Wende« in der hebräischen Lyrik Dubnow nicht daran, sich von Gordons Naturbildern begeistern zu lassen, die ihn zu pantheistischen Reflexionen anregten. Er stand in einem beinahe religiösen Verhältnis zur Natur und fühlte sich zu malerischen Orten nahe Odessa, Homel, Vilnius und St. Petersburg hingezogen, an denen er die Einsamkeit suchte und sich dem Nachdenken über Geschichte, Literatur und das Leben hingab. Zweifellos hat er durch die Romantik die Empfindsamkeit entdeckt und verinnerlicht, wobei das romantische Gespür nicht zwangsläufig im Widerspruch zur Verpflichtung gegenüber der positivistischen Philosophie steht.

Nach Auffassung der amerikanischen Historikerin Olga Litvak war die Haskala eine Bewegung mit eindeutig romantischen Fundamenten und entscheidendem Einfluss auf die Entstehung des jüdischen Nationalismus und der modernen jüdischen Kultur insgesamt.<sup>19</sup> Kein Wunder also, dass auf Dubnows Schreibtisch die Bände von Dichtern der Romantik wie Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Heinrich Heine und Michail Lermontow neben den Schriften von John Stuart Mill und Ernest Renan lagen.<sup>20</sup> Eine innige Beziehung zur Natur kann zeitgleich mit einer tiefen Bewunderung der Wissenschaft bestehen, ein positivistisches Geschichtsverständnis sich in die ro-

18 Miron, *From Continuity to Contiguity*, 57–89.

19 Olga Litvak, *Haskalah. The Romantic Movement in Judaism*, New Brunswick, N.J., 2012.

20 Sofija Dubnowa-Erlich, *Chleb i maca. Wospominanija, stichi raznych let* [Brot und Matze. Erinnerungen, Gedichte aus unterschiedlichen Jahren], St. Petersburg 1994.

romantische Geschichtsphilosophie integrieren. Dubnows berühmte Sentenz, nicht die Staatlichkeit, sondern das geistige Schaffen sei die Achse, um die sich die jüdische Geschichte bewege,<sup>21</sup> ist eine typisch romantische Behauptung, die auf seine Vertrautheit mit den Ideen der romantischen Denker in Deutschland und Russland (Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Konstantin Aksakow) verweist. Diese sahen in Literatur, Musik und Kunst den Nationalgeist abgebildet.<sup>22</sup> Die Betrachtung der Literatur als Spiegel des Lebens einer Nation ist auch charakteristisch für die Kritiker im russischen Realismus, Dubnows einschlägige Lehrer im Bereich der Literatur. Die kompromisslose Forderung der realistischen Schule, gemäß Bürgerpflicht die gesellschaftlichen Probleme darzustellen, nivellierte nicht nur die Forderung nach einer möglichst hohen poetischen Sprache als Mittel zur Konzeptionalisierung von Wahrheit, sondern verlieh dem Dichter und Kritiker den romantischen Heiligenschein eines Kämpfers für soziale Gerechtigkeit.

Innerhalb des russischen Literaturdiskurses im 19. Jahrhundert, insbesondere im Denken Belinskijs, war die Dichotomie von Romantik und Realismus noch nicht so ausgeprägt; sie verschärfte sich erst mit der Kritik im »Silbernen Zeitalter«, die sich von der realistischen Ästhetik lösen wollte. Ein deutlicher Beweis hierfür ist die Lyrik von Nekrassow, der genauso Gedichte mit politischem Gehalt publizierte wie poetische Liebesgedichte, die den Geschmack der Anhänger des L'art-pour-l'art-Gedankens trafen.<sup>23</sup> Entsprechend porträtiert Dubnow Gordon als typischen Schüler Nekrassows und es verwundert nicht, dass er bei der Besprechung von dessen Langgedicht *Kozo schel jud* (wörtl. »Der kleine Strich des Buchstabens Jud«) nicht an Lob spart. In seinen Augen handelt es sich um ein Musterbeispiel bürgerlicher Dichtung. Gleichzeitig legt er eine überaus bewundernde Haltung gegenüber dem Gedicht *Ahavat Dawid u-Michal* (Die Liebe von David und Michal) an den Tag und lobt die reiche Sprache und die bewegende romantische Intrige des Werkes. Die romantischen Grundzüge im Denken Dubnows machen ihn jedoch nicht gleich zum Anhänger des L'art-pour-l'art-Prinzips, wusste er doch ebenso poetische Lyrik zu schätzen, die sich nicht ausschließlich bürgerlichen Themen zuwendet.

Das hervorragendste Beispiel hierfür ist sein umfassendes Porträt über Immanuel ha-Romi, den hebräischen Dichter aus dem 14. Jahrhundert und

21 Simon Dubnow, *Pis'ma o starom i nowom ewrejstwe* [Briefe des alten und neuen Judentums], in: ders./Bendzion Dinur, *Dve kontsepcij ewrejskogo nacionalnogo wozroždenija* [Zwei Konzepte zur jüdischen nationalen Wiederbelebung], Jerusalem 1981, 67–93.

22 Siehe Brian Horowitz, *The Russian Roots of Simon Dubnow's Life and Thought*, in: *Zion* 77 (2012), H. 3, 341–358 (hebr.).

23 Zur großen Popularität von Nekrassows Lyrik in russischen Literaturkreisen siehe Awdot'ja Panaewa, *Wospominanija* [Erinnerungen], Moskau 1986.

Zeitgenossen von Dante.<sup>24</sup> In diesem Beitrag von 1886, bei dem es sich allem Anschein nach um die erste umfassende Arbeit zu Immanuel ha-Romi in Kritik und Forschung handelt, widmet Dubnow den größten Teil seiner Ausführungen der erotischen Lyrik des Dichters. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der Darstellung unterschiedlicher Arten und Zustände der Liebe im Werk ha-Romis – Verliebtheit, reife Liebe, das tragische Moment – verwebt Dubnow mit kleineren Abhandlungen zur europäischen erotischen Lyrik, sodass der Text die Form eines Vortrags in literarischer Komparatistik annimmt. Dubnow äußert sich ausführlich zu den verschiedenen Arten erotischer Lyrik (idealistische, skeptische, pessimistische) und zum einzigartigen historischen Kontext des literarischen Werkes an sich. Den historischen und wissenschaftlichen Charakter des Artikels minderten seine gegenwartsbezogenen Absichten keinesfalls, auch nicht der Versuch, Immanuel ha-Romis Werk Relevanz für die Moderne zuzusprechen. Für Dubnow ist ha-Romi der »Heine des Mittelalters«, dessen erotische Lyrik sich durch Realismus und Ironie auszeichnet. Sie dient nicht als Allegorie für metaphysische Suchbewegungen, sondern erzählt von weltlicher Liebe »mit all ihren Macken«,<sup>25</sup> wie Dubnow schreibt.

Die Verneinung einer möglichen metaphysischen Dimension – und vermutlich auch einer symbolisch-mystischen – in der Lyrik ha-Romis ist Ausdruck einer positivistischen Weltanschauung, die nach einer realistisch-historischen Lesart eines literarischen Werkes verlangt. Die Verpflichtung zu einer realistischen Interpretation in der Auseinandersetzung mit der erotischen Lyrik Immanuel ha-Romis und daraus resultierend auch mit dem Hohelied und der erotischen Tradition in der hebräischen Literatur insgesamt lässt sich nicht mit der religiös-mystischen Auslegung vereinbaren, die in den Augen der Positivisten eine Flucht vor dem wirklichen Leben im Hier und Jetzt darstellt. Mehr noch: Dubnows realistische Interpretation muss als eine Art »Gegenlektüre« betrachtet werden, die nicht nur verborgene Bedeutungsebenen im Werk ha-Romis – Beispiel eines frühen humanistischen, säkularen Diskurses – zutage fördert, sondern gleichermaßen den ideologischen Standpunkt des Kritikers offenbart. Es ist bezeichnend, dass Dubnow auch die satirischen Gedichte von Immanuel ha-Romi lobend erwähnt, die Rabbiner und Talmudgelehrte für unter ihrer Würde befunden hätten – eine Mutmaßung, die auf durchsichtige Weise versucht, die Lyrik eines Dichters aus dem 14. Jahrhundert zu einer Waffe im Kampf mit den diversen Gegnern der Moderne im 19. Jahrhundert zu machen. Abgesehen von der Instrumentalisierung der Lyrik ha-Romis für

24 Simon Dubnow, Immanuel Rimskij. Poet i satirik XIV weka [Immanuel ha-Romi. Dichter und Satiriker des 14. Jahrhunderts], in: *Woschod* 5 (1886), H. 3, 37–58; H. 4, 75–87, sowie H. 5, 6–22.

25 Dubnow, Immanuel Rimskij, in: *Woschod* 5 (1886), H. 4, 78.

die ideologischen und literarischen Kämpfe seiner Zeit bezeichnet Dubnow dessen satirische Gedichte als »unschuldigen, nicht tendenziösen Widerspruch«,<sup>26</sup> der nicht nur eine Lektion erteilen, sondern auch unterhalten und erfreuen will – vergleichbar mit Giovanni Boccaccios *Decamerone*. Trotz seiner Bewunderung für ha-Romis Liebeslyrik war Dubnow nicht bereit, sich von dessen lehrhaften Gedichten (*Ge-Hinnom* und *Gan Eden*) beeindruckt zu lassen, die er für wenig gelungene Nachahmungen Dante Alighieris hielt. Die Verpflichtung zu einer in die Gesellschaft hineinwirkenden Literatur steht nach Dubnow nicht im Widerspruch zur künstlerischen Freiheit und der Möglichkeit des subjektiven Ausdrucks des Dichters. Die Debatte und die ideologische Einordnung des Kunstwerks wiederum, also die Offenlegung der Verbindung zwischen Repräsentation und Referenz in der gesellschaftlichen Realität, sind die Domäne des Kritikers.

Allerdings lassen sich trotz der klaren Affinität für die realistische Ästhetik in Dubnows literarischem Denken auch Spuren des mythopoetischen Diskurses der russischen Literaturkritik der 1880er und 1890er Jahre identifizieren. Erkennbar wird dies an der Darstellung Italiens, einschließlich seiner nichtjüdischen Dichter wie Dante und Boccaccio und der Betonung des Zusammenhangs zwischen italienischer und jüdischer Renaissance. In seinem Artikel über Immanuel ha-Romi zeigt sich Dubnows Neigung, die neue jüdische Epoche mit dem Mythos der europäischen Moderne zu synchronisieren. Er fühlte sich vom Leuchten ha-Romis angezogen, das er vermutlich mit dem Glanz der italienischen Renaissancemalerei assoziierte, in der sich bereits die Strahlkraft der europäischen Aufklärung und damit auch der Haskala und des neuen jüdischen Nationalbewusstseins ankündigte. Die Metaphern des Lichts und der Auferstehung verdeutlichen hier das Gefühl und die Begeisterung angesichts der Entstehung einer modernen jüdischen Idee, die mit dem Mythos der Renaissance von der Wiedergeburt in Verbindung steht.

Zweifellos kannte Dubnow die Gleichsetzung der Renaissance mit dem Beginn der Neuzeit in der europäischen Historiografie und Literatur, auch der russischen, genau. Schließlich war Akim Wolynskij (1863–1926), der vielleicht mehr als jeder andere zum russischen Diskurs über die Ursprünge des modernen Bewusstseins in der italienischen Renaissance beigetragen hat, sein Jugendfreund und Kollege bei *Woschod* gewesen. Wolynskij entwickelte sich zu einem der einflussreichsten Kritiker und Denker der idealistischen und symbolistischen Wende in Russland am Ausgang des 19. Jahrhunderts.<sup>27</sup> Sein berühmtestes Werk ist eine Biografie von Leonardo da Vinci,<sup>28</sup>

26 Dubnow, Immanuel Rimskij, in: *Woschod* 5 (1886), H. 5, 6.

27 Siehe Jelena Tolstoi, Akim Volinski. *Mi-kez me'a schanim* [Akim Wolynskij. Nach 100 Jahren], in: *Nekudotajim* [Doppelpunkt] 2 (2001), 86–93.

28 Akim Wolynskij, *Leonardo da Winči*, Moskau 1899.

die einen Meilenstein im russischen Diskurs über die kulturelle Orientierung des Landes darstellte. Obwohl das erklärte Ziel des Buches eine Grundlegung der idealistischen Ästhetik bei gleichzeitiger Betonung des Erhabenen in der Kunst der Renaissance war, spielte es auch eine zentrale Rolle im Streit um die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen russischem Ideal und westlichen Ideen, in erster Linie der italienischen Renaissance. Dabei nimmt sich das enthusiastische Schreiben über die Kunst der Renaissance, und sei es nur zur Bekräftigung einer idealistischen Kunsttheorie, wie eine Identifikation mit westlichen und modernen Ideen aus.

Dubnow war mit den ästhetischen und historiografischen Ansichten Wolynskijs, mit dem er im Jahr 1886 in St. Petersburg eine Wohnung teilte,<sup>29</sup> bestens vertraut und hatte sicherlich Anteil an dessen liberaler westlicher Orientierung. Es darf angenommen werden, dass Wolynskijs *Woschod*-Artikel über Spinoza,<sup>30</sup> der sich unter anderem mit dem Kampf des Philosophen gegen die jüdische Orthodoxie befasst, seinen Gefallen fand.<sup>31</sup> In Fragen der Ästhetik waren ihre Positionen jedoch diametral entgegengesetzt, da Wolynskij zur Verherrlichung der subjektiven Kunst neigte, die sich dem Abbild der drängenden sozialen Probleme nicht verpflichtet fühlt. Seine scharfen Angriffe auf jedes Anzeichen von Utilitarismus und Positivismus in Literatur und Kunst stehen in vollkommenem Widerspruch zu Dubnows Ansichten.<sup>32</sup> Es ist allerdings interessant, dass Dubnow aus Wolynskijs Ablehnung der realistischen Ästhetik schloss, dass dieser auf die jüdischen Werte verzichte und sich stattdessen griechische Werte und den Kult um die äußere Schönheit zu eigen gemacht habe – eine Deutung, die von der Vermischung von jüdischem Denken und russischer Kritik in Dubnows Weltanschauung zeugt. Im *Buch des Lebens* beschreibt Dubnow den Riss, der zwischen ihnen klappte, weil Wolynskij sich zum »Griechen« erklärt habe, während er selbst »Jude« geblieben sei.<sup>33</sup> Mit anderen Worten: Es ist durchaus denkbar, dass er Wolynskijs ästhetische Vorlieben nicht als solche verwerflich fand, sondern die ihnen inhärente Abkehr vom Jüdischsein.

Der literarische Diskurs im östlichen Europa um die Wende zum 20. Jahrhundert setzte die »griechischen« Werte mit dem westlichen Ideal gleich. Sie waren ein Synonym für die ästhetische Auffassung der Moderne – eine literarische Schule, die von den meisten jüdischen Literaturkritikern, auch

29 Dubnow, *Buch des Lebens*, Bd. 1, 230.

30 Akim Wolynskij, *Teologo-političeskoe učenie Spinozy* [Spinozas theologisch-politische Lehren], in: *Woschod* 4 (1885), H. 11, 125–146.

31 Unter den materialistischen Kritikern der 1860er Jahre war Spinoza ein bewunderter Philosoph.

32 Akim Wolynskij, *Russkie kritiki. Literaturnye očerki* [Russische Kritiker. Literarische Essays], St. Petersburg 1896.

33 Dubnow, *Buch des Lebens*, Bd. 2: 1903–1922, Göttingen 2005, 322.

von Dubnow, abgelehnt wurde. Stattdessen befürworteten sie eine sozial engagierte Literatur, in deren Zentrum die Figur des Kritikers stand – gewissermaßen als Symbiose aus »Wächter über das Haus Israel« und russischer Intelligenzija. Die Antwort auf die Ideen der Romantik liegt nicht zwangsläufig in der Übernahme einer modernen Ästhetik, insbesondere da Erstere bereits durch Dubnows konsequentes Festhalten am Positivismus aufgewogen wurde. In diesem Sinne hat Miron mit seiner These Recht, dass die Dominanz des positivistischen Modells in Dubnows Denken ihn daran hinderte, die Bedeutung der Moderne in der europäischen und der hebräischen Literatur sowie die in Erscheinung tretende neue jüdische Subjektivität in Berdyczewskis Erzählungen zu erkennen. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass ihm der aufgeklärte litauische Rationalismus jedes Anzeichen von Irrationalität in jüdischer Literatur und jüdischem Denken der Epoche verdächtig machte. Dies galt auch für das Werk von Berdyczewski, der im Sinne der Dekadenzliteratur die dunklen und verborgenen Saiten zum Klingen brachte. Dubnow war sich gewiss der engen Verbindung zwischen der hebräischen Literatur im östlichen Europa und der chassidischen Welt bewusst und so ist es nur konsequent, dass der polemische Ton, in dem er seine historischen Forschungen zum Chassidismus niederschrieb, auch seine Literaturkritiken zum Thema auszeichnete. Dubnows Fokus auf Immanuel ha-Romis erotische Liebesdichtung und die gleichzeitige Betonung des Zusammenhangs zwischen italienischer Renaissance und modernem jüdischem Ideal dienten dazu, einen säkular-humanistischen Kulturdiskurs voranzubringen, der zwar noch nicht der neuen jüdischen Subjektivität entsprach, diese aber ankündigte. Das Misstrauen gegenüber Irrationalität, Dekadenz und *L'art pour l'art* ist nicht als Geringschätzung der Prinzipien von Komposition und Individualisierung zu verstehen, deren Umsetzung die Begegnung mit dem literarischen Text zu einem Erlebnis aus ästhetischer Erziehung und vollständiger Subjektwerdung macht.<sup>34</sup>

Diese Prinzipien leiteten Dubnow auch in seiner Einschätzung des Werks von Mosche Chaim Luzzatto, einem Dichter und Mystiker aus Italien, der etwa vierhundert Jahre nach Immanuel ha-Romi lebte und in vielerlei Hinsicht am Fundament für die moderne hebräische Literatur mitgewirkt hat. In seinem Artikel über Luzzatto von 1887<sup>35</sup> operiert Dubnow mit dem gleichen ästhetischen und kulturellen Gespür, das auch seine Untersuchung des Werks von Immanuel ha-Romi durchzieht. Hier ist allerdings eher eine Tendenz zur biografisch-historischen Beschreibung statt zu einer ausschließlich lite-

34 Dubnow kannte sicherlich Schillers bekannte Schrift über die ästhetische Erziehung.

35 Simon Dubnow, Moisej Chaim Luccato. Poet i mistik XVIII veka [Mosche Chaim Luzzatto. Dichter und Mystiker des 18. Jahrhunderts], in: *Woschod* 6 (1887), H. 5, 105–126, sowie H. 6, 85–108.



rarischen Analyse erkennbar. Lobend erwähnt er die frühen Werke *Ma'ase Schimschon* (Die Geschichte Simsons) und vor allem *Migdal Os* (Mächtiger Turm), die vor Luzzattos mystischer Wende und seiner Beschäftigung mit der Kabbala publiziert wurden. Sein Erstlingswerk *Ma'ase Schimschon*, das er bereits mit 17 Jahren vollendet hatte, weist nach Dubnows Ansicht zahlreiche poetische Qualitäten auf, insbesondere eine harmonische Sprache und einen außergewöhnlichen dramatischen Instinkt. Das Drama *Migdal Os*, laut Dubnow Luzzattos wichtigstes Stück, sei ein regelrechtes Musterbeispiel für die Loyalität gegenüber »dem jugendlichen Esprit und dem brennenden poetischen Instinkt«. Der Dichter »verzichtet darauf, diese zu unterdrücken und in moralische Reflexionen zu verwandeln«. Auch hier also verteidigt Dubnow die Emotionalität und die absolute künstlerische Freiheit des Dichters.

Wie bei seinen Arbeiten zu Immanuel ha-Romi hebt Dubnow die erotische und pastorale Dimension von *Migdal Os* hervor. Seiner Interpretation zufolge ist das Drama von der klassischen dramatischen Hirtendichtung inspiriert respektive von *Pastor Fido* aus der Feder Giovanni Battista Guarinis, einem italienischen Dichter des 16. Jahrhunderts. Es ist kein Zufall, dass Dubnow auch hier die Verbindung zu einem kanonischen Drama der Renaissanceliteratur betont. Es scheint, als könne das Licht der Renaissance, insbesondere die Kraft und Lebendigkeit der italienischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, aus seiner Sicht dem Projekt einer Wiedergeburt des jüdischen Volkes zusätzliche Energie verleihen. Und so verwundert es nicht, dass Dubnow *Migdal Os*, wie Israel Bartal herausgestellt hat, nicht nur für Luzzattos wichtigstes Werk, sondern für einen Meilenstein der jüdischen Geschichte in der Moderne hielt.<sup>36</sup> Die Schaffung des mit Eros ausgestatteten jüdischen Individuums, das mit den schöpferischen Kräften der Natur verbunden ist, wird hier zu einer frühen Voraussetzung für die Begründung des modernen jüdischen Kollektivs.

Die Metaphorik des Lichts und der Wiedergeburt begleitet auch Dubnows scharfen Tadel gegen Luzzattos Vorliebe, sich mit der Kabbala zu beschäftigen und in die düsteren Zonen der Mystik einzutauchen, statt das »erleuchtete Feld des Schönen« zu suchen. Es ist interessant, dass Dubnow sich zwar dort mit Luzzatto identifiziert, wo dieser die Verfolgung durch die italienischen Rabbiner beschreibt, aber darauf verzichtet, jenen polemisch-apologetischen Ton anzuschlagen, der sein historisches Schreiben über rationalistische und reformatorische »Lichtgestalten« der jüdischen Geschichte charakterisiert. Sowohl der Mystiker Luzzatto wie auch seine Gegner unter Italiens Rab-

36 Israel Bartal, *To Redeem a People. Jewish Nationalism and Enlightenment in Eastern Europe*, Jerusalem 2013 (hebr.), hier Kap. 9: RaMHaL ve-Dubnov. Mistika ve-reschit ha-et ha-hadascha [Mosche Chaim Luzzatto und Dubnow. Mystik und der Beginn der Neuzeit], 203–221.

binern erweisen sich für Dubnow als Söhne der Finsternis. Luzzattos allegorisches Drama *La-Jescharim Tehila* (Lobpreis den Rechtschaffenen), das er – müde und gebeutelt von seinen Kämpfen – mehr als zehn Jahre nach der Veröffentlichung von *Migdal Os* vollendet hatte, löste bei Dubnow eine ziemlich kühle Reaktion aus. Er lobt zwar den Klang und die Musikalität des Werks, bezeichnet es aber auch als philosophische Abhandlung ohne jeden poetischen Inhalt und ohne individuell gestaltete Figuren. Die Schwäche des Dramas liege in seinem lehrhaften Charakter, im Verzicht auf Emotionalität und die einzigartige subjektive Stimme des Dichters. Als treuer Anhänger der realistischen Schule konnte Dubnow ein allegorisches Werk, das sich nicht mit echten Situationen im Hier und Jetzt befasst, ohnehin nur schwer akzeptieren.

Tatsächlich behauptete Dubnow in einer Abhandlung über das Werk von Perez Smolenskin von 1887,<sup>37</sup> dass ein literarischer Text, der aus künstlerischer Sicht nicht ordnungsgemäß erarbeitet ist, auch gesellschaftlich nicht relevant sein kann. Seine Einschätzung von Smolenskin als Erzähler war sehr negativ. Dubnow zufolge besaß er unbestrittenes publizistisches Talent, das ihn zu einem der wichtigsten Vertreter der modernen jüdischen Nationalbewegung gemacht habe, aber in seinem Werk lasse sich keinerlei bedeutsame künstlerische Vision ausmachen. Die Trennung zwischen Literaturkritik und Publizistik auf der einen und Fiktion auf der anderen Seite, die Dubnows Untersuchung der Werke von ha-Romi und Luzzatto charakterisiert, ist also auch hier Gegenstand. Smolenskins Romane seien – so Dubnow – übermäßig tendenziös, litten an übertriebener Dramatisierung und fehlenden kausalen Verknüpfungen der Ereignisse. Schlimmer noch: Die schablonenhafte Figurenzeichnung mache es unmöglich, das Typische in ihnen zu erkennen, also die Verbindung zwischen ihnen und ihrer Referenz außerhalb der literarischen Welt. Deshalb enthalte sein Romanwerk keinen wirklichen Beitrag zum Verständnis gesellschaftlicher Prozesse. Obwohl es zentrale ideologische Tendenzen der jüdischen Bevölkerung widerspiegele, scheitere es an der Verwirklichung der ästhetischen Prinzipien des Realismus. Dubnow zufolge seien die Leistungen der hebräischen Prosa weitaus geringer als die der hebräischen Lyrik. Nur das Werk von Avraham Mapu, vor allem dessen Roman *Ahavat Zijon* (Zionsliebe), der eine romantische Intrige und die Darstellung der antiken Nationalgeschichte miteinander verknüpft, erfüllt seiner Meinung nach entsprechende ästhetische Kriterien. Dubnow lobt die Arbeit von Mapu im *Buch des Lebens* und in seiner historischen Forschung

37 Simon Dubnov, P. Smolenskin kak romanist i publicist [P. Smolenskin als Schriftsteller und Publizist], *Woschod* 6 (1887), H. 9, 9–25.

über die Juden des östlichen Europas in der Neuzeit.<sup>38</sup> Dennoch scheint Mapus Vorliebe für biblische Themen, die auch im Roman *Aschmat Schomron* (Die Schuld Samarias) zum Ausdruck kommt, Dubnow davon abgehalten zu haben, sein Werk für eine literatursoziologische Untersuchung heranzuziehen, wie sie für seine übrigen Artikel typisch ist. Der realistische Roman *Ait zavv'a* (Der bunte Vogel), so wichtig er auch sein mag, ist Mapus einziges Werk, das ausdrücklich die dringenden Probleme der Zeit aufgreift. Möglicherweise liegt hier der Grund dafür, dass Dubnow vom Verfassen einer umfangreichen Monografie über Mapus Œuvre absah.

### Zur Revolution des Pluralismus in der jüdischen Literatur: Dubnow über das Schreiben auf Jiddisch

Auf den ersten Blick erscheinen auch Dubnows Ausführungen zum Werk von Smolenskin als Versuch der Bewertung seiner individuellen Arbeit – ohne umfassende historiografische These zum Zustand der hebräischen Literatur. Allerdings impliziert Dubnows negative Einschätzung seiner Prosa aufgrund vermeintlicher Sünden gegen die ästhetischen Prinzipien des Realismus die Frage nach der prinzipiellen Fähigkeit der hebräischen Erzählliteratur um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, die Wirklichkeit mimetisch abzubilden. Denn obwohl Hebräisch in Bildungskreisen – besonders unter Literaten – hohes Ansehen genoss und die zentrale Sprache der jüdischen Gemeinschaften im östlichen Europa darstellte, waren die Alltagssprachen in dieser Zeit Jiddisch, Russisch, Polnisch und Ukrainisch. Als Konsequenz standen den Verfassern hebräischer Prosa lediglich begrenzte mimetische Möglichkeiten zur Verfügung. Die Dichter der Haskala hatten zwar, wie Dubnow in seinem Artikel über Gordon ausführt, viel zur Befreiung der hebräischen Sprache aus der Herrschaft des manierten Gebrauchs (*meliza*) beigetragen, aber es liege in der Natur der Sache, dass sie als Autoren von Prosa der Beschreibung der Realität nicht zur Gänze gewachsen seien. Den Verfassern jiddischer Literatur hingegen stünden umfassendere sprachlich-mimetische Optionen zur Verfügung. Daraus resultiere für Sie – trotz inferiorer Stellung in der Literatur – die Möglichkeit, die gesellschaftliche Aufgabe von Literatur zu erfüllen.

38 Dubnow, Buch des Lebens, Bd. 1, 88–90; ders., Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes, 10 Bde., Berlin 1925–1929, hier Bd. 9: Die neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes. Das Zeitalter der ersten Reaktion und der zweiten Emanzipation (1815–1881), aus dem Russ. übers. von Aaron Zacharovich Steinberg, Berlin 1929, 439 f.

In seiner Zeit als Literaturkritiker war für Dubnow die jiddische Literatur von größtem Interesse. Seine wichtigste Abhandlung in diesem Bereich war der Artikel *Über die Jargonliteratur* von 1888.<sup>39</sup> Darin behauptet er, dass die jüdische Nationalliteratur auch auf Jiddisch – das die eigentliche Sprache des Volkes sei – geschrieben werden könne und nicht nur auf Hebräisch, wie es die Überzeugung von Achad Ha'am und späterer Wortführer der kulturellen Renaissance war. Als Sprache des Gebets und des Lernens habe sich die hebräische Sprache zwar über die längste Zeit der jüdischen Geschichte einer heiligen Stellung erfreut, aber korrekt beherrschten sie lediglich eine Handvoll Gelehrte. Die überwiegende Funktion des Hebräischen in traditionellen Texten hatte, wie Dubnow andeutet, Auswirkungen darauf, wie es in modernen literarischen Werken angewendet wurde. Die Heiligkeit des Hebräischen biete ein unerschöpfliches Reservoir an Bildern zur Darstellung des Erhabenen, aber sie beeinträchtige sämtliche mimetischen Qualitäten, die für eine glaubwürdige Beschreibung der gesellschaftlichen Realität unerlässlich seien. Als tägliche Verkehrssprache der jüdischen Allgemeinheit sei das Jiddische, so Dubnow, auch als Literatursprache der breiten Bevölkerungsschichten besser geeignet.

Diese Behauptung, so logisch und selbstverständlich sie auch sein mag, war zu ihrer Zeit in höchstem Maße radikal, da die jüdische intellektuelle Elite dem Schreiben auf Jiddisch mit offener Geringschätzung begegnete. Die Autoren der Haskala ebenso wie die Dichter und Denker der hebräischen Renaissance, die häufig einen religiösen Hintergrund hatten, betrachteten das Jiddische üblicherweise als Sprache der Frauen und des einfachen Volkes, eine Sprache ohne rechte Grammatik und Syntax, eher ein Jargon. In ihren Augen konnte die »Jargonliteratur« und insbesondere das Genre des »Schunds«, das sich in banalen, melodramatischen Erzählungen erging, keinerlei sozialen oder nationalen Wert besitzen. Diese Haltung erstreckte sich auch auf anspruchsvollere literarische Texte, etwa von Scholem Alejchem, die im Vergleich zur hebräischen Lyrik und Literaturkritik als minderwertig angesehen wurden. Auch Dubnow verurteilte die »Schundliteratur« scharf, das Werk Scholem Alejchems jedoch zählte für ihn zu den herausragendsten Leistungen der jüdischen Literatur aller Zeiten. Seine Erzählungen befassten sich zwar mit dem Leben des einfachen Volkes und nicht nur mit den kulturellen Dilemmata der gebildeten Schichten, aber die sorgfältige Adaptation und Bearbeitung machten ihre Lektüre zu einem literarischen Erlebnis erster Güte. Nicht genug, dass Dubnow hier für die befleckte Ehre des Gründervaters der modernen jiddischen Literatur eintrat, er postulierte die Daseinsberechtigung jüdischer Literatur in drei Sprachen: Hebräisch, Jiddisch und Russisch.

39 Ders., O žargonnoj literature [Über die Jargonliteratur], in: *Woschod* 7 (1888), H. 10, 1–22.

Im Artikel *Über die Jargonliteratur*, der eine Mischung aus literarisch-kulturellem Manifest und soziologischem Essay ist, konstatiert Dubnow, dass die jüdische Intelligenzija im Russischen Kaiserreich keine Einheit bilde, sondern sich aus Untergruppen zusammensetze. Die erste Gruppe sei die der »progressiven Aufklärer«, die sich weitgehend russifiziert und in den großen Städten (St. Petersburg, Odessa, Kiew) niedergelassen haben. Für jeden, der zu dieser Gruppe der Akkulturierten im fortgeschrittenen Stadium gehöre, sei Russisch zwar die Sprache der »Hochkultur«, es diene aber zugleich als Sprache für jüdisch-nationale Werke. Zweifellos betrachtete sich Dubnow als Angehöriger dieser »progressiven Aufklärer«, die das Russische zu einer jüdischen Sprache machten. Die zweite Gruppe bildeten die Aufklärer in den Kleinstädten und Dörfern des Ansiedlungsrayons im Russischen Kaiserreich. Anders als die »progressiven Aufklärer« in den großen Städten hätten sie noch keine durchgreifende kulturelle Abspaltung von den breiten Bevölkerungsschichten erfahren; nur ihre sprachliche und literarische Ausrichtung, die in der traditionellen Gelehrsamkeit wurzle, unterscheidete sie von den Volksmassen. Sie seien es gewesen, die die moderne hebräische Literatur begründet hätten, obwohl die tägliche Verkehrssprache Jiddisch war und geblieben sei. Deshalb sei die moderne hebräische Literatur trotz ihres immensen Beitrags zur nationaljüdischen Bewegung recht gering verbreitet, nämlich hauptsächlich unter ehemaligen Jeschiwa-Schülern. Die dritte Gruppe bildeten laut Dubnow die Jiddisch schreibenden Aufklärer, die eine breite, allmählich den Modernisierungsprozessen ausgesetzte Bevölkerungsschicht repräsentierten. Die Stellung des Jiddischen als Sprache der Volksmassen widerlege nicht nur dessen Definition als Jargon, also als Umgangssprache der ungebildeten Bevölkerung, sondern erhebe es eindeutig zu einer Nationalsprache. Letztlich enthielten die literarischen Darstellungen auf Jiddisch auch Bezugnahmen auf die Erfahrungen der hebräischen und sogar der russisch-jüdischen Intelligenzija.

In seinen Abhandlungen über die Soziologie der jüdischen Literatur im östlichen Europa macht Dubnow deutlich, dass die Werke der jiddischen Autoren aus seiner Sicht am umfassendsten das soziale Gefüge der jüdischen Gesellschaft samt ihren Tiefenstrukturen zum Ausdruck bringen. So stehe die Flexibilität des Jiddischen als einer jahrhundertlang gesprochenen Sprache eher im Einklang mit der Modernisierung des jüdischen Lebens als das Hebräische – die Sprache des Gebets und des Studiums heiliger Texte, nicht aber des alltäglichen Umgangs. Seiner Ansicht nach ist das nationale Wiederaufleben des jüdischen Volkes ohne den Gebrauch des Jiddischen zur Verbreitung der Ideen von Fortschritt und national-kultureller Autonomie aussichtslos. Nur die jiddische Literatur könne die Emanzipation der unterdrückten Klassen voranbringen, vor allem des Proletariats und der Frauen, die den größten Teil des Volkes ausmachten. Diese Gruppen würden in der

hebräischen und der jüdisch-russischen Literatur nicht angemessen repräsentiert. Dubnow plädiert also für mehr Pluralismus in der jüdischen Literatur und unterminiert damit zugleich die patriarchale Hegemonie der intellektuellen und wirtschaftlichen Eliten, sei es die jüdisch-russische Intelligenzija mit ihrer Nähe zu »jüdischen Finanziers« in den Großstädten oder seien es die hebräischen Schriftsteller mit ihren Verbindungen zur geistlichen und politischen Führung in den Kleinstädten.

Dubnows Haltung steht – trotz seiner tiefen Verbindung zum liberalen Denken und der typisch romantischen Sentimentalität – in allem, was die Rolle des Jiddischen im Leben der jüdischen Gemeinschaften betrifft, im Einklang mit der materialistischen Literaturtheorie. Tatsächlich besteht das ausdrückliche Ziel seines Artikels darin, den literarischen Darstellungen in jiddischer Sprache nationale Legitimation zu verleihen und sie als Ausdruck des Klassenbewusstseins zu bestätigen. Literarische Werke werden zuallererst als Produkte der Klassenzugehörigkeit beschrieben, die das politisch Unbewusste der gesellschaftlichen Schichten des jüdischen Kollektivs offenlegen. Im Grunde nimmt diese Sichtweise die Versuche von Amir Banbaji und Hannan Hever in der Einleitung von *Literature and Class* vorweg, eine Theorie der »weichen«, »gespaltenen« und pluralistischen Ästhetik der hebräischen Literatur zu formulieren, ohne allerdings dabei das nationale Subjekt zu dekonstruieren.<sup>40</sup> Anders gesagt: Dubnow plädiert für Vielfalt innerhalb des nationalen Ganzen, die es jeder Schicht und jeder Untergruppe erlaubt, eine einzigartige Sprache und Poetik zu entwickeln. Seine Vision der jüdischen Literatur möchte mit den üblichen Hierarchien brechen – es ist eine Vision, die die jiddische Literatur aus ihrer marginalisierten Position befreit und das Jiddische zu einer anerkannten Nationalsprache macht. Es versteht sich von selbst, dass sich eine solche Literatur nicht auf die Darstellung der »niedereren« Kultur beschränken muss.

In dem Artikel *Narodnaja i prosto-narodnaja literatura* – sinngemäß übersetzbar etwa als *Nationalgeist und volkstümliche Literatur*<sup>41</sup> – unterscheidet Dubnow scharf zwischen seichter jiddischer Literatur ohne künstlerischen oder ideellen Wert (»Schundliteratur« und an ihrer Spitze der populäre Autor Nachum Schaikewitsch) und »hoher« jiddischer Literatur, die die Errungenschaften der russischen und europäischen Literatur verinnerlicht habe und danach strebe, im Sinne Schillers die ästhetische Erziehung des Volkes voranzutreiben. Die Verwendung der Begriffe *narodnost* (Nationalgeist) und *prostonarodnost* (Schlichtheit der Massen) sind Belinskijs Einlassung zum Wesen der russischen Literatur in einem Artikel über Puschkins *Ewgenij*

40 Banbaji/Hever, Mavo'.

41 Simon Dubnow, *Narodnaja i prosto-narodnaja literatura* [Nationalgeist und volkstümliche Literatur], in: *Woschod* 9 (1890), H. 10, 21–37.

*Onegin* entliehen. Dort stellte der russische Kritiker fest, dass sich der Nationalgeist gerade in der »hohen« Literatur ausdrücke und die literarischen Figuren, die zu den aufgeklärten Ständen gehören, Träger desselben seien.

Wie Belinskij ist auch Dubnow überzeugt, dass nur »ernsthafte« und kunstvoll gestaltete Werke – beispielsweise *Yosele Solovey* von Scholem Alejchem und *Dos vintshfingerl* von Mendele Moicher Sforim (Scholem J. Abramovitsh) – das Nationalbewusstsein bereichern. Das Streben nach ästhetischer Erziehung des Volkes, das scheinbar eine Anpassung des literarischen Stils und der Figuren an den Geschmack der ungebildeten Leser erfordere, beeinträchtige keineswegs die Freiheit des Autors, auch Figuren aus den gebildeten Schichten zu wählen, wie es Scholem Alejchem in *Yosele Solovey* getan habe. Beim Lesen des Romans verspüre der Rezipient absolutes ästhetisches Vergnügen, ziehe aus den psychologischen Beschreibungen und denen des Alltagslebens aber auch einen informativen Nutzen. Die Erzählung von Mendele Moicher Sforim spiegelt nach Dubnows Ansicht ebenso deutlich das nationale Bewusstsein wider. Die Welt von Herschl, der Hauptfigur, beziehe sich zwar hauptsächlich auf die alte patriarchale Umgebung der Jeschiwa-Schüler und geschäftiger Gemeindeglieder aller Art, aber seine Wanderungen brächten den Leser mit vielfältigen Charakteren aus der jüdischen Gesellschaft in Kontakt, wodurch *Dos vintshfingerl* zu einer Art Mischung aus Epos und Lyrik werde, die an Gogols Roman *Tote Seelen* erinnere. Die Werke von Scholem Alejchem und Mendele Moicher Sforim stellten das Leben des Volkes kritisch und düster, aber voller Empathie dar. Auch in Dubnows Augen ist der schwarze Humor der jiddischen Autoren eine unvergleichlich ernsthafte Angelegenheit.

Seiner Ansicht nach geht die Verpflichtung des jüdischen Autors und Kritikers zu einem prüfenden Blick allerdings mit einer Absage an die herabsetzende Darstellung von Juden in den Schriften nichtjüdischer Autoren einher. In seinem Artikel über Wsewolod Krestowskijs Buch *Ägyptische Finsternis* schreibt Dubnow, der russische Autor vermittele seinen Lesern ein verfälschtes Bild jüdischen Lebens.<sup>42</sup> Der Roman leide an schwerwiegenden ästhetischen Mängeln und sei demonstrativ tendenziös. Die Gestaltung der Hauptfigur Tamara, die von der Religion ihrer Väter zum Christentum übertritt, um mit ihrem Auserwählten, einem polnischen Adligen, vereint zu sein, versündige sich an den Prinzipien der realistischen Ästhetik: Tamara habe keine typischen Charakterzüge und es scheine, als stamme ihre Figur aus einem billigen melodramatischen Roman der europäischen Literatur. Der Verfasser des Werks werde von antisemitischen Überzeugungen angetrieben, die ihn dazu veranlassten, Juden als heimtückisch darzustellen, stets auf der

42 Simon Dubnow, T'ma egipetskaja [Ägyptische Finsternis], in: *Woschod* 8 (1889), H. 6, 7–30.

Jagd nach Profit und Weltherrschaft. Sein Versuch, die jüdische Elite und insbesondere die Vorherrschaft der Gemeinde aus der Sicht des Einzelnen kritisch zu beschreiben, sei ein totaler Anachronismus, der nichts mit dem jüdischen Leben der Gegenwart zu tun habe. Dubnow schließt Kritik am jüdischen Gemeindeleben nicht aus, aber es scheint, als sei in seinen Augen den Nichtjuden verboten, was den Juden erlaubt ist.

Krestowskijs Roman strotzt in der Tat vor antisemitischen Stereotypen; der apologetische Ton in Dubnows Artikel wiederum verweist auf die Übernahme nationaler Rhetorik – und auf ein Abrücken von der Tendenz der Haskala-Literatur, das Postulat des russischen »aufgeklärten Absolutismus« zu akzeptieren, demzufolge die Juden nach ihrer Modernisierung zu »brauchbaren Untertanen« des Reiches würden. Anscheinend sollte sich der jüdische Nationalismus Dubnow zufolge weiter in Richtung Produktivität und Stärkung der liberalen, humanistischen Prinzipien in Bildung, Kultur und Politik bewegen. Keinen Platz habe dagegen das Verinnerlichen der Stereotype, die den antisemitischen Diskurs seitens der Herrschenden und der Intelligenzija im Russland des 19. Jahrhunderts prägten. In diesem Sinne unterscheiden sich Dubnows Ansichten zur jüdischen Frage im nichtjüdischen Diskurs von denen Brenners, der trotz Identifikation mit der zionistischen Ideologie vorschlug, antisemitische Schriften ins Hebräische zu übersetzen, um so das jüdische Selbstwertgefühl zu schärfen.<sup>43</sup> Unmissverständlich ist auch, dass das Gefühl tiefer Enttäuschung über die Gleichgültigkeit der russischen Intelligenzija angesichts von Diskriminierung und Gewalt gegenüber Juden hier den national-apologetischen Ton Dubnows abschwächt.<sup>44</sup> Möglicherweise vermittelt die Frustration hinsichtlich der Intelligenzija als bevorzugter Referenzgruppe außerhalb der jüdischen Gesellschaft und als der wichtigsten Verbündeten im Kampf für Bürgerrechte und jüdische Autonomie im russischen Staat einen Eindruck von den Zweifeln an der Integration der Juden im russischen Kulturraum.<sup>45</sup>

43 Josef Chaim Brenner, *Ketavim* [Werke], Tel Aviv, 1985, vol. 4, bes. Kap. *Ha'arachatzmenu be-schloschet ha-krachim* [Unsere Selbsteinschätzung in drei Bänden], 1246 f.

44 In seinem Aufsatz über die Literaturkritiken von Dubnow befasst sich Viktor Kelner mit Dubnows Artikel in der Oktoberausgabe von *Woschod* des Jahres 1889 über die Darstellung der Juden in den Erzählungen von Anton Tschechow. Dieser Artikel ist allerdings mit den Initialen S. G. gezeichnet, nicht mit dem Namen Kritikus, wie es für Dubnow üblich war. In der chronologisch angelegten »Autobibliographie (1922–1939)« taucht der Artikel nicht auf (siehe Dubnow, *Buch des Lebens*, Bd. 3: 1922–1933, 211–218). Die Initialen S. G. legen nahe, dass der Artikel von dem jüdisch-russischen Dichter Semën Grigor'evič Frug stammt, nicht von Dubnow.

45 Dimitry Shumsky schreibt, dass Dubnows exterritorialer Nationalismus nicht komplett von territorialistischen Konzepten, einschließlich dem Zionismus, abgekoppelt war. Siehe ders., *Zionism in Quotation Marks, or to what Extent Was Dubnow a Non-Zionist?*, in: *Zion* 77 (2012), H. 3, 369–384 (hebr.).



## Fazit

Für einen jüdisch-russischen Intellektuellen wie Dubnow musste Russland das geistige und intellektuelle Zuhause sein. Die russische Literatur lieferte ihm die Deutungsmodelle für seine Literaturkritiken, die von parallelen Tendenzen in der jüdischen Literatur durchzogen waren. Die jüdische Lebenswirklichkeit im Russischen Kaiserreich wiederum diente ihm sowohl zur Artikulation seiner nationalen Programmatik als auch zur Formulierung einer Theorie jüdischer Literatur in drei Sprachen. Als Liberaler und als Humanist glaubte er an den Erfolg einer an die nationale Wirklichkeit angepassten realistischen Ästhetik. Es scheint allerdings, als hätten die Realität in Russland und Europa, die von wachsenden Spannungen zwischen dem Kaiserreich und den nationalen Bewegungen geprägt war, und das Gefühl einer nahenden Katastrophe seine optimistische literarische Vision untergraben. Dies führte schließlich dazu, dass er seine Arbeit als Literaturkritiker vernachlässigte und sich stattdessen der direkten politischen Arbeit zuwandte: dem publizistischen Schreiben und vor allem seinem gewaltigen historiografischen Vorhaben.

*Aus dem Hebräischen von Sebastian Schirrmeister*



## Aus der Forschung



Zarin Aschrafi

## Intellektuelles Exil: Zur Gründungsgeschichte der Zeitschrift *Babylon*

### Land in Sicht – *Babylon*

Am Abend des 30. Januar 1987 verwandelte sich eine kleine, alternative Buchhandlung im Frankfurter Stadtteil Nordend in einen Ort erfahrungsgeschichtlicher Selbstvergewisserung. Ein Kreis von Herausgeberinnen und Herausgebern hatte sich in den dezidiert linken Buchladen begeben, um im Rahmen einer Veranstaltung ihre kürzlich erschienene Zeitschrift öffentlich vorzustellen. Zu ihnen gehörten der seinerzeit an der Universität Essen wirkende Historiker Dan Diner, die Publizistin und Gruppenanalytikerin Susann Heenen-Wolff, die Publizistin und spätere Professorin für Filmwissenschaften Gertrud Koch, die spätere Mitarbeiterin am Jüdischen Museum in Frankfurt am Main Cilly Kugelmann sowie der Publizist Martin Löw-Beer.<sup>1</sup>

Wenngleich die Veranstaltungsankündigung viele Interessierte anzog, war es nicht die Präsentation der Zeitschrift als solche, die – aus der historischen Distanz betrachtet – jenen Abend in der Buchhandlung außergewöhnlich machte. Als Format fügte sie sich in eine seit Ende der 1960er Jahre herausgebildete deutsche Wirkungstradition linker Buchläden: So war es im Zuge des Bedeutungsgewinns von Theorie und Text sowie von Praxis und Organisation zu einem regelrechten Gründungsboom linker Buchhandlungen und Verlage gekommen, die mit ihrer Auswahl und dem Vertrieb von Literatur und Theorie den Lese- und Wissenshunger einer jungen, zumeist studentischen Intelligenz zu stillen wussten.<sup>2</sup> Neben den sich bereits ab Mitte der 1960er Jahre etablierenden linken Kneipen und Cafés transformierten sich die Buchläden zu Orten der Vergemeinschaftung,<sup>3</sup> zu »Kristallisationspunkten der Bewegung am Ort, zu Kommunikations- und Informationszentren

- 1 Siehe den kurzen Bericht zur Veranstaltung: Gemeinsamkeit im Schmerz, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2. Februar 1987, 30.
- 2 Siehe hierzu Uwe Sonnenberg, Von Marx zum Maulwurf. Linker Buchhandel in Westdeutschland in den 1970er Jahren, Göttingen 2016.
- 3 Siehe hierzu die Studie von Sven Reichardt, Authentizität und Gemeinschaft. Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren, Berlin 2014.

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für die Linke« insgesamt.<sup>4</sup> In diese Entwicklung reihte sich auch die kleine Buchhandlung im Frankfurter Nordend mit dem für ihre Zeit durchaus noch optimistischen Namen »Land in Sicht« ein,<sup>5</sup> wenngleich das Jahr ihrer Gründung, 1978, für eine theoretische wie politische Neuorientierung des im Zuge von Achtundsechzig erstarkenden linken Milieus stand.<sup>6</sup> Dies kam insbesondere in der Auflösung des einstigen Zentrums der 68er-Bewegung in den studentischen Vierteln des Frankfurter Westends und Bockenheims sowie in der Zersplitterung der politischen Gruppierungen und ihrer Niederlassung in anderen Stadtteilen der Mainmetropole zum Ausdruck. Die ökologische Alternativszene fand dabei im Nordend ihren Wirkungsraum.<sup>7</sup> Hier bildete sich mit der Gründung von Cafés, Kneipen und Buchläden erneut eine linke Infrastruktur mit entsprechendem politischen Programm heraus.<sup>8</sup> Die Veranstaltung im Januar 1987 fügte sich in dieses Milieu. Hingegen korrespondierte das vom Herausgeberkreis gewählte Thema des Abends keineswegs mit dem Selbstverständnis der linken, der Universalität aufklärerischer Ideen verpflichteten Buchhandlung.<sup>9</sup> So fokussierten die Gründerinnen und Gründer der Zeitschrift ein in der Linken kaum beachtetes, ja geradezu nivelliertes Thema: die Herkunft. Sie traten als selbstbewusste Jüdinnen und Juden auf. Ihr Periodikum, das den Titel *Babylon. Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart* trug, sollte ihrer partikularen Zugehörigkeit Rechnung tragen.

»Babylon« – ein Ort, der zur Zufluchtsstätte für die aus Jerusalem vertriebene jüdische Oberschicht im 7. Jahrhundert vor unserer Zeitrechnung wurde und der gemäß der tanachischen Überlieferung für den Beginn der Jahrtausende währenden jüdischen Diaspora steht. In der Rezeptionsgeschichte

- 4 Zit. nach Adelheid von Saldern, Markt für Marx. Literaturbetrieb und Lesebewegungen in der Bundesrepublik in den Sechziger- und Siebzigerjahren, in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 44 (2004), 149–180, hier 167.
- 5 Zur Gründung der Buchhandlung siehe Seit zwanzig Jahren ist Land in Sicht. Eine ganz besondere Frankfurter Buchhandlung, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, 21. Juni 1998, 26.
- 6 Zur theoretischen Neuorientierung siehe u. a. Philipp Felsch, Der lange Sommer der Theorie. Geschichte einer Revolte 1960–1990, München 2015; Ulrich Raulff, Wiedersehen mit den Siebzigern. Die wilden Jahre des Lesens, Stuttgart 2014; Philipp Felsch, Kritik der Bleiwüste. Theoriedesign nach dem Deutschen Herbst, in: Merkur 68 (2014), H. 784, 780–792. Ferner auch den auf die Veränderungen in Frankreich bezogenen Aufsatz von Martin Kindtner, »Wie man es anstellt, nicht zu viel zu regieren.« Michel Foucault entdeckt den Neoliberalismus, in: Morten Reitmayer/Thomas Schlemmer (Hgg.), Die Anfänge der Gegenwart. Umbrüche in Westeuropa nach dem Boom, München 2014, 37–50.
- 7 Siehe Für »Land in Sicht« schuf F. K. Wächter das erste Logo, in: Frankfurter Neue Presse, 20. Juni 1998, 17.
- 8 Siehe ebd.
- 9 Zum Selbstverständnis der Buchhandlung siehe Paul Parin, Seit 20 Jahren Gast bei »Land in Sicht«. Schöne Literatur und das Wissen, dass Kultur nie unpolitisch sein kann. Zum Jubiläum einer Frankfurter Buchhandlung, in: Frankfurter Rundschau, 20. Juni 1998.

wird Babylon mitunter auch als Gegenort zu Zion konstruiert – und damit zur säkularen Antipode des heiligen Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> Nun zierte der mythische Ortsname der untergegangenen antiken Stadt den Titel der im Januar 1987 präsentierten Zeitschrift. Als intellektuelle Heimat der seinerzeit in Deutschland lebenden jüdischen Zeitschriftengründerinnen und -gründer wurde Babylon zum Bekenntnis des Exils, genauer: des intellektuellen Exils, das zugleich die eingenommene Perspektive aus einer zeitlich wie räumlich unabhängigen Peripherie hervorheben sollte.

Expressis verbis kam diese intellektuelle Standortbestimmung im programmatischen Editorial des ersten Heftes zum Ausdruck. So beabsichtigte der Herausgeberkreis, mit seiner Zeitschrift einen »intellektuellen Diskurs zu jüdischen Problemen« zu etablieren.<sup>11</sup> Wenngleich sie als Juden in der linken Buchhandlung auftraten, wollten sie sich in ihrer Publikation nicht als »Vertreter einer je nach Perspektive religiösen/sozialen/ethnischen Minderheit« äußern. Vielmehr verstanden sie sich als »universalistisch orientierte Intellektuelle, die Herkunftspartikularität reflektierend überschreiten [wollten], ohne sie zu leugnen«. <sup>12</sup> Ihre Rolle als »Intellektuelle« nahmen sie dabei aus einer »jüdischen Randzone« in den Blick. Keineswegs wollten sie jedoch »jüdische Themen im engeren, im partikularen Sinne« zum Schwerpunkt des Periodikums machen. Vielmehr beabsichtigten sie, Themen aufzugreifen, die »weitestgehend und universalistisch von Juden und dem Judentum« handeln beziehungsweise Juden zugeschrieben werden. Von dieser Perspektive versprachen sie sich einen kritischen Blick auf die »politischen und kulturellen Befindlichkeiten in der Gesellschaft« insgesamt.<sup>13</sup>

Im Sinne dieses programmatischen Anspruchs lag es für die Herausgeberinnen und Herausgeber nahe, ihre Zeitschrift nicht nur unter dem Dach des lange Zeit zum Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenverband (SDS) gehörenden linken Verlags Neue Kritik zu veröffentlichen. Für die Vorstellung der Publikation wie für die Diskussion der Inhalte wurden auch ausschließlich nichtjüdische Orte gewählt.<sup>14</sup>

In der Forschung werden Zeitschriftengründungen gemeinhin mit dem Verweis auf die historische Eigenständigkeit des Mediums als Interventionen verstanden, die eine spezifische Zeitwahrnehmung dokumentieren und

10 Zur Konstruktion Babylons als Gegenort zu Jerusalem siehe Richard Chaim Schneider, *Babylon, Israel, Zion. Kleiner Schritt zur Selbstverständlichkeit*. Die Zeitschrift »Babylon«, in: *Die Zeit*, 22. November 1991, 69; Simon Rawidowicz, *Babylon and Jerusalem, London 1957* (hebr.).

11 Editorial, in: *Babylon. Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart* (1986), H. 1, 7 f., hier 7.

12 Ebd.

13 Ebd., 8.

14 Siehe Interview der Verfasserin mit Cilly Kugelmann, Berlin, 13. Juli 2018.

widerspiegeln.<sup>15</sup> Wenngleich das Erscheinungsjahr des ersten *Babylon*-Heftes 1986 als Ausdruck einer intellektuellen wie politischen Partizipation an den seinerzeit aufkeimenden Debatten zum Umgang mit dem nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen und seinem Erbe verstanden werden kann, geht ihre Gründung vor allem auf einen im Frühjahr 1980 von Cilly Kugelmann initiierten Diskussionskreis in Frankfurt zurück, dem neben den *Babylon*-Herausgeberinnen und -Herausgebern Diner, Heenen-Wolff, Koch und Löw-Beer weit mehr Personen angehört hatten.<sup>16</sup> 1985 löste sich dieser Kreis formal auf – wohl aus ganz profanen Gründen wie denen des Wegzugs oder beruflicher Verpflichtungen. Ihm folgte im Oktober 1986 die Gründung der Zeitschrift. Diese vermochte es nicht nur, Teile des Netzwerks zusammenzuhalten und den intellektuellen Austausch fortzusetzen, vielmehr ermöglichte sie es, die im geschlossenen Kreis erfassten Inhalte einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen. Was zuvor im privaten Raum verhandelt und diskutiert worden war, fand nun Eingang in den öffentlichen Diskurs.

Unmittelbar nach der Etablierung des Diskussionskreises gaben die Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer diesem informell die Bezeichnung »Jüdische Gruppe«. Zwei miteinander verschränkte Erfahrungen – eine generationelle und eine deutsche – kommen in diesem Namen zum Ausdruck. So gehörten die vierzig bis fünfzig Mitglieder allesamt jener Generation von Juden in Deutschland an, die im Jahr 1945 oder unmittelbar danach geboren worden waren.<sup>17</sup> Viele von ihnen waren als Kinder von Holocaustüberlebenden und Verfolgten im Nachfolgestaat des Nationalsozialismus aufgewachsen – in jenem Land also, das für die Juden der Welt wie für Israel zum verbotenen Land geworden war: Es galt die Aufforderung, den »blutgetränkten« deutschen Boden zu verlassen und nie wieder zu betreten.<sup>18</sup>

15 Siehe Patrick Eiden-Offe/Moritz Neuffer, Was ist und was will eine kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschriftenforschung?, 19. November 2018, in: ZfL Blog. Blog des Leibniz-Zentrums für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin, <<https://www.zflprojekte.de/zfl-blog/2018/11/19/patrick-eiden-offe-moritz-neuffer-was-ist-und-was-will-kulturwissenschaftliche-zeitschriftenforschung/#more-893>> (2. Juli 2022).

16 Siehe Shila Khasani, Eine Minderheit in der Minderheit. Das politische Engagement der linksorientierten Juden der Frankfurter »Jüdischen Gruppe«, in: Trumah. Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg 14 (2004), 55–74; dies., Oppositionelle Bewegung oder Selbsterfahrungsgruppe? Entstehung und Engagement der Frankfurter Jüdischen Gruppe, in: Susanne Schönborn, Zwischen Erinnerung und Neubeginn. Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte nach 1945, mit einem Vorwort von Michael Brenner, München 2006, 160–177.

17 Zur Teilnehmerzahl siehe Khasani, Eine Minderheit in der Minderheit, 56.

18 Siehe Dan Diner, Im Zeichen des Banns, in: Michael Brenner (Hg.), Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart. Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft, München 2012, 15–66, hier 20–31.



Die Mehrheit der Gruppe hatte ihre Kindheit zudem in der Stadt Frankfurt verbracht und war damit in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren in einem der beiden Zentren des 68er-Protests politisch und intellektuell sozialisiert worden. So kam mit der Gründung von *Babylon* 1986 eine intellektuelle Konstellation zum Vorschein, die auf den bereits 1980 etablierten und an keinem anderen Ort in der Bundesrepublik bestehenden Zusammenschluss von jüdischen Intellektuellen zurückging.

### Frankfurt – amerikanisch, jüdisch, demokratisch

Dass gerade Frankfurt am Main zum Ort einer neuen und selbstbewussten jüdischen Präsenz wurde und damit zur Überwindung der lange Zeit praktizierten Distanz von Juden zur öffentlichen Sphäre der Bundesrepublik beitrug, resultierte – wie es die historische Forschung der letzten Jahre genauer herausgearbeitet hat – aus einer spezifischen Kombination urbaner, wirtschaftlicher und gesellschaftspolitischer Entwicklungen in der Stadt nach 1945.<sup>19</sup> Ein markanter Faktor etwa war die Wahl Frankfurts zum Hauptquartier der amerikanischen Streitkräfte nach dem Krieg. Die Stadt am Main war für die amerikanischen Alliierten aufgrund ihrer Lage und als Verkehrsknotenpunkt kontinentaler Straßen- und Schienenwege sowie wegen des ausbaufähigen Flughafens von überregionaler, ja gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung.<sup>20</sup>

- 19 Siehe im Folgenden in chronologischer Reihenfolge u. a. Rachel Heuberger/Helga Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto. Juden in Frankfurt am Main 1800–1950*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988 (Begleitbuch zur ständigen Ausstellung des Jüdischen Museums der Stadt Frankfurt am Main); Dan Diner, *Juden in Frankfurt – Frankfurter Juden*, in: Thomas Koebner/Erwin Rotermond (Hgg.), *Rückkehr aus dem Exil. Emigranten aus dem Dritten Reich in Deutschland nach 1945. Essays zu Ehren von Ernst Loewy*, Marburg 1990, 107–114; Cilly Kugelmann, *Frankfurter Nachkriegskarrieren*, in: Fritz Backhaus/Raphael Gross/Michael Lenarz (Hgg.), *Ignatz Bubis. Ein jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a. M. 2007, 46–51; Dan Diner, *Skizze zu einer jüdischen Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland nach 1945*, in: *Münchner Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 4 (2010), H. 1, 8–16; Tobias Freimüller, *Frankfurt am Main. Intellektuelles Zentrum jüdischen Lebens in der Bundesrepublik*, in: ebd., 78–89; ders., *Mehr als eine Religionsgemeinschaft. Jüdisches Leben in Frankfurt am Main nach 1945*, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History (Online-Ausgabe)* 7 (2010), H. 3, <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Freimueller-3-2010>> (2. Juli 2022); Helga Krohn, »Es war richtig, wieder anzufangen«. *Juden in Frankfurt am Main seit 1945*, Frankfurt a. M. 2011; Diner, *Im Zeichen des Banns; sowie jüngst erschienen Tobias Freimüller, Frankfurt und die Juden. Neuanfänge und Fremdheitserfahrungen nach 1945*, Göttingen 2020.
- 20 Siehe Wolfgang Klötzer, »Wahrlich eine schöne und lebendige Stadt ...« *Kleine Schriften zur Frankfurter Kulturgeschichte* 1, Frankfurt a. M. 1985, bes. *Frankfurter Geschichte 1920–1970*, 94–108, hier 106.

Durch ihren Ausbau zum Ort der amerikanischen und britischen Bizonenverwaltung gewann sie ab 1947 im Kalten Krieg zudem an symbolischer Bedeutung.<sup>21</sup> Eine unmittelbare Folge der Zusammenführung der Bizonenbehörde war darüber hinaus die Beschleunigung weiterer urbaner Entwicklungen etwa im Bau- und Wirtschaftssektor, die Frankfurt im Vergleich zu anderen im Krieg zerstörten Städten weitaus schneller zur »wiederaufgebaute[n] Stadt« werden ließen.<sup>22</sup>

Wenngleich die Mainmetropole in der Wahl zur bundesrepublikanischen Hauptstadt 1949 gegenüber Bonn das Nachsehen hatte,<sup>23</sup> forcierte der damalige Oberbürgermeister Walter Kolb unmittelbar danach die Entwicklung der Stadt zum internationalen Wirtschafts- und Finanzzentrum. Begünstigt wurde dies durch die im Zuge der Währungsreform 1948 dort gegründete Bank deutscher Länder.<sup>24</sup> Zahlreiche Organisationen, Unternehmen und Verbände wurden in der Folge von der Frankfurt eigenen politischen wie wirtschaftlichen Zentrallage angezogen. Zu ihnen zählten nicht nur Behörden und Unternehmen wie Bundespost und Bundesbahn sowie Interessenverbände wie die IG Metall und der DGB,<sup>25</sup> sondern eben auch eine ganze Reihe von Vertretungen jüdischer (Hilfs-)Organisationen und Interessensgruppen, zu denen das American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (Joint), die United Restitution Organization, die International Restitution Successor Organization (IRSO), die Jewish Agency und der World Jewish Congress gehörten.<sup>26</sup>

Mit den Einrichtungen kamen die Menschen. So waren 1955 der Jurist und Pädagogikgelehrte Berthold Simonsohn sowie der Pädagoge Bertold Scheller beim Umzug der 1951 in Hamburg gegründeten Zentralen Wohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland nach Frankfurt gelangt.<sup>27</sup> Sowohl der KZ-Überlebende Simonsohn als auch der im Jahr 1935 von Berlin nach Palästina emigrierte und 1949 nach Deutschland zurückgekehrte Scheller engagierten sich im politisch linken Milieu Frankfurts.<sup>28</sup> In der Stadt am Main entstand mit den Institutionen und Menschen eine amerikanisch-jüdisch-deutsche Infrastruktur, die der Historiker Frank Stern als »historic

21 Siehe Werner Bendix, *Die Hauptstadt des Wirtschaftswunders. Frankfurt am Main 1945–1956*, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, 82.

22 So der Titel eines 1956 vom Magistrat veröffentlichten Jahresberichts. Zit. nach ebd., 10.

23 Siehe ebd., 133.

24 Siehe ebd., 167–172; Frolinde Balsler, *Aus Trümmern zu einem europäischen Zentrum. Geschichte der Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1945–1989*, Sigmaringen 1995, 131.

25 Siehe Bendix, *Die Hauptstadt des Wirtschaftswunders*, 141.

26 Siehe Freimüller, *Frankfurt und die Juden*, 80.

27 Siehe Wilma Aden-Grossmann, Berthold Simonsohn. *Biographie des jüdischen Sozialpädagogen und Juristen (1912–1978)*, Frankfurt a. M. 2007, hier 198–212.

28 Siehe ebd., 264 und 396–398.

triangel« beschrieb<sup>29</sup> – ein Dreieck aus Zugehörigkeiten, das in der Erfahrungsgeschichte sowie im rechtlichen und sozialen Status der Remigranten seine realhistorische Verkörperung fand, denn nicht selten waren diese alles zugleich: Deutsche, Juden und Amerikaner. Als Juden hatten sie Deutschland verlassen müssen, mit der Erfahrung – und nicht selten auch der Staatsangehörigkeit – des westlichen Exils kehrten sie nun nach Deutschland zurück. Dabei bestimmten bis Anfang der 1950er Jahre insbesondere politische Gründe die Entscheidung zur Rückkehr.<sup>30</sup> Aufrufe seitens der Sozialdemokraten und Kommunisten an die einstigen Genossen im Exil begünstigten den Entschluss – auch, weil damit ein sich neu formierendes sozialpolitisches Netzwerk zu erwarten war.<sup>31</sup> Dabei erwies sich die Stadt am Main als idealer Ort für das Wirken der politisch motivierten Rückkehrer.<sup>32</sup> Zu ihnen gehörten nicht nur ehemalige Stadtbewohner wie Peter Gingold, der 1933 ins französische Exil geflüchtet war, sich dort während der deutschen Besatzung der Résistance angeschlossen hatte und nach 1945 aus Gründen der »Partei-disziplin« wieder nach Frankfurt zurückzog.<sup>33</sup> Auch Joseph und Erna Lang, ehemalige Aktivisten in der Sozialistischen Arbeiterpartei (SAP) in Berlin, die 1938 aufgrund der rassenideologischen Verfolgung in die Vereinigten Staaten geflohen waren, hatten sich gezielt für Frankfurt als Wirkungsraum entschieden – eine Entscheidung, die sie anfänglich von Eindrücken einer politischen Rundreise durch die Bundesrepublik und Westberlin im August 1950 abhängig gemacht hatten.<sup>34</sup> Im Frankfurter Gewerkschaftshaus gründete das Ehepaar Lang eine Buchhandlung, die bald zum Treffpunkt von Gewerkschaftern, Verlegern und Politikern avancierte und weit über Frankfurt

29 Frank Stern, *The Historic Triangle. Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany*, in: *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19 (1990), 47–76.

30 Siehe Michael Brenner, *Nach dem Holocaust. Juden in Deutschland 1945–1950*, München 1995, 196.

31 Siehe Marita Krauss, *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land. Geschichte der Remigration nach 1945*, München 2001, 74; Monika Richarz, *Juden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik seit 1945*, in: Micha Brumlik (Hg.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland seit 1945*, Frankfurt a. M. 1986, 13–30, hier 19.

32 Siehe auch Freimüller, *Frankfurt und die Juden*, 69–72.

33 Peter Gingold im Gespräch mit Tjark Kunstreich am 1. August 2000 in Frankfurt am Main, »Wie kann man da nicht Kommunist sein?« Ein Gespräch mit Peter Gingold über Antisemitismus und Befreiung, in: *Arbeitskreis Kritik des deutschen Antisemitismus* (Hg.), *Antisemitismus – die deutsche Normalität. Geschichte und Wirkungsweise des Vernichtungswahns*, Freiburg i. Br. 2001, 253–271, hier 268.

34 Epilog. Begrüßungsrundbrief von Joseph und Erna Lang an die Freunde und Genossen in der alten Heimat anlässlich ihrer Rückkehr aus den USA. Hamburg, Ende August 1950, in: Helga Grebing (Hg.), *Lehrstücke in Solidarität. Briefe und Biographien deutscher Sozialisten 1945–1949*, Stuttgart 1983, 306 f.

hinaus bekannt wurde.<sup>35</sup> Ferner spielte Joseph Lang bis zu seinem Tod 1973 in der Frankfurter und südhessischen SPD eine maßgebende Rolle.<sup>36</sup>

Neben der politisch begründeten Rückkehr setzte alsbald eine Remigration aus beruflichen, insbesondere akademischen Motiven ein. Diese betraf viele jüdische Juristen, beispielsweise die Frankfurter Rechtsanwältin Erich Cohn-Bendit und Joseph Klibansky. Zurückgekommen aus dem französischen Exil, setzten Cohn-Bendit und Klibansky sich juristisch für die Belange der jüdischen Gemeinde in der Bundesrepublik ein.<sup>37</sup> Auch Schriftsteller, Schauspieler, Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftler, deren Betätigungsfeld in einem stärkeren Maße vom deutschen Sprach- und Literaturraum abhängig war, zog es wieder nach Deutschland im Allgemeinen, nach Frankfurt im Speziellen. Die Emigration einer Vielzahl hervorragender jüdischer Wissenschaftler hatte der Frankfurter Universität zuvor besonders schwer zugesetzt.<sup>38</sup> Anders als bei anderen deutschen Universitäten war die Gründung der Goethe-Universität im Jahr 1914 vor allem auf das Engagement jüdischer Stifter zurückgegangen, die sich an der Universitätspolitik auch insofern beteiligten, als sie sich gegen die damals verbreitete Praxis des Ausschlusses jüdischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler von Hochschulen einsetzten.<sup>39</sup> Im Nationalsozialismus jedoch entließ die Goethe-Universität aus rassenideologischen Gründen fast ein Drittel ihrer Ordinarien.<sup>40</sup> Als die Hochschule im Februar 1946 wiedereröffnet wurde, zog es einige an ihre Alma Mater zurück, etwa den zum Protestantismus übergetretenen und 1934 nach Indien geflohenen Dermatologen Oscar Gans, der bereits im Oktober 1945 vom Dekan der Medizinischen Fakultät um Rückkehr gebeten worden

35 Siehe Biografien in alphabetischer Reihenfolge, in: Grebing (Hg.), *Lehrstücke in Solidarität*, 311–384, hier 350 f.

36 Siehe ebd.

37 Zu Klibansky siehe Monica Kingreen, *Zurück nach Frankfurt. Rückkehr aus dem Exil in die Stadt am Main*, in: Irmela von der Lühe/Axel Schildt/Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Hgg.), »Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht wirklich zu Hause«. *Jüdische Remigration nach 1945*, Göttingen 2008, 121–143, hier 136 f.

38 Eine biografische Übersicht jüdischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler der Universität Frankfurt findet sich bei Renate Heuer/Siegbert Wolf (Hgg.), *Die Juden der Frankfurter Universität*, Frankfurt a. M. 1997; zur Zwangsentlassung akademischen Personals aus der Universität siehe Asta der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt (Hg.), *Die braune Machtergreifung. Universität Frankfurt 1930–1945*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989.

39 Siehe Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Intellektuellendämmerung. Zur Lage der Frankfurter Intelligenz in den zwanziger Jahren*. Die Universität. Das Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus. Die Frankfurter Zeitung. Radio Frankfurt. Der Goethe-Preis und Sigmund Freud. Das Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt a. M. 1982, 17–32; Simone Lässig, *Mäzenatisches Handeln und politische Bürgerlichkeit. Zur politischen und sozialen Dimension der kulturellen Praxis von Juden und anderen Bürgern in den Kommunen des deutschen Kaiserreichs*, in: *Jahrbuch zur Liberalismus-Forschung* 13 (2001), 75–112.

40 Siehe Kingreen, *Zurück nach Frankfurt*, 129.

war.<sup>41</sup> Auch die Soziologen Julius Kraft und Gottfried Salomon-Delatour kamen in den Fünfzigerjahren in ihre Heimat zurück. Kraft durfte wieder ein professorales Amt bekleiden, Salomon-Delatour jedoch – inzwischen Emeritus – musste sich seine ihm zustehenden Ruhestandsbezüge vor Gericht erkämpfen.<sup>42</sup> Zu den bekanntesten remigrierten Akademikern zählten fraglos Max Horkheimer und Theodor W. Adorno, die gemeinsam mit ihrem 1923 in Frankfurt gegründeten Institut für Sozialforschung ab 1950 zurückkamen – wenngleich letztlich die prekären Verhältnisse des Instituts in den Vereinigten Staaten Horkheimer zu dieser Entscheidung gedrängt hatten.<sup>43</sup> Horkheimer und Oskar Gans sowie Fritz Neumark, ein aus der Türkei zurückgekehrter Finanzwissenschaftler, bekleideten in den Folgejahren jeweils das Rektorenamt.<sup>44</sup>

In der historischen Forschung ist die politische Bedeutung von Remigranten für die Bundesrepublik bereits in zahlreichen Studien hervorgehoben worden. Sie leisteten einen Beitrag zur verfassungspolitischen »Neuordnung« Deutschlands nach 1945,<sup>45</sup> bewirkten das »Demokratiewunder«<sup>46</sup> und beschleunigten durch Exilerfahrung und Ideentransfer den Prozess der »Westernisierung«, also die Herausbildung einer westlichen Wertegemeinschaft in der Bundesrepublik.<sup>47</sup> Der Minderheit von Rückkehrern jüdischer Herkunft wird zudem ein herausragender Beitrag zur »intellektuellen Gründung der Bundesrepublik« zugeschrieben.<sup>48</sup> Zuletzt hat Jürgen Habermas 2012 in einem Interview die Bedeutung der Sozialtheoretiker Horkheimer und Adorno, die als Juden im Sinne einer »historischen Zugehörigkeit zu

41 Siehe ebd., 129.

42 Siehe ebd., 130.

43 Siehe Eva-Maria Ziege, Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie. Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil, Frankfurt a. M. 2009, 25; zum Gesamtvorgang der Rückkehr siehe v. a. Monika Boll/Raphael Gross (Hgg.), Die Frankfurter Schule und Frankfurt. Eine Rückkehr nach Deutschland (Ausstellungskatalog), Göttingen 2009.

44 Zu Neumark siehe Kingreen, Zurück nach Frankfurt, 128.

45 Siehe Claus-Dieter Krohn/Martin Schumacher (Hgg.), Exil und Neuordnung. Beiträge zur verfassungspolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland nach 1945, Düsseldorf 2000.

46 Siehe Arnd Bauerkämper/Konrad H. Jarausch/Marcus M. Payk (Hgg.), Demokratiewunder. Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945–1970, Göttingen 2005.

47 Siehe Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 1999, 12–14.

48 Siehe Clemens Albrecht u. a., Die intellektuelle Gründung der Bundesrepublik. Eine Wirkungsgeschichte der Frankfurter Schule, Frankfurt a. M./New York 1999; Micha Brumlik, Ende und Neubeginn des deutschen Judentums, in: ders./Steffen Wagemann (Hgg.), Autoritäres Erbe und Demokratisierung der politischen Kultur. Festschrift für Hajo Funke, Berlin 2010, 145–158, hier 146.

einer Schicksalsgemeinschaft« zurückgekehrt seien, für den Demokratisierungsprozess der Gesellschaft apostrophiert.<sup>49</sup>

Tatsächlich lässt sich für die Stadt Frankfurt bereits vor 1933 eine tiefgreifende demokratische Tradition konstatieren, die mit der Herkunft und Wirkung ihrer jüdischen Bewohner in historischem Zusammenhang steht. Wie kein zweites Symbol erinnert die Paulskirche als Wahrzeichen der Demokratie an diese in Frankfurt entstandene und von Frankfurt ausgehende liberale Tradition.<sup>50</sup> Von Anfang an wurden diese Tendenzen insbesondere vom jüdischen Bevölkerungsteil der Stadt unterstützt, der im Jahr 1933 bei 4,7 Prozent lag – in Berlin betrug er seinerzeit 3,8 Prozent.<sup>51</sup> Jüdische Stifter und Mäzene verliehen ihrer Verbundenheit mit der Heimatstadt durch zahlreiche Schenkungen und den Einsatz für den Aufbau öffentlicher Sozial- und Kultureinrichtungen Ausdruck.<sup>52</sup> Die Machtübergabe an die Nationalsozialisten schließlich, die in Frankfurt vergleichsweise spät,<sup>53</sup> jedoch mit rigoroser Konsequenz erfolgte, hatte die Zerstörung dieser demokratischen wie auch jüdischen Tradition der Stadt zur Folge.<sup>54</sup> Als der sozialdemokratische Oberbürgermeister Walter Kolb nach 1946 die Regierungsgeschäfte übernahm, war er in den ersten »drei wilden Jahren« nach dem Krieg daher besonders darum bemüht, an das Stadtimage Frankfurts vor 1933 anzuknüpfen.<sup>55</sup> Neben dem Wiederaufbau der Paulskirche, den er trotz anderer infrastruktureller Brennpunkte forcierte,<sup>56</sup> richtete er als erster und einziger Oberbürgermeister in der Bundesrepublik noch zum Jahreswechsel 1946/47 einen Appell an die im Exil lebenden jüdischen Bürgerinnen und Bürger Frankfurts, in ihre Stadt zurückzukehren.<sup>57</sup> Nicht viele ehemalige Frank-

49 »Jeder von den Emigranten konnte nach 1945 nur als Jude zurückkommen!« Jürgen Habermas im Gespräch mit Rachel Salamander, in: Münchner Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur 6 (2012), H. 1, 7–18, hier 15.

50 Siehe Evelyn Hils-Brockhoff/Sabine Hock, Die Paulskirche. Symbol demokratischer Freiheit und nationaler Einheit, hg. im Auftrag des Dezernats für Kultur und Freizeit, Amt für Wissenschaft und Kunst der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, Institut für Stadtgeschichte und der Frankfurter Sparkasse, Frankfurt a. M. 1998.

51 Siehe Brita Eckert, Jüdische Emigration aus Deutschland 1933 bis 1941. Die Geschichte einer Austreibung (Ausstellungskatalog), Frankfurt a. M. 1985, 5.

52 Siehe Lässig, Mäzenatisches Handeln und politische Bürgerlichkeit, 110.

53 Siehe Inge Schlotzhauer, Ideologie und Organisation des politischen Antisemitismus in Frankfurt am Main 1880–1914, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, 299.

54 Siehe Heike Drummer, »... dem Wahren, Schönen und Guten zu dienen«. Friedrich Krebs (1894–1961). Oberbürgermeister in der NS-Zeit, in: Archiv für Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst 73 (2012), 195–222, hier 210; siehe Heuberger/Krohn, Hinaus aus dem Ghetto, 172 und 179.

55 Siehe Madlen Lorei/Richard Krin, Frankfurt und die drei wilden Jahre, Darmstadt 1989.

56 Siehe Balsler, Aus Trümmern zu einem europäischen Zentrum, 87.

57 Siehe Krohn, »Es war richtig, wieder anzufangen«, 63; Kingreen, Zurück nach Frankfurt, 128.

furter folgten seinem Aufruf. Diejenigen, die sich dafür entschieden, wie etwa der einstige Stadtverordnete Friedrich Dessauer, erklärten dies mit der nach dem Krieg aufscheinenden »Atmosphäre« in Frankfurt, die zu ihrer »alten, gutartigen, bürgerlichen Tradition« strebe.<sup>58</sup> Dieser stete Rekurs auf eine vorherrschende jüdische wie demokratische (Vorkriegs-)Tradition kam schließlich auch in dem einvernehmlichen Beschluss des Stadtparlaments vom 27. September 1956 zum Ausdruck, in dem die Rückerstattung von entzogenem jüdischen Vermögen bestimmt wurde.<sup>59</sup>

Mitte der 1950er Jahre war die Frankfurter Jüdische Gemeinde im Vergleich zu anderen Gemeinden in Deutschland finanziell und materiell besser ausgestattet.<sup>60</sup> Durch rückerstattete Gemeindeliegenschaften wie auch durch Schadenersatzleistungen konnten die religiösen, sozialen und kulturellen Aktivitäten ausgebaut werden, die durch den raschen Anstieg der Mitgliederzahl – auch unter dem Einfluss des im Juni 1956 verabschiedeten Bundesentschädigungsgesetzes hatte sich die Frankfurter Jüdische Gemeinde bis Ende 1958 nahezu verdoppelt – dringend benötigt wurden.<sup>61</sup> Die Rechtsgrundlage einer finanziellen Entschädigung führte zur Remigration vieler Familien, die Frankfurt ganz bewusst als neuen Lebensmittelpunkt wählten.<sup>62</sup>

Wie kaum eine andere Stadt in Deutschland war die Mainmetropole damit gleich nach 1945 von einer Diversität jüdischer Lebens- und Schicksalsverläufe gekennzeichnet, denen die sich herausbildende städtische Infrastruktur viele Berührungspunkte bot. So wirkten die politisch motivierten Remigranten nicht zwangsläufig auch in jüdischen Räumen, wie etwa der Jüdischen Gemeinde, doch transformierten sie in der Wahrnehmung der nachwachsenden Generation von Juden den Raum Frankfurt allein durch ihre Präsenz und ihren Verkehr zu einem jüdischen Ort: »[A]uf der großen Drehscheibe Frankfurt«, so der Historiker Dan Diner in einem Zeitzeugengespräch aus dem Jahr 1999, ließen sich »Anwälte, Intellektuelle, Journalisten, Politiker« als Juden nieder.<sup>63</sup> In seiner wissenschaftlichen, von autobiografischen Er-

58 Zit. nach Balsler, *Aus Trümmern zu einem europäischen Zentrum*, 61 f.

59 Siehe ebd., 162–164; Krohn, »Es war richtig, wieder anzufangen«, 90 f.

60 Siehe Krohn, »Es war richtig, wieder anzufangen«, 96.

61 Siehe Wolf-Arno Kropat, *Jüdische Gemeinden, Wiedergutmachung, Rechtsradikalismus und Antisemitismus nach 1945*, in: *Neunhundert Jahre Geschichte der Juden in Hessen. Beiträge zum politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben*, hg. von Christiane Heinemann im Auftrag der Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, Wiesbaden 1983, 447–508, hier 457.

62 Siehe z. B. Dan Diner, »Man hat mit der Sache eigentlich nichts mehr zu tun«, in: Richard Chaim Schneider (Hg.), *Wir sind da. Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis heute*, Berlin 2000, 233–252, hier 245; Dina Stein, *Zwischen allen Stühlen*, in: Cilly Kugelmann/Hanno Loewy (Hgg.), *So einfach war das. Jüdische Kindheit und Jugend in Deutschland seit 1945*, Köln 2002, 82–88, hier 82.

63 Siehe Diner, »Man hat mit der Sache eigentlich nichts mehr zu tun«, 244.

fahrungen durchdrungenen Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte Frankfurts verweist er immer wieder auf die Herausbildung eines politisch-kulturellen Milieus in der Stadt, das jüdisch bestimmt war und eine bestimmte Ausstrahlungs- und Integrationskraft auf die jüdischen Heranwachsenden ausübte.<sup>64</sup> Während von den Eltern der neuen Generation jedweder persönlicher Kontakt zur deutschen Mehrheitsgesellschaft vermieden und verboten wurde, kamen mit den Remigranten in Frankfurt nun Jüdinnen und Juden zum Vorschein, die mit diesem Bann gebrochen hatten.<sup>65</sup> Sie hatten für sich einen »neutralen Boden« gefunden, auf dem sie ihre historische Herkunft gegen eine geschichtsphilosophische Zukunft einzutauschen hofften.<sup>66</sup> Dies war gleichsam der Versuch, die objektive Last jüdischen Daseins im Land der Täter durch die Funktionalität beruflichen Engagements zu überwinden oder doch zu mildern: Nicht als Juden, sondern als Politiker, Akademiker oder Demokratievermittler kehrten sie zurück.

### Im Land der Täter – Zukunft als Frage nach der Gestalt

Die Judenheiten außerhalb Deutschlands hatten einer Zukunft jüdischen Lebens im Nachfolgestaat des Nationalsozialismus zwar eine klare Absage erteilt. Spätestens jedoch mit dem ersten Bemühen um einen Wiederaufbau der Nachkriegsgemeinde – die sich dezidiert nicht als Auflösungseinrichtung verstand – sah sich zumindest eine kleine Zahl deutscher Jüdinnen und Juden gewillt zu bleiben. Im Rechtsstreit mit der 1948 in der amerikanischen Zone gegründeten Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) hatten sie sich konsequent darum bemüht, rhetorisch an die Arbeit und Traditionen der Vorkriegsgemeinde anzuknüpfen, um so ihren Status als in Deutschland wiedererweckte jüdische Institution zu rechtfertigen.<sup>67</sup> Die amerikanische Militärregierung hatte der JRSO die Aufgabe zugesprochen, das herrenlose jüdische Vermögen in Deutschland allen Juden in der Welt zugute kommen zu lassen. Die Frankfurter Jüdische Gemeinde konnte 1954 mit der JRSO einen Vergleich verabreden, dem zufolge einige Liegenschaften in den Gemeindebesitz übergangen und die Gemeinde damit inoffizielle Anerkennung

64 Siehe ebd., 243 f; ferner ders., *Im Zeichen des Banns*, 46–49.

65 Zum Begriff des »Banns« siehe ders., *Im Zeichen des Banns*, 46–49; ferner ders., *Skizze zu einer jüdischen Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland nach 1945*.

66 Zur Bezeichnung des »neutralen Bodens« siehe ders., »Man hat mit der Sache eigentlich nichts mehr zu tun«, 243.

67 Siehe Alon Tauber, *Zwischen Kontinuität und Neuanfang. Die Entstehung der jüdischen Nachkriegsgemeinde in Frankfurt am Main 1945–1949*, Wiesbaden 2008, 144.



erlangte.<sup>68</sup> Ohnehin hatte sich zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits gezeigt, dass dem wiederholten eindringlichen Aufruf an die in Deutschland verbliebenen Juden, das »blutgetränkte« Land schnellstmöglich zu verlassen, nicht alle nachkamen.<sup>69</sup> Wenngleich die Staatsgründung Israels sowie die Lockerung der amerikanischen Einreisebestimmungen zur Auswanderung eines Großteils der jüdischen Displaced Persons (DPs) geführt hatten, verblieb ein kleiner »harter Kern« aus gesundheitlichen oder ökonomischen Erwägungen in Deutschland.<sup>70</sup> In Frankfurt fusionierte bald darauf die Jüdische Gemeinde mit der Vertreterorganisation der jüdischen DPs, dem Committee of Liberated Jews. Letzteres hatte bis zu seiner Auflösung im Jahr 1949 die jüdischen Bewohnerinnen und Bewohner des DP-Camps Zeilsheim nicht nur politisch vertreten, sondern sich um die Verteilung von Hilfsgütern gekümmert, die vom Joint bereitgestellt worden waren.<sup>71</sup>

Mit der Vereinigung änderte sich die Gemeindefunktion erheblich: Deutsche Mitglieder, die die Führungspositionen innehatten, waren in der Minderheit, während die breite Mehrheit nunmehr einen osteuropäisch-jüdischen Hintergrund hatte.<sup>72</sup> In dieser neuen institutionellen Konstellation drängte sich zunehmend die Frage nach der Zukunft jüdischen Lebens auf – verhandelt etwa am Thema Erziehung der jungen Generation, das mit dem Heranwachsen der in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit geborenen »Babyboomer« umso dringlicher wurde.<sup>73</sup> Neben Religionsunterricht und der Initiierung von Jugendvereinen wurden deshalb in den Jahren 1958 bis 1962 in den Großgemeinden Westdeutschlands neue Jugendzentren ins Leben gerufen. Diese hatten in erster Linie den Zweck, »der jüdischen Jugend ein eigenes attrak-

68 Siehe Krohn, »Es war richtig, wieder anzufangen«, 90.

69 Siehe Anthony D. Kauders, *Unmögliche Heimat. Eine deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, München 2007, 47 f.

70 Atina Grossmann/Tamar Lewinsky, *Erster Teil: 1945–1949. Zwischenstation*, in: Brenner (Hg.), *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, 67–152, hier 150 f.

71 Siehe Jacqueline Giere, *Einleitung*, in: *Überlebt und unterwegs. Jüdische Displaced Persons im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, hg. vom Fritz Bauer Institut, Frankfurt a. M./New York 1997, 13–26, hier 19.

72 So hielt der Gemeindefunktionär Paul Arnsberg in seinem dreibändigen Werk zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden zum Ende fest, dass es »unter den etwas mehr als 5 000 Juden, die sich jetzt in Frankfurt befinden, [...] kaum noch deutsche Juden [gibt]. [...] Bei den Mitgliedern der ›vierten‹ Jüdischen Gemeinde in Frankfurt handelt es sich um DPs, Flüchtlinge aus den Lagern und dem kommunistisch gewordenen Osten [...]. Keineswegs handelt es sich um ›deutsche‹ Juden«. Siehe Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution*, 3 Bde., Darmstadt 1983, hier Bd. 2: *Struktur und Aktivitäten der Frankfurter Juden von 1789 bis zu deren Vernichtung in der nationalsozialistischen Ära*, 488.

73 Zum »Babyboom« siehe Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton, N. J., 2007, 184–235.

tives Freizeitheim zu geben, um sie davon abzuhalten, den Attraktionen der Umwelt zu folgen«. <sup>74</sup>

Ab 1959 wurden in den größeren jüdischen Gemeinden auch Ortsgruppen der Zionistischen Jugend in Deutschland (ZJD) gegründet. <sup>75</sup> Zentral für die Jugendarbeit sowohl in der ZJD als auch in den Jugendzentren gestaltete sich das Thema Israel, auch deshalb, weil viele Erzieher der Jugendprogramme von dort angefordert wurden. <sup>76</sup> Diese israelorientierte Erziehung hatte die Einwanderung in den jüdischen Staat (Alija) zum Ziel <sup>77</sup> und beeinflusste die Entscheidungen vieler in Frankfurt heranwachsender Jugendlicher. Nach dem Abschluss der Schule oder des Studiums sahen viele ihre Zukunft im jüdischen Staat, so zum Beispiel auch Cilly Kugelmann, die ihre Nachmittage gern in der Zionistischen Jugend in Frankfurt verbrachte, wo sie regelmäßig ihren Jugendfreunden Micha Brumlik, Doron Kiesel und anderen begegnete. Alle drei verließen ab Mitte der 1960er Jahre Deutschland. <sup>78</sup> Später, im Frühjahr 1980, sollten sich ihre Wege in der Jüdischen Gruppe in Frankfurt erneut kreuzen. <sup>79</sup> Ihre Entscheidungen für Israel resultierten jedoch nicht nur aus ihrer zionistischen Überzeugung. Insbesondere die antiisraelische Rhetorik und Agitation in der studentischen Neuen Linken, die seit dem Junikrieg von 1967 an Universitäten und in einer weiteren Öffentlichkeit dominierte, bestärkte viele in ihrem Vorhaben, Deutschland hinter sich zu lassen. <sup>80</sup> Dabei hatte das seit Anfang der 1960er Jahre erstarkende linke Milieu ihnen Türen in die deutsche Mehrheitsgesellschaft geöffnet, die für die Elterngeneration aufgrund von Vertreibung und Verfolgung durch die Deutschen verschlossen geblieben waren. So wurde etwa mit der Gründung des Club Voltaire in Frankfurt 1963 ein Raum geschaffen, in dem – programmatisch an die Idee der Aufklärung anknüpfend – eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den politischen Entwicklungen in Deutsch-

74 Walter W. Jacob Oppenheimer, *Jüdische Jugend in Deutschland*, München 1967, 66.

75 Ebd., 67.

76 Ebd.

77 Siehe Ari Lipinski, *Die Arbeit der Zionistischen Jugend in Deutschland*, in: Ellen Presser/Bernhard Schoßig (Hgg.), *Junge Juden in Deutschland. Protokoll einer Tagung*, München 1991, 69–78, hier 73.

78 Kugelmann und Brumlik gaben ferner die zionistische Jugendzeitschrift *Meorot* heraus, in der Erfahrungsberichte von Ferienfahrten, Kommentare und sonstige Beiträge der aktiven Jugendlichen veröffentlicht wurden.

79 Siehe Micha Brumlik, *Kein Weg als Deutscher und Jude. Eine bundesrepublikanische Erfahrung*, München 1996, 132.

80 So beispielsweise Brumlik, siehe ebd., 57. Zum Verhältnis der Neuen Linken zu Israel siehe u. a. Jeffrey Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel. East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967–1989*, Cambridge 2015; Zur politischen Entwicklung in Frankfurt nach 1967 siehe Zarin Aschrafi, *Der Nahe Osten im Frankfurter Westend. Politische Akteure im Deutungskonflikt (1967–1972)*, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History (Online-Ausgabe)* 16 (2019), H. 3, <<https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2019/5789>> (2. Juli 2022).

land und der Welt gesucht wurde.<sup>81</sup> Es waren junge Menschen, die – von Vertretern der alten Arbeiterbewegung unterstützt – die »Zeit an ihrer Seite« sahen und umfassende gesellschaftliche Veränderungen einforderten.<sup>82</sup> Ihr optimistisches Lebensgefühl unterstrichen sie nicht selten durch ein nonkonformistisches Erscheinungsbild.<sup>83</sup> Hinter den Türen des halb verborgenen, aber unheimlich populären Club Voltaire entstanden ein politischer Diskursraum und ein kultureller Aufbruch, die von den Vorträgen und Debatten ihrer – eben auch zahlreichen jüdischen – Gastredner inspiriert wurden und in der Chiffre 1968 schließlich ihre politische Wirkung entfalteten.<sup>84</sup> Es war eine Opposition, mit der sich junge Juden identifizieren konnten: Im Club Voltaire akkulturierten sie sich nicht nur; hier verlor ihre Zugehörigkeit zu den jüdischen Dagebliebenen und Rückkehrern ihre politische Brisanz.<sup>85</sup> Der Raum ermöglichte ihnen einen Übergang vom »Jüdischen ins Allgemeine«.<sup>86</sup>

Dass diese Identifikation nicht bruchlos blieb, zeigte sich spätestens ab Sommer 1967 in den antizionistischen Deutungen im Zuge des Junikrieges. Denn die seit Beginn der 1960er Jahre weitverbreitete Rezeption marxistischer und revolutionärer Ideen und Theorien führte zu einer monokausalen Integration des Palästina-Konflikts in ein ideologisches Interpretationskorsett, wonach die Lösung in der »Befreiung der Palästinenser« lag. Anklang fand diese Deutung insbesondere bei der studentischen Linken.<sup>87</sup> In ihrer rigorosen Forderung erhielten die deutschen Studierenden moralische Unterstützung von israelischen Linken.<sup>88</sup> Mit Dina Stein und Maya Cohen hatte der

81 Zum Selbstverständnis und politischen Wirken des Frankfurter Club Voltaire siehe Zarin Aschrafi, Aufklärende Gegenöffentlichkeit und politische Konversionen. Der Frankfurter Club Voltaire in den 1960er Jahren, in: Dennis Göttel/Christina Wessely (Hgg.), Im Vorraum. Lebenswelten Kritischer Theorie um 1969, Berlin 2019, 161–180.

82 »Time is on my side« hieß auch eine im Jahr 1964 veröffentlichte Single der britischen Band The Rolling Stones.

83 Siehe hierzu v. a. Detlef Siegfried, Time is on My Side. Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre, Göttingen 2006; ferner Reichardt, Authentizität und Gemeinschaft.

84 Siehe Aschrafi, Aufklärende Gegenöffentlichkeit und politische Konversionen, 171–173.

85 Ebd.

86 Dan Diner, 1968 – Club Voltaire. Vortrag im Rahmen der Ringvorlesung »Jüdische Erinnerungsorte in Frankfurt am Main. Juden in der Frankfurter Stadtgeschichte«, Johann Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität, 11. Juni 2008, zit. nach Freimüller, Mehr als eine Religionsgemeinschaft (Onlineausgabe).

87 Siehe u. a. Herf, Undeclared Wars with Israel; Martin Kloke, Israel und die deutsche Linke. Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses, Frankfurt a. M. 1994; ders., Resentiment und Heldenmythos. Das »Palästinenserbild« in der deutschen Linkspresse, in: Reinhard Renger (Hg.), Die deutsche »Linke« und der Staat Israel, Leipzig 1994, 47–75.

88 Siehe Dan Diner, Täuschungen. Israel, die Linke und das Dilemma der Kritik, in: Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hg.), Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946–1995, 3 Bde., Frankfurt a. M. 1998, hier Bd. 3: Aufsätze und Kommentare, Register, 187–194.

SDS auch Mitglieder der radikal-sozialistischen israelischen Gruppe Matzpen in seinen Reihen. Als Vertreterinnen der »jüdischen Gruppe« im SDS – so die von den Genossen gewählte Bezeichnung<sup>89</sup> – gehörten die Ende der 1950er beziehungsweise Mitte der 1960er Jahre nach Frankfurt gezogenen Stein und Cohen zu den schärfsten Kritikerinnen der israelischen Politik.<sup>90</sup> Von ihrer Forderung nach einer sozialistischen Umwälzung im Nahen Osten versprachen sie sich eine gemeinsame Zukunft von Arabern und Juden in der Region. Ab 1969 arbeiteten sie auch mit der nationalistisch geprägten, der Fatah nahestehenden palästinensischen Studentengruppierung GUPS in Frankfurt zusammen – eine Kooperation, für die das Scheitern einer von jüdischen Studierenden organisierten Veranstaltung mit dem israelischen Botschafter Asher Ben-Natan im Juni 1969 im Frankfurter Hörsaal VI exemplarisch steht.<sup>91</sup> Jedoch ging es ihnen bei ihrer Kritik an der israelischen Politik – anders als der GUPS – keineswegs um eine Infragestellung des Existenzrechtes der israelischen Juden in der Region.<sup>92</sup> Die Forderung von Fatah und PLO nach einem ausschließlich palästinensischen Staat, die Ende der 1960er Jahre zudem mit einer interreligiösen Vision des Zusammenlebens von Muslimen, Christen und Juden verbunden wurde, stand ihren politischen Vorstellungen geradezu entgegen.<sup>93</sup> Und doch stieß ihre politische Aktivität in Frankfurt bei anderen, ebenfalls politisch links stehenden jungen Juden auf Missfallen.

Im Gegensatz zu ihren deutschen und israelischen Kommilitonen stellte der Zionismus für die in Deutschland sozialisierten Juden, zu denen neben Dan Diner, die Medizinstudenten Heschi Rotmensch und Marek Glezerman sowie Georg Heuberger, der spätere erste Direktor des Jüdischen Museums in Frankfurt, gehörten, seinerzeit keineswegs eine Ideologie der Unterdrückung dar. Als Vertreter des 1968 gegründeten Bundesverbands jüdischer Studenten in Deutschland hielten sie im Rekurs auf Ideen des zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts aus dem östlichen Europa stammenden Theoretikers Ber Borochov dagegen, dass der Zionismus als eine Befreiungsbewegung des jüdischen Volkes betrachtet werden müsse. Wenige Monate nach der verhinderten Veranstaltung im Hörsaal VI mit Ben-Natan, im September 1969, gründeten die Befürworter dieser Position schließlich einen nach Borochov benannten Verlag, in dem sie einen Neudruck von dessen erster Schrift *Die*

89 Siehe APO-Archiv, Freie Universität Berlin, Nachlass Heide Berndt, 68er-Buch, Maya und Volkhart Mosler im Gespräch mit Heide Berndt, 31. August 1996.

90 Siehe ebd. sowie Stein, *Zwischen allen Stühlen*.

91 Zur historischen Bedeutung der Veranstaltung im Hörsaal VI mit Ben-Natan siehe Aschrafi, *Der Nahe Osten im Frankfurter Westend*.

92 Siehe Diner, *Täuschungen*, 192.

93 Siehe ebd.; ferner Lutz Fiedler, *Matzpen. Eine andere israelische Geschichte*, Göttingen/Bristol, Conn., 2017, 211 f.

*Grundlagen des Poalezionismus* von 1906 publizierten.<sup>94</sup> Mehr noch als theoretische Intervention stand die Rezeption sozialistisch-zionistischer Ideen Ende der 1960er Jahre in Zusammenhang mit einer Suchbewegung junger Jüdinnen und Juden in Deutschland, die in der Frage nach der »jüdischen Identität« zum Ausdruck kam. Dies lässt sich exemplarisch in den zwischen 1970 und 1972 erschienenen Ausgaben der Berliner Jugendzeitschrift *Shalom* erkennen, die in ihren Themenheften zur »Jüdischen Identität« vielfach die sogenannte »Judenfrage« aufgriff und in diesem Kontext Texte von Karl Marx, Karl Kautsky, Joseph Stalin, Jean Paul Sartre, Abraham Leon und dem genannten Ber Borochov abdruckte.<sup>95</sup> Die Suche nach einem jüdischen Selbstverständnis eröffnete Diner, Rotmensch, Glezerman und Heuberger die Möglichkeit einer Migration nach Israel als Konsequenz ihrer zionistischen Ideale. Die vier Borochov-Rezipienten verließen nach Beendigung ihres Studiums beziehungsweise ihrer Promotion Anfang der 1970er Jahre die Bundesrepublik.<sup>96</sup>

### Konflikt durch Integration – Integration durch Konflikt

Wenngleich der Zionismus von Kugelman, Brumlik und Kiesel einerseits und der von Diner, Rotmensch, Glezerman und Heuberger andererseits eine differierende theoretische Provenienz aufwies, glichen sich ihre Israel-Erfahrungen in einem Punkt: Ihre zionistische Erwartungshaltung wurde alsbald von der israelischen Realität eingeholt. Etwa 80 Prozent der nach Israel migrierten jungen Juden aus Frankfurt kehrten nach wenigen Jahren wieder an den Main zurück, erinnerte sich Doron Kiesel 1992.<sup>97</sup>

Zu ihnen zählten neben Kiesel auch Kugelman, Brumlik und Diner. Während Brumlik sich im Zuge seines Studiums an der Hebräischen Universität in Jerusalem durch den Kontakt zu Matzpen zionismuskritischen Vorstellun-

94 Siehe Fiedler, Matzpen, 355; Ber Borochov, *Die Grundlagen des Poalezionismus*, Frankfurt a. M. 1969.

95 Siehe die Ausgaben der Berliner Zeitschrift *Shalom-Dialog* 18/19 (1970) sowie 20/21 (1972).

96 Zu Glezerman siehe Wechsel im Gemeinderat, in: *Frankfurter Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, Dezember 1972, 10. Zu Rotmensch siehe Interview der Verfasserin mit Heschi Rotmensch, Tel Aviv, 21. August 2018; zu Heuberger siehe Georg Heuberger zum Direktor des Jüdischen Museums ernannt, in: *Frankfurter Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, Dezember 1985, 7. Zu Diner siehe Interview der Verfasserin mit Dan Diner, Jerusalem, 6. September 2018.

97 Siehe Gerd Mattenklott, *Über Juden in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a. M. 1992, hier 147.

gen annäherte,<sup>98</sup> vollzog sich Diners Distanz zum Zionismus in einem »langandauernde[n] und bittere[n] Prozess«. Sie kulminierte in der Erfahrung als Soldat im Jom-Kippur-Krieg von 1973.<sup>99</sup> Bei einer Patrouille im besetzten Westjordanland sei in ihm – wie er 1980 retrospektiv festhielt – die »intellektuelle Erkenntnis« gereift, dass Zionismus nicht als eine »bloße Form ideologischer Rechtfertigung des jüdischen Staates« verstanden werden könne, sondern auch eine Art »materieller Gewalt« sei.<sup>100</sup> Auch bei Brumlik setzte eine politische Desillusionierung ein, die dazu führte, dass er 1969, nach seiner Wiederankunft in Frankfurt, politisch ein Suchender blieb und sich bei divergierenden linken Gruppierungen um ideologischen Anschluss bemühte.<sup>101</sup> Im Sozialistischen Büro (SB), das 1969 in Offenbach gegründet worden war, fand er Mitte der 1970er Jahre schließlich eine politische Heimat. Das SB entdeckte auch Diner für sich, nachdem er Israel nach dem Krieg von 1973 wieder verlassen hatte.<sup>102</sup> Beide engagierten sich in der Redaktion der Zeitschrift *links*, wo sie sich – auch vor dem Hintergrund eines gemeinsamen sozialistisch-politischen Erwartungshorizonts – anfreundeten und fortan zusammenarbeiteten. Das in der historischen Forschung bislang wenig untersuchte SB verkörperte seinerzeit eine Art Kommunikationsplattform für undogmatische Linke. In den 1970er und 1980er Jahren bildete es fraglos eine der wirkmächtigsten Organisationen für die Linke in der Bundesrepublik.<sup>103</sup> Dies belegen etwa die von dem Büro ausgerichteten politischen Kongresse, zu denen Tausende Menschen kamen, um Vorträge prominenter linker Persönlichkeiten zu hören.<sup>104</sup> Das SB griff überwiegend innenpolitische Themen auf; außenpolitische Kontroversen wurden dagegen in Arbeitskreisen wie in dem Mitte der Siebzigerjahre gegründeten AK Internationalismus diskutiert. Im Gegensatz zu den damaligen K-Gruppen habe dieser versucht, internationale Konflikte jenseits der antiimperialistischen Deutungsschablone zu verstehen, erinnert sich der Adorno-Schüler Detlev Claussen.<sup>105</sup> Damit schuf

98 Siehe Micha Brumlik, Kompass einer Jugend, in: taz.de, 5. Juli 2017, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20170705085405/https://taz.de/Archiv-Suche!/5422877/>> (2. Juli 2022).

99 Dan Diner, Fragmente von unterwegs. Über jüdische und politische Identität in Deutschland, in: *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 51 (1983), 5–15, hier 15. Zuerst erschienen als ders., Fragmente von unterwegs. Über jüdische Sozialisation und politische Identität in Deutschland, in: *Autonomie. Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft* 14 (1979), 52–57.

100 Siehe ebd.

101 Siehe Brumlik, Kein Weg als Deutscher und Jude, 91 f.

102 Siehe ebd., 116 f.

103 Siehe Silke Mende, »Nicht rechts, nicht links, sondern vorn«. Eine Geschichte der Gründungsgrünen, München 2011, 172–180.

104 Siehe Gottfried Oy, Spurensuche Neue Linke. Das Beispiel des Sozialistischen Büros und seiner Zeitschrift »links«. *Sozialistische Zeitung* (1969 bis 1997), <[https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls\\_uploads/pdfs/Policy\\_Paper/Papers\\_Spurensuche.pdf](https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/Policy_Paper/Papers_Spurensuche.pdf)> (2. Juli 2022).

105 Siehe Interview der Verfasserin mit Detlev Claussen, Frankfurt am Main, 4. Mai 2017.

das SB für viele linke Aktivistinnen und Aktivisten öffentlichen Raum für eine Positionierung zwischen den politischen Flügeln, die von der spontanistischen Szene bis zu traditionellen Organisationsvorstellungen reichte.<sup>106</sup>

Zeitgleich etablierte sich ein privater, ideologisch wie personell eng mit dem SB verbundener Politikreis in der Wohnung von Ernst Loewy.<sup>107</sup> Hier wurden jedoch nicht nur aktuelle politische Themen aufgegriffen, sondern man sprach auch »offen über die schlimmsten Schrecken des *short century*«. <sup>108</sup> Den Austausch in einem exklusiven, persönlichen Kreis mag Loewy nicht zuletzt vor dem Hintergrund seines Lebens wie seiner politischen Aktivitäten in Palästina geschätzt und etabliert haben: 1936 war der Sechzehnjährige mit der Jugendalija nach Palästina gelangt und absolvierte in Tel Aviv eine Lehrlingsausbildung als Buchhändler. Dabei kam er rasch in Verbindung mit einem intellektuellen Zirkel deutscher Emigranten, dem Kreis der Bücherfreunde.<sup>109</sup> Die Protagonisten dieser Gruppe gehörten zwischen 1943 und 1945 dem Umfeld der Zeitschrift *Heute und Morgen. Antifaschistische Revue* an.<sup>110</sup> Wie dieser Zeitschriftenkreis in Tel Aviv hatten auch die Treffen in Frankfurt den Charakter einer exterritorialen Zusammenkunft von Versprengten, die den Erfahrungsgehalt der Weimarer Republik miteinander teilten. Erweitert wurde der Zirkel um Gäste der jüngeren Generation: Die linksorientierten, bis zu seiner Auflösung 1970 dem SDS angehörenden Studierenden waren zumeist Bekannte von Ernst Loewys Sohn Ronny. Auf diesem Wege kam beispielsweise Claussen, der wie Diner und Brumlik in der *links*-Redaktion des SB tätig war, bei den Loewys mit Frankfurter Persönlichkeiten wie Jakob Moneta oder Heinz Brandt in Kontakt.<sup>111</sup> Ferner begaben sich auch Trude und Berthold Simonsohn sowie das Ehepaar Hans Joachim und Irmgard Heydorn regelmäßig zu den Loewys.

106 Siehe Mende, »Nicht rechts, nicht links, sondern vorn«, 173.

107 Zu Ernst Loewy siehe das ausführliche Kapitel über dessen Zeit in Palästina in Caroline Jessen, *Kanon im Exil. Lektüren deutsch-jüdischer Emigranten in Palästina/Israel*, Göttingen 2019, 268–313.

108 Detlev Claussen, *Der Nachgeborene. Zum Tod von Ronny Loewy*, in: Fritz Bauer Institut (Hg.), *Einsicht 08. Bulletin des Fritz Bauer Instituts*, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, 91–95, hier 94 (Hervorhebung im Original). Ernst Loewy war Mitglied des SB und entrichtete einen regelmäßigen Mitgliedsbeitrag an die Organisation. Ferner hat er regelmäßig in der Zeitschrift *links* publiziert.

109 Siehe Heinrich Mohr, *Laudatio für Ernst Loewy*, in: Koebner/Rotermund (Hgg.), *Rückkehr aus dem Exil*, 11–13; zum Kreis der Bücherfreunde siehe Yonatan Shilo-Dayan, *On the Point of Return. »Heute und Morgen« and the German-Speaking Left-Wing Émigrés in Palestine*, in: Bettina Bannasch/Michael Rupp (Hgg.), *Rückkehrerzählungen. Über die (Un-)Möglichkeit nach 1945 als Jude in Deutschland zu leben*, Göttingen 2018, 35–56, hier 40.

110 Siehe Shilo-Dayan, *On the Point of Return*, 40.

111 Siehe Claussen, *Der Nachgeborene*, 94.

In diese politisch linken Milieus Frankfurts gliederten sich die jungen Juden ein, die vor dem Hintergrund ihrer Erfahrungen in Israel sowie im Lichte einer gemeinsamen Zukunft von Arabern und Juden im Nahen Osten nunmehr eine dezidiert zionismuskritische Position eingenommen, sich gar Matzpen angenähert hatten.<sup>112</sup> Ihr politischer Integrationsversuch blieb nicht ohne Folgen. Als bald bescherte er ihnen Konflikte mit Vertretern der Frankfurter Jüdischen Gemeinde. Die in Deutschland lebenden Juden hätten nicht zuletzt aufgrund ihres Verweilens im Land der Täter »Schuldgefühle« respektive ein »schlechtes Gewissen« entwickelt – so der Historiker Anthony Kauders in seiner Studie zur Geschichte der Juden in der Bundesrepublik.<sup>113</sup> Ein Umstand, der aus Sicht der Gemeinde eine bedingungslose Unterstützung für den jüdischen Staat verlangte und in regelmäßigen demonstrativen Spendensammlungen für Israel kompensatorischen Ausdruck fand.<sup>114</sup> Das zionismuskritische Engagement der deutschen Linken wie der linken Juden empfanden sie dabei als Provokation: Die Aktivitäten seien »antijüdisch«, so der Vorsitzende der Berliner Gemeinde, Heinz Galinski;<sup>115</sup> sie seien Ausdruck eines »jüdischen Selbsthasses« gewesen, so Arno Lustiger, der auch rückblickend an seinem Urteil festhielt.<sup>116</sup>

Derartige Entwicklungen zeitigten im Frühjahr 1980 schließlich einen Aufruf Kugelmanns und Brumliks an junge Juden in Frankfurt, sich zu einem Austausch zusammenzufinden. Explizit führten sie in ihrem Einladungsschreiben aus, dass sie beabsichtigten, sich mit der Frage »nach dem Verhältnis von Antizionismus und Antisemitismus, von Selbsthass und Schande« auseinanderzusetzen.<sup>117</sup> Einen Ort für die Gesprächsrunde bot neben der katholischen Studentengemeinde auch das Verlagshaus Neue Kritik. Die Treffen dort waren durch freundschaftliche Kontakte zu einigen Verlagsmitgliedern möglich geworden. So hatte sich zur selben Zeit ein zweiter Gesprächskreis zwischen Deutschen und Juden etabliert, der vom Lektor des Verlags, Dietrich Wetzel, initiiert worden war. Denn bei aller Missbilligung ihres israelkritischen Engagements vonseiten der Jüdischen Gemeinden war ihnen das »schwierige Verhältnis« der deutschen Linken zum Staat Israel

112 Siehe Kauders, *Unmögliche Heimat*, 120–125.

113 Zum Schuldgefühl siehe ebd., 42–49.

114 Siehe ebd., 100–103.

115 Zit. nach Eike Geisel/Mario Offenberg, Nachwort. Die gegenwärtige Vergangenheit. Zur Aktualität von Isaac Deutschers Schriften zur jüdischen Frage, in: Isaac Deutscher, *Die ungelöste Judenfrage. Zur Dialektik von Antisemitismus und Zionismus. Mit einer Vorbemerkung von Tamara Deutscher. Übersetzung und Nachwort von Eike Geisel und Mario Offenberg*, Berlin 1977, 105–142, hier 107.

116 Siehe Arno Lustiger, *Wider den Zionismus. Jüdische Linke in Deutschland und der Staat Israel*, in: Renger (Hg.), *Die deutsche »Linke« und der Staat Israel*, 89–100, hier 90 f.

117 Zit. nach ebd., 89.



nicht verborgen geblieben.<sup>118</sup> Neben Kugelmann, Brumlik und Diner begaben sich unter anderen Dina Stein, Detlev Claussen sowie der seinerzeit in Frankfurt lebende amerikanische Historiker und Theoretiker Moische Postone zu den Treffen.<sup>119</sup> Aus den hier geführten Diskussionen und Reflexionen dieser deutsch-jüdischen Zusammenkunft entstand 1983 die Publikation *Die Verlängerung von Geschichte*, in der die Protagonisten in verschiedenen Beiträgen den Umgang der deutschen Linken mit ihrer Vergangenheit sowie linke Deutungen des Nahostkonflikts jenseits der deutschen Geschichte problematisierten. Vor allem aber diagnostizierten sie das »weitgehende Fehlen eines Bewußtseins« dafür, »daß Israel nicht zuletzt aus Auschwitz hervorgegangen war«<sup>120</sup> – ein Umstand, der den Integrationsversuch der jungen Juden in die Linke in Deutschland selbst zu einem konflikthaften Prozess machte.

### Der nichtjüdische Jude – eine deutsche Erfahrungsgeschichte

Der komplizierte Integrationsprozess war begleitet von einer Selbstreflexion über die eigene jüdische Herkunft, wofür die Treffen in der Jüdischen Gruppe ab 1980 Raum boten. Das Verhältnis ihres linken Selbstverständnisses zu jenem ihrer Eltern wie auch deren Entscheidung, in Deutschland zu bleiben, bestimmten die Diskussionen der Gruppe thematisch in ähnlicher Weise wie die politische Haltung zum Palästinakonflikt und Differenzen mit den deutschen Linken.<sup>121</sup> Dabei sympathisierten einige bereits ab Ende der 1970er Jahre mit einer »jüdische[n] Identität, die in Praxis Universalität vorwegnimmt«.<sup>122</sup> Sie strebe im Konkreten den Menschen an und akzeptiere darin die Bedeutung des Juden, führte Dan Diner in einer autobiografischen Skizze aus dem Jahr 1979 aus.<sup>123</sup>

Neu war die Idee der Zusammenführung von partikularer Herkunft und universalem Anspruch nicht. Vielmehr knüpfte sie an theoretische Überlegungen des 1907 in Polen geborenen und 1939 nach England geflüchteten Schriftstellers und Historikers Isaac Deutscher an, die drei Jahre zuvor, 1977,

118 Zum »schwierigen Verhältnis« siehe Kloke, Israel und die deutsche Linke.

119 Siehe Dietrich Wetzels, »Die Verlängerung von Geschichte«. Anstatt einer Einleitung, in: ders. (Hg.), *Die Verlängerung von Geschichte. Deutsche, Juden und der Palästinakonflikt*, Frankfurt a. M. 1983, 7–14, hier 7; zu Moische Postone in Frankfurt siehe Dan Diner, *Vertraute Begegnungen. Moische Postone in Frankfurt am Main*, in: *Jüdische Geschichte & Kultur. Magazin des Dubnow-Instituts* 3 (2019), 54 f.

120 Wetzels, »Die Verlängerung von Geschichte«, 10.

121 Siehe Brumlik, *Kein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, 132.

122 Hier zit. nach Diner, *Fragmente von unterwegs*, 5.

123 Siehe ebd., 15.

von den Berlinern Eike Geisel und Mario Offenberg, politischen Weggefährten der linken Juden,<sup>124</sup> aus dem Englischen ins Deutsche übersetzt und herausgegeben worden waren.<sup>125</sup> In Großbritannien waren diese Schriften bereits 1967 als Essayband unter dem Titel *The Non-Jewish Jew* veröffentlicht worden. In der deutschen Übersetzung firmierte das Werk unter dem abgewandelten Titel *Die ungelöste Judenfrage. Zur Dialektik von Antisemitismus und Zionismus*, der durchaus als politische Intervention im deutschen Diskurs gemeint war.<sup>126</sup> Vor dem Hintergrund des sich verschärfenden Konflikts zwischen den jüdischen Institutionen einerseits und den linken – jüdischen und nichtjüdischen – deutschen Aktivisten in der Bundesrepublik andererseits meinten Geisel und Offenberg mit Isaac Deutscher eine Antwort auf die »ungelöste Judenfrage« geben zu können: Diese liege in der Figur des nichtjüdischen Juden.<sup>127</sup> Dieser, so die Überlegungen der Herausgeber in ihrem Nachwort, sei ein Jude, der die »Grenzen des Judentums überschritten, die Beschränkung des alten Denkens aufgebrochen und neue Horizonte erobert« habe.<sup>128</sup> Er stehe in der Tradition des »rebellischen Ketzers und weltanschaulichen Grenzgängers«.<sup>129</sup> Als solcher fühle sich der nichtjüdische Jude – Leben und Werk Isaac Deutschers waren für die beiden hier beispielgebend – stets dem Internationalismus verpflichtet.<sup>130</sup>

Für die linken Juden in Frankfurt wurde die bei Deutscher gefundene Verkörperung des nichtjüdischen Juden zu einer Identifikationsfigur, deren Bedeutung sich im Zuge des Libanonkrieges von 1982 und dessen Rezeption in der Bundesrepublik vollends entfaltete. Der Krieg hatte in linken Kreisen eine moralische Empörung hervorgerufen, die sich in Demonstrationen und antizionistischen Aktionen und sogar in der Analogiebildung mit dem präzedenzlosen Ereignis des Holocaust ausdrückte. So gab es Stimmen, die das israelische Kriegsvorgehen als »Endlösung«,<sup>131</sup> ja als »umgekehrte[n] Holo-

124 Eike Geisel und Mario Offenberg gehörten der Berliner linken Studentenkampagne Deutsch-Israelische Studiengruppe an, einem vom evangelischen Theologen Helmut Gollwitzer 1957 initiierten versöhnungsorientierten Zusammenschluss von Studentinnen und Studenten, der deutsch-israelische Begegnungen zu fördern suchte und bis zu seiner Auflösung Anfang der 1970er Jahre politisch operierte. Siehe Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 53–55 sowie 132 f.

125 Siehe Deutscher, *Die ungelöste Judenfrage*.

126 Siehe Geisel/Offenberg, Nachwort; ferner Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, hg. und mit einer Einleitung von Tamara Deutscher, London u. a. 1968.

127 Siehe Geisel/Offenberg, Nachwort.

128 Ebd., 107.

129 Ebd., 110.

130 Ebd., 141.

131 In *Die Tageszeitung* wurde der Wiederabdruck eines Interviews aus dem *Pflasterstrand* mit den Worten »Zur israelischen Endlösung« angekündigt. Siehe Fiedler, Matzpen, 364.

caust«<sup>132</sup> deuteten. Linke Juden empfanden derartige Vergleiche nicht nur als geschichtsrelativierend, sondern auch als ignorant gegenüber der jüdischen Geschichtserfahrung.<sup>133</sup> Die sich aus einem proklamierten Universalismus speisende Israelkritik verdeckte schließlich die Tatsache, dass es sich beim Palästina-Konflikt auch um eine Verlängerung deutscher Geschichte handle. Diner etwa intervenierte in der *Tageszeitung*:

»Es bleibt dabei: Was dort passiert, ist auch Fortsetzung deutscher, europäischer Geschichte. Und wer dieses Elend begreifen will, verändern im Sinne von arabischen Palästinensern und israelischen Juden, der muss die Geschichte als Ganzes begreifen lernen und sich dabei nicht zuletzt verantwortlich fühlen.«<sup>134</sup>

Gerade vor dem Hintergrund dieser Auseinandersetzungen mit den deutschen Linken boten Isaac Deutscher's Reflexionen zum nichtjüdischen Juden für linke Juden einen theoretischen Anknüpfungspunkt: Der sich als Marxist verstehende Autor bekannte sich zu seiner jüdischen Herkunft qua »unbedingte[r] Solidarität mit den Verfolgten und Ausgeretteten«. »Ich bin Jude, weil ich die jüdische Tragödie als meine eigene empfinde.«<sup>135</sup> Ausgangspunkt seiner jüdischen Zugehörigkeit bildete damit weder eine soziale, ethnische noch religiöse Komponente, sondern die vom Holocaust überschattete Vergangenheit.

Als die Protagonistinnen und Protagonisten der Jüdischen Gruppe sowie die späteren Herausgeberinnen und Herausgeber der Zeitschrift *Babylon* 1987 in der Buchhandlung »Land in Sicht« gemeinsam auftraten, war ebenjene von Isaac Deutscher bereits in den 1960er Jahren vertretene Vorstellung vom Holocaust als reflexivem Referenzpunkt jüdischer Zugehörigkeit auch zu einem Bestandteil ihres eigenen jüdischen Selbstverständnisses geworden. Die Identifikation mit der Denkfigur des nichtjüdischen Juden ermöglichte es den Mitgliedern des Kollektivs Mitte der 1980er Jahre, als universalistisch orientierte Intellektuelle aufzutreten, ohne die eigene jüdische Partikularität ausschließen zu müssen. Doch anders als Deutscher, der seine Reflexionen über die Vereinbarkeit von universalistischer Orientierung und jüdischer Herkunft durch das Prisma des Holocaust legitimierte, indem er unter anderem auf historische Persönlichkeiten wie Heine, Marx, Börne, Lassalle, Luxemburg, Freud oder Trotzki verwies, die vor dem Holocaust noch als akkulturierte Sozialisten wirken konnten,<sup>136</sup> stellten die jüdischen

132 Die Bezeichnung geht zurück auf den Journalisten Reinhard Hesse von der Berliner *Tageszeitung*. Siehe ebd., 363.

133 Siehe bes. das Kapitel »Libanon 1982. Der reale und der imaginäre Krieg«, in: ebd., 349–372, hier 364 f.

134 Dan Diner, Leserbrief in der *Tageszeitung*, 30. Juni 1982, zit. nach ebd., 365.

135 Isaac Deutscher, Wer ist Jude, in: ders., Die ungelöste Judenfrage, 21–34, hier 28.

136 Ders., Der nicht-jüdische Jude, in: ders., Die ungelöste Judenfrage, 7–20.

Intellektuellen aus Frankfurt einen neuen Bezug her. Sie dachten über die Vernichtungspraxis der Nationalsozialisten nach, die eine »Art des Sterbens« herbeigeführt habe, die sich auch auf »das Bewusstsein und das Leben und Überleben der Weiterlebenden« auswirke.<sup>137</sup> Es gebe eine »transgenerationale Tradierung« der Schoah – so der später eingeführte fachliche Ausdruck aus der Psychoanalyse, der als Phänomen jedoch bereits Anfang der 1980er Jahre unter jenen jüdischen Intellektuellen psychoanalytisch untersucht worden war, die sich in der Jüdischen Gruppe zusammenfanden.<sup>138</sup> Ganz bewusst wichen sie an dieser Stelle von Isaac Deutschers Ansatz ab, der versuchte, vor dem Holocaust wirkenden Personen a posteriori eine jüdische Tradition einzuschreiben. Auf diese Weise umgingen sie die Fortsetzung einer noch vor dem Holocaust bestehenden und denkbaren deutsch-jüdischen Existenz von Integration und Akkulturation. Vielmehr entwickelten sie ein jüdisches Selbstverständnis, das ihnen durch die notwendige Scheidung von einer deutsch gewordenen Linken dazu verhalf, Zukunft durch Herkunft ebenso wie Geschichtsphilosophie durch Geschichte zu ersetzen. Herkunft und Geschichte sollten auch das Verhältnis von Juden und Deutschen nach dem Holocaust ex negativo bestimmen. *Negative Symbiose* lautete dementsprechend der Titel des einleitenden Aufsatzes im ersten *Babylon*-Heft,<sup>139</sup> »Negative Symbiose« bildete auch den Schwerpunkt ihres Vortrags im Januar 1987 in der Buchhandlung »Land in Sicht«.<sup>140</sup>

137 Dan Diner, Israelische Endlösungsstrategie, in: Die Tageszeitung, 30. Juni 1982, zit. nach Fiedler, Matzpen, 364. Diner führte diesen Gedanken im Zusammenhang der Analogiebildungen der israelischen Militärstrategie mit dem Holocaust aus und argumentierte damit insbesondere gegen eine deutsche Debatte in der Öffentlichkeit.

138 So verfasste beispielsweise Kurt Grünberg 1983 eine Diplomarbeit zu den »Folgen nationalsozialistischer Verfolgung bei Kindern von Überlebenden/Juden in der BRD«, deren Ergebnisse zusammenfassend im ersten Heft von *Babylon* veröffentlicht wurden. Siehe Kurt Grünberg, Jüdische Überlebende der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung und deren Nachkommen, in: *Babylon. Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart 1* (1986), 127–136. Zu den bekannten Psychoanalytikerinnen und Psychoanalytikern in der Jüdischen Gruppe gehörten ferner Sammy Speier und Susann Heenen.

139 Dan Diner, *Negative Symbiose*, in: ebd., 9–20.

140 Siehe *Gemeinsamkeit im Schmerz*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2. Februar 1987, 30.

# Literaturbericht



Enrico Lucca

## Recent Literature on Gershom Scholem: A Review Essay

Ironizing the number of Gershom Scholem biographies that have seen the light of day during the past several years, two years ago an Israeli researcher posted on Facebook a copy of some cake recipes that she found in the archive of the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, wickedly hinting that they may offer material for future scholarly contributions.<sup>1</sup> It was, of course, nothing but a joke, yet one that underlined the direction of contemporary academic trends, given in particular the many studies dedicated in the last ten years to the life and work of Gershom Scholem, the renowned Berlin-born Israeli historian and Kabbalah scholar. These publications range from diverse biographical investigations to new editions (and re-editions) of Scholem's own texts and correspondence as well as related monographies that shift the attention to other members of his family. How can we explain this enormous interest? What is the reason for this fascination with Scholem? Are we witnessing the emergence of a new field of research or rather a fleeting fashion soon to be overtaken by a newer and academically more rewarding one? More specifically, how should we envision the place occupied by this field within Jewish studies and what is left to research in Scholem scholarship? While the formulation of a satisfying answer would perhaps require an entire book, in the following I wish to start to examine some of the intricacies prompted by these questions by assessing the most important publications on Scholem from recent years.<sup>2</sup>

### Different Scholems: On Disciplines and Academic Cultures

Before cautiously beginning to survey the profusion of scholarly contributions, there are some preliminary observations that bear consideration. As Daniel Abrams already noted, it is always important to understand *which* Scholem one

- 1 Lee Rotbart, Facebook entry, 13 February 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/lee.rotbart.3>> (13 June 2022).
- 2 While this text was originally drafted in summer 2020, I have made all efforts to render it up to date (July 2022).

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reads as much as *how* one reads him.<sup>3</sup> In nearly sixty years of academic career, Scholem published hundreds of books and articles in different languages, and, what is more, a blossoming array of ego-documents and archival material surfaced after his death in February 1982. These mainly include three volumes of selected correspondence and two volumes of diaries and early writings which some twenty years ago laid the groundwork for a series of studies devoted to Scholem as a writer, thinker, scholar of religion, and even theologian.<sup>4</sup>

When dealing with such publications, one should never forget to ask about the agenda behind the various analyses and, in particular, it may be about time to highlight the role different academic contexts (e. g. German, American, Israeli) have played and perhaps still play in the reception of Scholem's work. In other words, it is not only a question of *which* Scholem comes to the fore in each publication, but also which sides of him appear more suited for the scholarly as well as wider readership in different countries. This is proven, in the first instance, by the fact that not all of Scholem's works have been translated. Only a selection of his early diaries and correspondence written in German is accessible in English, and several of his essays can still be read only in their original Hebrew version. Unfortunately, not all of Scholem's readers and interpreters are familiar with both Hebrew and German, and of course it is difficult to cover with equal competence all the nuances in twentieth-century Israeli and German cultural, intellectual, and political contexts. It is true, and recent biographical studies have demonstrated it quite aptly, that especially after World War II Scholem shaped his own image as a scholar and intellectual, depending on the audience he addressed (in Israel, Germany, or even in the United States), so that one may not be wrong to speak, for example, of a German or a Hebrew/Israeli Scholem. Yet, one is also tempted to add that the same is true for Scholem's contemporary reception, in that the aspects of his work that catch the attention of German academics are not always the same that interest the American or the Israeli scholarly community.

- 3 Daniel Abrams, Presenting and Representing Gershom Scholem. A Review Essay, in: *Modern Judaism. A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 20 (2000), no. 2, 226–243, here 226.
- 4 See, e. g., Elisabeth Hamacher, *Gershom Scholem und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin/New York 1999; Steven Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer. Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times*, Bloomington, Ind., 2001; Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *Gershom Scholem. Un juif allemand à Jérusalem [Gershom Scholem. A German Jew in Jerusalem]*, Paris 2002; Eric Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the Profane. The Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, New York 2003; Daniel Weidner, *Gershom Scholem. Politisches, esoterisches und historiographisches Schreiben*, Munich 2003 (an English translation with the title *The Father of Jewish Mysticism. The Writing of Gershom Scholem* is scheduled to appear at Indiana University Press in October 2022); Gabriele Guerra, *Judentum zwischen Anarchie und Theokratie. Eine religionspolitische Diskussion am Beispiel der Begegnung zwischen Walter Benjamin und Gershom Scholem*, Bielefeld 2007; Benjamin Lazier, *God Interrupted. Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars*, Princeton, N. J./Oxford 2008.



A further element to take into consideration is the vastitude of Scholem's archive. It is true that one of the main contributions from the last wave of scholarly publications is to be found in the unpublished materials that have been made accessible to the reader for the first time. However, those familiar with Scholem's estate know that the richness of his archive is far from being exhausted, and entire parts of it have yet to be uncovered.<sup>5</sup> One should also not forget Scholem's personal library, housed on the second floor of the National Library of Israel, which constitutes a true goldmine for Scholem scholars, insofar as his books, Kabbalistic and otherwise, contain invaluable marginalia that only recently have started to receive thorough scholarly attention.<sup>6</sup>

A perhaps more important factor relates to the fact that the first reception of Scholem's work has been characterized by quite a rigid disciplinary separation. Philosophers and literary scholars have read their Scholem, as have historians, whereas Kabbalah researchers abstained for a long time from digging into his archive, strictly limiting themselves to confront Scholem's published work on Jewish mysticism, either accepting, revising, or rejecting his scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Different disciplines have hardly communicated between each other. While scholars of Jewish mysticism may have long been reluctant to admit the relevance of research on Scholem's life, philosophers have often taken for granted his reading of Kabbalistic texts and ventured interpretations hardly supported by any evidence. This has begun to change in the last few years and perhaps the greatest asset to Scholem studies came precisely from the work of Kabbalah scholars, who have recently unearthed, edited, and published precious materials that offer a better understanding of his reflections on some of the most important chapters in Jewish history.<sup>8</sup>

5 See the valuable comments in Jonatan Meir, *In the Footsteps of Scholem's Archive* (Heb.), in: Jonatan Meir/Shinichi Yamamoto, *Gershom Scholem and the Research of Sabbatianism*, transl. by Samuel Glauber-Zimra, Jerusalem 2021, 9–17.

6 See Daniel Abrams, *Gershom Scholem's Methodologies of Research on the Zohar*, in: Mirjam Zadoff/Noam Zadoff (eds.), *Scholar and Kabbalist. The Life and Work of Gershom Scholem*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2019, 3–16, esp. 12–15; Zvi Leshem, *The Alacritous Work of Librarians and the Insane Labor of Collectors. Gershom Scholem as Book Collector and Librarian. A Collection of Sources*, in: *ibid.*, 292–322. See also Daniel Abrams, *Marginalia Scholemiana*, 2 f., <<https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/Hebrew/collections/jewish-collection/scholem/Documents/Daniel-Avrams-Article.pdf>> (13 June 2022). Zvi Leshem, responsible for the Scholem library at the National Library of Israel, has himself published several interesting short contributions on Scholem's marginalia (mainly book dedications) that can be read in the blog of the Israeli institution.

7 See, e. g., Eliezer Schweid, *Judaism and Mysticism according to Gershom Scholem. A Critical Analysis and Programmatic Discussion*, Atlanta, Ga., 1985; Joseph Dan, *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History*, New York 1987; Moshe Idel, *Rabbinism versus Kabbalism. On Gershom Scholem's Phenomenology of Judaism*, in: *Modern Judaism* 11 (1991), no. 3, 281–296.

8 Particularly interesting is the research conducted by Daniel Abrams and Jonatan Meir.

When it comes to biographical research, a methodological question needs to be asked. Should a biographer be necessarily familiar with the field of expertise of the protagonist of their story? If so, to what extent? Albeit a question relevant not only for Scholem, but for the biography of any scholar, his case is particularly significant, insofar as his scholarship addresses extremely obscure teachings. Of course, biography as such, especially as an academic genre, has been the object of serious methodological investigations and scholars have been reflecting on its multiple directions.<sup>9</sup> That said, it would be hard not to agree with Steven Aschheim – himself one of the protagonists of the first wave of Scholem reception – when he writes:

“The ‘ultimate’ biographer of Scholem would not only have to document, contextualize, and assess Scholem’s life and scholarship, as well as analyze the relation (or possibly the nonrelation) between the two, but also master key aspects of 19th- and 20th-century German and European cultural and intellectual life, as well as the study of Kabbalah, German Jewry, Zionism, and Israel. [...] I doubt that we will ever have an ultimate biography.”<sup>10</sup>

### Writing the Life of Gershom Scholem

“In the last fifteen years of his life, he was no longer interested in detective stories, he rather read biographies and autobiographies. He believed that these two genres were very likely to lie and that it was very difficult to avoid that.”<sup>11</sup>

Among the many publications devoted to Scholem over the past couple of years it is quite remarkable to see the number of biographical studies that have been produced. In addition to no less than four volumes expressively meant to shed light on Scholem’s life, at least three other studies should be mentioned, which

9 See, e. g., Christian Klein (ed.), *Handbuch Biographie. Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien*, Stuttgart/Weimar 2009; Hans Renders/Binne De Haan (eds.), *Theoretical Discussions of Biography. Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, revised and augmented ed., Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2014; Hans Renders/Binne De Haan/Jonne Harmsma (eds.), *The Biographical Turn. Lives in History*, London/New York 2017.

10 Steven Aschheim, *The Secret Metaphysician*, in: *The Jewish Review of Books*, Fall 2018, <<https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/3429/the-secret-metaphysician/>> (13 June 2022). The idea that only a collective endeavor may capture the complexity of Scholem’s biography gave impulse to the work of Andreas Kilcher and Daniel Weidner, who for many years already are editing a volume provisionally entitled *Gershom Scholem. Bausteine zu einer intellektuellen Biographie*.

11 Fania Scholem, in: Naomi Frankel, *Fania Scholem Tells about Gershom Scholem. One Year after His Death*, in: *Yedi’ot Achronot [Latest News]*, 11 February 1983, 3 (Heb.).

address either his entire family or the tragic fate of his closest brother, Werner.<sup>12</sup> Other shorter contributions, enclosed in collective volumes, also aim to clarify specific chapters of Scholem's biography.<sup>13</sup> Given the authority that his work has acquired in Jewish Studies, it is not difficult to understand the fascination that Scholem's figure exerts especially upon scholars, and indeed the attempt to collect his memorabilia can be traced back to his closest students.<sup>14</sup> One may further add that Scholem's autobiography, which appeared in German in 1977 and later in a Hebrew edited version in 1982,<sup>15</sup> left many questions open, omitted the private aspects of his life, and seemed to be constructed on a teleological path that brought Scholem from the Berlin of his youth to Zionism and the achievement of his career at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In line with post-Zionist trends, Noam Zadoff's biography explicitly takes issue with Scholem's reflective life narrative. Zadoff claims in his introduction that Scholem's self-portrait was problematic both because it wants to convey the idea that there was a clear way leading him from Berlin to Jerusalem and to Kabbalah, and in light of the fact that it was limited to the first twenty-eight years of his life. Zadoff's book was first published in Hebrew and later in a German and English translation under the title *Gershom Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back. An Intellectual Biography*.<sup>16</sup> It

- 12 Ralf Hoffrogge, *Werner Scholem. Eine politische Biographie (1895–1940)*, Konstanz/Munich 2014; Mirjam Zadoff, *Der rote Hiob. Das Leben des Werner Scholem*, Munich 2014. Both works have been translated into English. I will address Jay Geller's book on the Scholem family later in this chapter.
- 13 See, e. g., Gerold Necker/Elke Morlok/Matthias Morgenstern (eds.), *Gershom Scholem in Deutschland. Zwischen Seelenverwandtschaft und Sprachlosigkeit*, Tübingen 2014, esp. Bill Rebiger, *Auch eine Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert. Zur Biographie des jungen Gershom Scholem bis 1915*, in: *ibid.*, 19–26; Klaus Herrmann, *Gershom Scholems Weg zur Kabbala*, in: *ibid.*, 37–72; and Saverio Campanini, *Alu im shalom [Go in Peace/Go with Scholem]*. *Die Bibliothek Gershom Scholems vor der Auswanderung*, in: *ibid.*, 73–96.
- 14 Joseph Weiss planned to write a biography of Scholem composed of a string of anecdotes. See Jonatan Meir/Noam Zadoff, "Divrei Shalom" or "Hayei Moharash." Satiric Manuscripts from the Joseph Weiss Archives, in: Joseph Dan (ed.), *Gershom Scholem (1897–1982)*. In *Memoriam*, 2 vols., Jerusalem 2007, here vol. 1, 365–384 (Heb.).
- 15 Gershom Scholem, *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem. Jugenderinnerungen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1977; *idem*, *Mi-Berlin li-Yerushalayim. Zikhronot ne'urim [From Berlin to Jerusalem. Memories of my Youth]*, ed. by Abraham Shapira, Tel Aviv 1982. On the relation between the two books, see Saverio Campanini, *A Case for Sainte-Beuve. Some Remarks on Gershom Scholem's Autobiography*, in: Rachel Elijor/Peter Schäfer (eds.), *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought. Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, Tübingen 2005, 363–400.
- 16 Noam Zadoff, *From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back. Gershom Scholem between Israel and Germany*, Jerusalem 2015 (Heb.); *idem*, *Gershom Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back. An Intellectual Biography*, transl. by Jeffrey Green, Waltham, Mass., 2017; *idem*, *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem und zurück. Gershom Scholem zwischen Israel und Deutschland*, transl. by Dafna Mach, Göttingen 2020. In the following I will refer to the English translation. From the same author it has recently appeared another monograph in Hebrew which I have not yet been able to consult. See *idem*, *Gershom Scholem*, Jerusalem 2022 (Heb.).

is divided into three parts. The first is dedicated to Scholem's early years in Palestine and to his contacts with local religious, political, and cultural circles. The second and perhaps most compelling section analyzes Scholem's reaction to the Holocaust and his engagement in Jewish cultural restitution on behalf of the Hebrew University. The third and final part follows Scholem's later years focusing on his return to Germany.

Leaving aside some factual mistakes, Zadoff's text is undoubtedly very rich.<sup>17</sup> The author draws on new archival sources and, in particular, on some very interesting passages from Scholem's unpublished diaries. To some extent, it seems that Zadoff even shaped his own narrative around them. This works particularly well in the second part of the book, in which the reader can truly witness Scholem's turmoil during his 1946 journey to Europe in the aftermath of the Holocaust by reading the pages of his diary, which are recorded almost day by day in the text. The same strategy is perhaps less convincing in the first part of the book. One doubts, for example, that Scholem's (non-)involvement in the Ha-ol (The Yoke) circle<sup>18</sup> – itself quite a minor episode in the life of the Yishuv and of its German-Jewish enclave<sup>19</sup> – could be considered a “turning point” or exhaust the complexity of Scholem's theo-

17 See at least, to name but an example, the *vexata quaestio* about the exact date of Scholem's first marriage. Since Scholem claimed that his first marriage took place on the day of his 26th birthday, Zadoff was led to date the event on 5 December 1923, perhaps overlooking a passage from the scholar's autobiography, where Scholem instead dated his first marriage to November that year. It is rather telling that it never occurred neither to Zadoff nor to other Scholem biographers (who all followed him on that) that Scholem may have referred to his 26th birthday according to the Hebrew calendar (10 Kislev), which indeed corresponded to Sunday, 18 November 1923 (10 Kislev 5684). This date seems to be confirmed by some letter exchange between Scholem and his parents from November 1923. See Betty Scholem/Gershom Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel 1917–1946*, ed. by Itta Shedletzky together with Thomas Sparr, Munich 1989, 90–94. Scholem's second marriage, on the other hand, was concluded on Friday, 4 December 1936 (20 Kislev 5697).

18 See Zadoff, *Gershom Scholem*, 65–69.

19 On the short life of the Ha-Ol circle, see William M. Brinner/Moses Rischin, *Like All the Nations? The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes*, Albany, Ga., 1987, 147–150; Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions. Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity*, Detroit, Mich., 1991, 343–347 and 398–401; David Barak-Gorodetsky, *Jeremiah in Zion. The Religion and Politics of Judah Leib Magnes*, Be'er Sheva 2018, 195–199 (Heb.). Barak-Gorodetsky's book has recently been translated into English. See *idem*, *Judah Magnes. The Prophetic Politics of a Religious Binationalist*, transl. by Merav Datan, Lincoln/Philadelphia, Pa., 2021. See also the material included in the file P3/2272 from the Magnes Archive, which is housed at the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem. See also S. Hugo Bergman, *J. L. Magnes mevakesh et elohav. Shanah le-maveto 24 be-tishri [Judah Leib Magnes Seeks His God. One Year after His Death]*, in: *Haaretz*, 17 October 1949, 2, as well as Bergman's unpublished diaries from 1939 in the National Library of Israel. See National Library of Israel, Archives, Jerusalem (henceforth NLI), Arc 4° 1502, Hugo Bergman Papers, file 02 48.

logical reflections, especially during the 1930s.<sup>20</sup> As for the third part of the book, it surely contributes to shedding important light on central episodes in Scholem's life, such as his participation in the Eranos circle in Ascona from 1949 to 1979, his uneasy relation with Hannah Arendt, or the effort he made to make Walter Benjamin's work known to the German readership. Yet, one cannot disagree with Daniel Weidner, who remarked that Zadoff's thesis, which strongly emphasizes the late Scholem's return to German culture and language, seems to owe more to the dramaturgy of the narrative that the author establishes than to the sources themselves.<sup>21</sup> One should also add that the too prominent role played by nostalgia in the book, and more generally the author's frequent recourse to theory of emotions, constitutes perhaps the weakest point of the whole text.<sup>22</sup>

While Scholem's autobiography can be read to a great extent as an apologetic construction, making no mention of more than fifty years and silently implying that his life reached its scope with his 1923 immigration to Mandatory Palestine and his 1925 employment at the Hebrew University, Zadoff's biography seems to be no less biased and "dialectically" constructed, though in a reverse way, on the Jerusalem-Berlin axis. This is particularly obvious when he reads Scholem's early years in Palestine exclusively against the background of the unfulfillment of his youth expectations. There is an additional point that Zadoff, unfortunately, did not take into consideration: It is true that, during the 1960s and 1970s, Scholem felt more and more at home in Germany. But one should not confound this feeling, which is biographically understandable, with an actual homecoming. Scholem did spend and enjoy time in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) first and foremost as a Jew and an Israeli, but he certainly did not perceive himself as a German, or even less so as a German Jew, a hybrid concept which he absolutely abhorred and always rejected. To disentangle this knot would have required Zadoff to enter a rather complicated and somewhat morbid dimension of Scholem's

20 On this topic see, e. g., the following contribution: Enrico Lucca/Ynon Wygoda, A Goy who Studies Torah. Two Unpublished Sources by Ernst Simon and Gershom Scholem on the Spiritual Legacy of Franz Rosenzweig, in: Naharaim. Zeitschrift für deutsch-jüdische Literatur und Kulturgeschichte/Journal of German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History 12 (2018), no. 1–2, 197–224, esp. 214–224.

21 See Daniel Weidner, Zwei neue Biographien von Gershom Scholem. Oder: Was kann eigentlich eine intellektuelle Biographie?, in: PaRDeS. Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e. V. 24 (2018), 241–246, esp. 245.

22 See, e. g., "Eranos had nostalgic value for Scholem" as well as the immediately following paragraphs, in: Zadoff, Gershom Scholem, 186; see also *ibid.*, 149 f., and the long, yet not very relevant excursus on anthropological definitions of pilgrimage.

inner life,<sup>23</sup> and yet this might have helped the author not to fall prey to the rather facile temptation of simply reversing Scholem's self-narrative.

As for Jay Geller's *The Scholems. A Story of the German-Jewish Bourgeoisie from Emancipation to Destruction*, one may be inclined to address the opposite concerns, and suggest that the whole book can be read as a long footnote to one of Scholem's own statements – in *From Berlin to Jerusalem* – according to which the completely different political paths that he and his three brothers took during the Weimar period reflected the entire spectrum of options that were available to German Jewry in the aftermath of World War I.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, Geller's book is a very useful reading that aims to portrait the fate of the Scholem family as paradigmatic for the German-Jewish bourgeoisie, both as a microcosmos within German society and in the various places of its diaspora, from Jerusalem to Australia. The author does so by following the members of the family from their arrival in Berlin at the beginning of the nineteenth century until their emigration from Germany at the end of the 1930s, in particular by focusing on the destiny of the four Scholem brothers (Reinhold, Erich, Werner, and Gerhard) and their mother Betty. Whereas some parts of the text could have been more nuanced – as, for instance, in the cliché description of the inability of German Jews to adapt to living conditions in Palestine,<sup>25</sup> the overall impression is that the reader can gain interesting information from the text, and this also with regard to Gershom's own biography.<sup>26</sup> No less important is the fact that, of all the recent

- 23 See, e. g., Scholem's obsession with tracing the success of half-Jews in postwar Germany, as he confessed in his interview with Sabine Berghahn: "Today only one Jewish group plays a role in Germany. [...] Nobody talks about them, they are the half-Jews [...] and that is strictly taboo [...] they are the only group of Jewish origin which really has a meaning in Germany. [...] Among the judiciary [...] academics, universities, intellectuals, in all professions [...] a large number of people whose names you hear every day are half-Jews. [...] I can list such cases. You have no idea. I am an expert in these matters." The interview was partially broadcasted by the Hessischer Rundfunk in Autumn 1979. For the full transcript, see NLI, Arc 4° 1599, Gershom Scholem Papers, file 01 21, here transl. by the author. See also Sabine Berghahn, "Sie stammen aus einer anderen Welt, liebes Kind!" Erinnerungen an ein Gespräch mit Gershom Scholem und seiner Frau Fania in Jerusalem, in: Necker/Morlok/Morgenstern (eds.), *Gershom Scholem in Deutschland*, 261–280.
- 24 Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem. Memories of My Youth*, transl. by Harry Zohn, New York 1980, 42.
- 25 See Jay Howard Geller, *The Scholems. A Story of the German-Jewish Bourgeoisie from Emancipation to Destruction*, Ithaca, N. Y./London 2019, 177 f.
- 26 In particular, Geller generously refers to Scholem's early correspondence with his friends Erich Brauer, Ludwig Strauss, and Aharon Heller.

biographical studies, Geller's is undoubtedly the most solidly grounded on archival sources, and this represents a substantial added value of his book.<sup>27</sup>

Having authored the first book ever dedicated to Scholem's thought in 1979,<sup>28</sup> David Biale published a new biography of Scholem in 2018 under the title *Gershom Scholem. Master of the Kabbalah* in the "Jewish Lives" series of Yale University Press.<sup>29</sup> Meant to address a wider readership, Biale's study is structured along the lines of more classical biographies, covering Scholem's life from the beginning to the end. The author moves from the attempt to understand Scholem from within and to "view him not only as a thinker and writer but also as a human being."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the book largely recurs to psychological explanations, emphasizing, for example, Scholem's early conflict with his father, which Biale uses as a tool to interpret both Scholem's relationship with Buber or the way he later came to soften his young anarchic fervors and adopt a more bourgeois conduct.<sup>31</sup> Against this background, Biale also speculates whether Scholem's exemption from German military service due to him being diagnosed with a form of *dementia praecox* might actually reflect a real mental instability, and was not – as Scholem always claimed – the result of his astute trick to avoid conscription.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most interesting chapters is devoted to Scholem's love life, and here Biale even hints to the possible homoerotic component in his friendship with Walter Benjamin.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, Biale relies extensively on psychology as a key to decipher Scholem's writings. Such as in the case, for example, of

27 See also the following reviews to the German translation of Geller's book (*Die Scholems. Geschichte einer deutsch-jüdischen Familie*, transl. and ed. for the German edition by Ruth Keen and Erhard Stölting, Berlin 2020): Magnus Klaue, *Sicherheit stellte sich nie mehr ein. Gruppenbild mit Kontrasten: Jay H. Geller folgt den Lebensläufen der Brüder Scholem*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 February 2021, 12; Enrico Lucca, *Mikrogeschichte deutsch-jüdischer Bourgeoisie*, in: *Einsicht* 2021. *Bulletin des Fritz Bauer Instituts* 13 (2021), 110.

28 David Biale, *Gershom Scholem. Kabbalah and Counter-History*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1979 (2nd revised edition 1982).

29 Idem, *Gershom Scholem. Master of the Kabbalah*, New Haven, Conn./London 2018. The book has been translated into Hebrew (by Amos Giladi, Jerusalem 2019) and Italian (by Gian Mario Cao, Rome 2019).

30 *Ibid.*, xi.

31 On Scholem's conflict with his father, see *ibid.*, 5 f. and 10. On Scholem's resemblance to his father in old age, see *ibid.*, 202. On Scholem seeking from Buber the support he did not get from his father, see *ibid.*, 27 f. and 189 (the very same sentence features twice in the book). See also Biale's hypothesis concerning Scholem's relationship with Joseph Weiss: "It might not be too speculative to suggest that Weiss was the closest Scholem ever had to a son." (*ibid.*, 166)

32 *Ibid.*, 32. Biale interestingly remarks how the chief psychiatrist of the group that examined Scholem was Karl Abraham, one of Freud's most talented disciples (*ibid.*, 37 f.).

33 *Ibid.*, 43.

the famous *Redemption through Sin*, which Biale believes may be read as “a projection onto history of its author’s own innermost struggles,”<sup>34</sup> much like Scholem’s later biography of Shabbetai Zevi. To provide a further example, reflecting on Scholem’s 1922 tempestuous discussion with the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, and how he realized only afterwards that the latter was already suffering from an illness that would completely paralyze him, Biale argues that Scholem’s uncharacteristic guilt would affect “his later feelings about Rosenzweig and his philosophy.”<sup>35</sup>

It is hard to say to what extent a biographer has the right to draw conclusions about their protagonist’s psyche, and this may turn especially problematic when used to interpret their writings. However, and despite some inaccuracies or factual mistakes, in particular when dealing with unpublished sources,<sup>36</sup> Biale very convincingly explains why Scholem and his work remain so present forty years after his death, and how, through his apparently recondite scholarship, he managed to capture some of the most essential questions that modern Jews face – not to mention the inextricable dialectical tension between religion and secularism, finally acquiring a sort of iconic value which reunites the man and his work.<sup>37</sup>

34 Ibid., 129. It seems that Biale even suggests that a hidden model for Scholem’s description of Jacob Frank in the same essay might have been no one less than Adolf Hitler.

35 Ibid., 73. It is not clear to what Biale is referring here. On the relation between Scholem and Rosenzweig, see more recently Enrico Lucca, *Translating, Interpreting the Bible, Fighting Satan. Rosenzweig, Scholem, and the End of Their Correspondence* (with Three Unpublished Letters from Scholem to Rosenzweig), in: Antonios Kalatzis/Enrico Lucca (eds.), “Into Life.” *Franz Rosenzweig on Knowledge, Aesthetics, and Politics*, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2021, 9–38. See also Enrico Lucca/Ynon Wygoda, *A Goy who Studies Torah*.

36 To provide a few examples: It is true that, in his book on Walter Benjamin, Scholem remembers how his students used to recall his statement that one needs to read Kafka’s *The Trial* in order to understand the Kabbalah. However, this does not mean that Scholem ever considered holding seminars on Kafka’s work (Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, 110). Abraham Yaari was never the head of the Jewish National Library (ibid., 159). During his 1946 European journey on behalf of the Hebrew University, Scholem was followed in Prague by Hugo Bergman and not preceded by him (ibid., 161). Walter Benjamin’s theses *On the Concept of History* are not ten (ibid., 176). Also, there is no four-page essay on Kafka and the Kabbalah in Scholem’s unpublished diaries from the 1930s (ibid., 118 f.). Instead, Scholem drafted three theological aphorisms in which Kafka and the Kabbalists are mentioned once. The first aphorism, the only one related to Kafka, has been recalled already in Hugo Bergman’s diaries. See Hugo Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, 2 vols., Königstein i. Ts. 1985, here vol. 1: 1901–1948, 357. My edition and commentary of Scholem’s three aphorisms is going to appear in Andreas Kilcher/Daniel Weidner, *Gershom Scholem. Bausteine zu einer intellektuellen Biographie*, Göttingen (forthcoming).

37 This has also been true for, e. g., Franz Kafka and, though in a different way, for Franz Rosenzweig.



Precisely this set of questions concerns George Prochnik's *Stranger in a Strange Land. Searching for Gershom Scholem and Jerusalem*.<sup>38</sup> Prochnik's book is an extraordinarily well-written memoir in which the story of his own turn to Judaism – the religion of his father – and his immigration from the United States to Israel alternates with the retelling of the most important chapters in Scholem's life, whose work is used as a sort of mirror and constant inspiration for Prochnik's existential quest toward a secular Jewish identity. As Prochnik confesses in the introduction, it was precisely Scholem's "seductive authority" that triggered him to move to Jerusalem "in search of a guide to religious anarchy."<sup>39</sup> The book is more than five hundred pages long and is divided into eighteen chapters that span from the time Prochnik and his wife decided to settle in Jerusalem in 1988 and raise their family there, experienced the first Intifada, hailed the signing of the Oslo agreements, and witnessed the raise of a new religious nationalism that culminated in the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, before they finally decided to return to the United States and put an end to their marriage. Scholem's life and writings function in the book both as a spur to self-exploration for the author and as a key to interpret the reality that surrounded him.

Prochnik's book is not meant to be a scholarly volume, and thus it would be useless to point out its imprecisions or to look into it for original academic contributions.<sup>40</sup> However, the author is so deeply caught by the power of Scholem's thought that he manages to provide brilliant insights into his work, part of which are still awaiting to raise the attention of Scholem scholars. To mention but one example, Prochnik hints very cleverly at Scholem's early focus on the notion of pseudo-epigraphy – the false ascription of authorship for a text – which he considered "one of the most profound problems of history."<sup>41</sup> This is not only a concept that obviously interested Scholem in relation to the object of his scholarship, as in the question of the authorship of the Zohar, but it exerted a much more profound influence

38 George Prochnik, *Stranger in a Strange Land. Searching for Gershom Scholem and Jerusalem*, New York 2016.

39 *Ibid.*, 19–21. See also *ibid.*, 432: "'Scholem filled the gap very nicely for Jews who wanted to rededicate themselves to Judaism,' Moshe Idel told me. 'There was a vacuum in the United States at the time Scholem's writings began to be known there. Scholem's Judaism was antinomian – it was anti-establishment – perfect.' And of course I recognize myself among those hovering in the expectant void."

40 Some of them can be easily explained by the fact that the author seems unfamiliar with German sources.

41 Prochnik, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, 276. See also Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher. Nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, 2 vols., Frankfurt a. M. 1995–2000, here vol. 2: 1917–1923, ed. by Karlfried Gründer, Herbert Kopp-Oberstebrink and Friedrich Niewöhner with the collaboration of Karl Erich Grözinger, Frankfurt a. M. 2000, 336.

on him, as can be appreciated from the style of his “unhistorical” writings, which he consciously drafted as if they were part of a Kabbalistic tradition.<sup>42</sup> What is more, the same notion of pseudo-epigraphy ended up being a quintessential component of Scholem’s legacy to Western thought. As Moshe Idel has remarked, the image of Judaism accepted by many intellectuals and philosophers throughout the second half of the twentieth century – Jews and non-Jews alike – ultimately coincided with the one they encountered in Scholem’s works.<sup>43</sup> In the reception history of his books, in particular in Europe and in the United States, the difference between Scholem’s thought and the doctrines of the Kabbalists often blurred, and one may even suspect that Scholem himself was not always keen on highlighting this distinction.<sup>44</sup> On a more biographical level, scholars have already examined the role Scholem’s wives – Escha Burchardt and Fania Freud – played in drafting some of his letters or assisting him in his scholarship,<sup>45</sup> and further research may reveal new insights even in this direction.<sup>46</sup>

Amir Engel’s book *Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography*, which came out in 2017 with the University of Chicago Press, aims to focus on Scholem as a storyteller, or better as the greatest Jewish mythographer of the last century. Keeping his distance from interpreters who have tried to decipher “Scholem’s enigma” by drawing almost solely on hints and fragments,<sup>47</sup>

42 On this aspect, see Weidner, Gershom Scholem, 152–154 and 158–162. See also idem, Reading Gershom Scholem, in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006), no. 2, 203–231.

43 See, e. g., some of the essays included in Moshe Idel, *Old Worlds, New Mirrors. On Jewish Mysticism and Twentieth-Century Thought*, Philadelphia, Pa., 2010.

44 See, e. g., the pride with which Scholem confessed to Benjamin that he was the actual inventor of an aphorism on the messianic time that meanwhile had been attributed to an anonymous rabbi both by Benjamin and Ernst Bloch. See Gershom Scholem (ed.), *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932–1940*, transl. by Gary Smith and André Lefevere, Cambridge, Mass., 1992, 123. See also Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Bd. 1, 368. On the genealogy of the aphorism, see Saverio Campanini, *Ombre Cinesi [Chinese Shadows]*, in: *Walter Benjamin/Gershom Scholem, Archivio e camera oscura. Carteggio 1932–1940 [Archive and Darkroom. Correspondence, 1932–1940]*, transl. by Saverio Campanini, Milan 2019, 377–453.

45 See, e. g., Manfred Voigts, Nicht überall, wo Gershom Scholem draufsteht, ... Ein unveröffentlichter Brief zum Briefwechsel mit seiner Mutter, in: *VJS-Nachrichten. Informationsblatt der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien* e. V. 5 (2000), 10 f.; see also Fania Scholem, I wrote and he signed, in: *Kol ha-ir [The Whole City]*, 19 January 1990, 50 (interview, Heb.).

46 For instance, according to Bergman’s diaries, one of Scholem’s most important political texts from the time of his political engagement within the movement Brit Shalom (Covenant of Peace) – the article *Ist die Verständigung mit den Arabern gescheitert?* – had been written instead by Escha, who was very active in the group. The article appeared in the *Jüdische Rundschau* on 20 November 1928. See NLI, Arc 4° 1502, Hugo Bergman Papers, file 02 42, 28 December 1928 (diary entry).

47 Amir Engel, *Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography*, Chicago, Ill., 2017, 1.

Engel wishes to concentrate exclusively on his actual work as a historian of Jewish mysticism. Rather than reading between the lines and speculating on Scholem's theological or mystical drives, Engel suggests to analyze the way Scholem chose to construct his textual material "in accordance with his own sensitivities, assumptions, and concerns."<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, the author claims that Scholem's major achievement lies not in his discoveries but rather in his creation, in the way he molded the documents and the material he had encountered.<sup>49</sup>

The book is divided into seven chapters, the first being a declaration of intents, whereas the others are organized in couples with the aim to connect Scholem's life and work. The second and the third chapters center around exile. The author explores Scholem's early activity within the Jewish youth movements and his sense of alienation in Germany before his 1923 emigration to Jerusalem in parallel with his interpretation of the Lurianic myth as a response to the Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492. The fourth and the fifth chapters have the notion of disappointment at their center, and Engel suggests that we understand Scholem's scholarly engagement with Sabbatianism as a way to address the political reality in Palestine and the dangers that Scholem supposedly detected in contemporary Zionism. In the last two chapters the author turns his focus to the period after World War II and argues that a shift from the fringes toward more mainstream positions can be detected in Scholem's post-Holocaust work and engagement as a public intellectual.

The structure of Engel's book, the correspondence between Scholem's life and work, is certainly fascinating, and one could say that the author himself provided an excellent example of storytelling, in line with the image of Scholem that he wishes to delineate. However, some substantial points are lacking in this picture. First and foremost, for a book that seeks to put the accent on Scholem's historical work, the number of texts that the author chose to analyze is rather meager. Engel does not relate to all the intricacies of Scholem's hundreds of publications and often ventures interpretations which scholars more versed in Scholem's Kabbalah scholarship may easily contradict.<sup>50</sup> In addition to that, the book does not reveal many new archival

48 *Ibid.*, 65.

49 *Ibid.*, 18.

50 See, e. g., his general assessment of Scholem's later scholarship on Sabbatianism. For a critique of Engel on this point, see Meir/Yamamoto, Gershom Scholem and the Research of Sabbatianism, 90–102, esp. 99: "It is patently clear that the widespread quibbling among Scholem scholars concerning his abstention from further writing on late Sabbatianism due to psychological impediments, drastic shifts in his scholarly outlook, or other ideological developments are entirely unsubstantiated."

sources and suffers from a few factual imprecisions.<sup>51</sup> Finally, in a book that emphasizes Scholem's conception of myth one would have perhaps expected more attention to his actual confrontation with previous German theories of symbol, myth, and tradition.<sup>52</sup>

Each of the five books offers a unique perspective on Scholem and proves useful in its own way to illuminate different chapters of his life and scholarship. One need not to be a prophet to know that new biographical works will follow in an attempt to shed light on other episodes which have so far not received adequate attention. In particular, an inner contextualization of Scholem's intellectual and institutional activities in Palestine may contribute to a more comprehensive view of his life and achievement. To name but a couple of examples, Scholem's role and activity within the Hebrew University still awaits a more thorough examination, and there is no doubt that recent work on the archives of this institution may help to prompt further research in this direction.<sup>53</sup> The history of Scholem's relation – or more often, non-relation – to Jerusalem's most prominent orthodox figures and religious milieu, from the Rav Kook's circle to traditional Kabbalah seminaries, is another fascinating chapter to which some scholars have already pointed.<sup>54</sup>

51 Only to name an example, Engel emphasizes the fact that the first statement by Brit Shalom, the binational group in which Scholem was involved, appeared in a German paper, forgetting to mention that, in the very same days, the group published an identical statement in many Palestinian newspapers as well, in English and Hebrew (*ibid.*, 103). See also the review of Engel's book by Saverio Campanini, in: *Materia Giudaica* 22 (2017), 285–287.

52 See Weidner, *Zwei neue Biographien von Gershom Scholem*, 242.

53 For a very first approach to the topic, see Shaul Katz, *Gershom Sholem ve-tehilat darko ba-Universita ha-ivrit* [Gershom Scholem and the Beginnings of His Career at the Hebrew University], in: *Katarsis. Ketav et le-bikoret be-mad'e ha-ruah ve-ha-hevra* [Catharsis. Journal of Criticism in Humanities and Social Sciences] 3 (2005), 144–163; see also Joseph Dan, *Gershom Scholem and Kabbalah Studies at the Hebrew University*, in: Hagit Lavsky (ed.), *The History of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Academic Progression in a Period of National Struggle*, 3 vols., Jerusalem 1997–2009, here vol. 2: *A Period of Consolidation and Growth*, Jerusalem 2005, 199–218 (Heb.). A new description of the historical archives of the Hebrew University has been completed in December 2018.

54 See at least Boaz Huss, *Ask No Questions. Gershom Scholem and the Study of Contemporary Jewish Mysticism*, in: *Modern Judaism* 25 (2005), no. 2, 141–158; Jonatan Meir, *Kabbalistic Circles in Jerusalem (1896–1948)*, transl. by Avi Aronsky, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2016, esp. 9–15; and, more recently, Boaz Huss/Jonatan Meir, “The Light Is Burning Pretty Low.” The 1948 Correspondence between Samuel Lewis and Gershom Scholem, in: *Correspondences* 8 (2020), no. 1, 45–72. On Scholem and Rav Kook, see Zvi Leshem, *Eino mevin af mila mi-ma she-katav. Gershom Sholem ve-ha-rav Kook* [He Does Not Understand a Word of What He Wrote. Gershom Scholem and Rav Kook], 19 August 2019, <<https://blog.nli.org.il/sodot-sholem/>> (13 June 2022); see also Uriel Barak, *Kabbalah versus Philosophy. Rabbi Avraham Itzhak Kook's Critique of the Spiritual World of Franz Rosenzweig*, in: *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 23 (2015), no. 1, 27–59.

This survey of recent biographical works on Scholem also suggests some more general remarks concerning academic biographies. This genre has been flourishing in the last years, and Jewish studies are no exception. In order to be recognized as such, academic biographies needed to distance themselves from more classical works and, above all, insist on the importance of selecting the material to avoid considering the whole biographical path of the protagonist and rather focus on individual significant, often connected episodes from their life. However, the reader cannot help but notice – especially when looking at the Anglo-American market – that academic biographies frequently resemble one another, both in structure and length.<sup>55</sup> What is more, one has the impression that, in order to attract academic attention, these works tend to sacrifice the nuances and many complexities of life stories to the creation of a compelling yet too unidirectional narrative. In the case of Scholem biographies, this is true also with regard to the use of archival and unpublished sources – mostly fragments or short diary entries – which many a time have been isolated and extracted from their original context only with the aim to reinforce preexistent interpretations.

Already in 1956, the great Italian Jewish historian Arnaldo Momigliano prophetically warned young scholars against the risk of making history of historiography without being acquainted with the actual problems at stake.<sup>56</sup> More than half a century later, this issue has become a true plague infesting academic intellectual history, and yet this problem is far from being addressed in graduate schools and academic environments. There is no doubt that future Scholem biographers may profit greatly from making themselves more familiar at least with some of the topics that stood at the center of his scholarship.<sup>57</sup>

55 It is probably no coincidence that works that do not comply with these requirements find it harder to be translated into English. See, e. g., Dominique Bourel, *Martin Buber. Sentinelle de l'humanité* [Martin Buber. Sentinel of Humanity], Paris 2015. This very valuable biography, originally written in French, has been translated so far only into German: idem, *Was es heißt, ein Mensch zu sein*, transl. by Horst Brühmann, Gütersloh 2017.

56 “Today there is a danger that historiographical studies will turn into a special field with the consequence of having Ranke scholars who do not know the history of the Popes and Mommsen scholars who do not know Roman law. Instead of researchers examining the history of a problem in order to solve the problem we too often have scholars of the history of the problem who are not interested in the problem.” See Arnaldo Momigliano’s review of Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past. The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship*, in: *Rivista Storica Italiana* [Italian Historical Journal] 68 (1956), no. 1, 92–94, here 92 (transl. by the author).

57 See also the following appropriate remark by Jonatan Meir about recent Scholem scholarship: “This wave of publications has been marked by the appearance of various strange theories concerning biographical elements and ideological motives hidden in Scholem’s work. In certain cases, attempts have been made to interpret Scholem’s scholarship solely through the lens of his biography, despite the absence of any hints to such a reading in Scholem’s personal writing.” Idem, *In the Footsteps of Scholem’s Archive*, 15.

## Editions, Re-Editions, and “New” Sources

“Gershom went to Klausner and told him that he had received the survey on Hebrew literature from Robert [Weltsch] (which book did he like best?).<sup>58</sup> Klausner told him that he had also received the survey. But why did *Gershom* receive it? [Klausner said to Gershom:] ‘*What do You understand of literature?*’”<sup>59</sup>

Letters have rightly been considered one of the keys to decrypt the intellectual world of German Jewry,<sup>60</sup> and thus it is no surprise that the edition of Scholem’s correspondence continues to play a significant role in the reception of his work. Priority has been given to his letter exchange with the main German-Jewish intellectuals of his generation, and obviously one should not forget that Scholem himself already contributed in this direction by publishing his correspondence with Walter Benjamin in 1980. No less important was Werner Kraft’s 1986 edition of a small volume of Scholem’s correspondence with him. The collection is extremely rich, and it may be interesting for future scholars to have access to Kraft’s letters as well.<sup>61</sup> Particular value should be attributed to the edition of the letters between Scholem and Hannah Arendt for at least two reasons. The correspondence – of which exists already an English, a French, Hebrew, and Spanish translation – is extremely insightful for historians engaged with problems of postwar restitution and Jewish cultural property,<sup>62</sup> and the editor even published an appendix including a series of relevant documents by Arendt related to the topic.<sup>63</sup> More generally, the letters trace the genealogy of a rupture which famously exploded only when Scholem read Arendt’s book on the Eichmann trial, but which ultimately

58 See Rundfrage zum hebräischen Buch, in: Jüdische Rundschau, 4 April 1928, 201 f.

59 See Bergman, Tagebücher und Briefe, Bd. 1, 239 (diary entry from 11 April 1928). The last question reads in Hebrew in the original typescript of the diary, whereas the rest has been written in German in Gabelsberger stenography.

60 See Gert Mattenklott, Über Juden in Deutschland, Frankfurt a. M. 1992 (revised and expanded edition of Jüdische Intelligenz in deutschen Briefen, Frankfurt a. M. 1988).

61 Gershom Scholem, Briefe an Werner Kraft, ed. by Werner Kraft with an epilogue by Jörg Drews, Frankfurt a. M. 1986.

62 See, e. g., Elisabeth Gallas, Spiritual Sources for Zion. Gershom Scholem and the Salvage of Looted Books and Manuscripts after the Holocaust, in: Zadoff/Zadoff (eds.), Scholar and Kabbalist, 272–291; idem, A Mortuary of Books. The Rescue of Jewish Culture after the Holocaust, New York 2019 (first publ. Germ.: “Das Leichenhaus der Bücher.” Kultur restitution und jüdisches Geschichtsdenken nach 1945, Göttingen/Bristol, Conn., 2016). See also Anna Holzer-Kawałko, Vanishing Heritage. Nation-Building, Cultural Restitution and German-Jewish Libraries in Postwar Czechoslovakia (unpubl. PhD thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2022), esp. chapter 3.5: The Many Successors of German Jewry. Palestinian, American and British Claims to German-Jewish Books.

63 See Hannah Arendt/Gershom Scholem, Der Briefwechsel 1939–1964, ed. by Marie Luise Knott with the collaboration of David Heredia, Berlin 2010, 485–533.

was the result not only of their long irreconcilable views on Judaism and Zionism, but also of a shared yet quite different attempt to reexamine the historical notion of Jewish tradition and to reshape it according to the challenges of modernity.<sup>64</sup>

Among the most recent publications, especially relevant for the story of Benjamin's reception in the FRG, is the correspondence between Scholem and Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, which came out in 2015.<sup>65</sup> At least in part connected to the same topic is a booklet authored by Liliane Weissberg, who surveyed Scholem's letter exchange with Siegfried Unseld, the patron of the Suhrkamp publishing house and later one of Scholem's closest friends in Germany.<sup>66</sup> Weissberg has provided only few insights into what

- 64 It is not possible to refer here to all scholarship on the Scholem-Arendt relation. See at least David Suchoff, Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and the Scandal of Jewish Particularity, in: *The Germanic Review* 72 (1997), no. 1, 57–76; Stéphane Mosès, Das Recht zu urteilen. Hannah Arendt, Gershom Scholem und der Eichmann-Prozeß, in: Gary Smith (ed.), *Hannah Arendt Revisited. "Eichmann in Jerusalem" und die Folgen*, Frankfurt a. M. 2000, 78–92; Steven Aschheim, In Times of Crisis. Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews, Madison, Wisc., 2001, esp. chap. 7: Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem, 73–85; Michelle-Irène Brudny, La polémique Scholem/Arendt ou le rapport à la tradition, in: *Raisons politiques. Études de pensée politique* 7 (2002), no. 3, 181–198; Raluca Munteanu Eddon, Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt and the Paradox of "non-Nationalist" Nationalism, in: *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 12 (2003), no. 1, 55–68; Eric Jacobson, Ahavat Yisrael. Nationhood, the Pariah and the Intellectual, in: Elior/Schäfer (eds.), *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought*, 401–415; Arie M. Dubnow, Hannah Arendt, Gershom Scholem, and the Ethics of Collective Responsibility, in: *Sh'ma [Listen]* 40 (2010), no. 4, 7–9; Andreas Stuhlmann, "Sie sehen: ich bin wütend." Hannah Arendt und Gershom Scholem streiten über Judentum im Exil, in: Juliane Sucker/Lea Wohl von Hasenberg, *Bilder des Jüdischen. Selbst- und Fremdzuschreibungen im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2013, 179–204; Sonia Goldblum/Robert Krause, Das Judentum im Dialog. Hannah Arendts und Gershom Scholems Briefwechsel, in: Hiltrud Häntzschel et al. (eds.), *Auf unsicherem Terrain. Briefschreiben im Exil*, Munich 2013, 137–151; Shira Kupfer/Asaf Turgeman, The Secularization of the Idea of Ahavat Israel and Its Illumination of the Scholem-Arendt Correspondence on Eichmann in Jerusalem, in: *Modern Judaism* 34 (2014), no. 2, 188–209; Dávid Kaposi, The Breakdown of Discourse. Post-Holocaust Jewish Identity and the Scholem-Arendt Exchange, in: *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 11 (2017), no. 1, 85–110; Zadoff, Gershom Scholem, 189–201; Lotte Houwink ten Cate, "'Die Amerikanerin' Scolds!" How the Private Friendship between Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem Went Public, in: *New German Critique* 46 (2019), no. 1, 1–14; David Baron, "I Am Not Moved by Any 'Love' of this Sort." Hannah Arendt's Response to Gershom Scholem against the Backdrop of Her Understanding of Jewish Emancipation and Its Shortcomings, in: *Daat [Knowledge]. A Journal of Jewish Philosophy & Kabbalah* 87 (2019), 611–628 (Heb.).
- 65 Theodor W. Adorno/Gershom Scholem, "Der liebe Gott wohnt im Detail." Briefwechsel 1939–1969, ed. by Asaf Angermann, Frankfurt a. M. 2015.
- 66 Liliane Weissberg, *Über Haschisch und Kabbala. Gershom Scholem, Siegfried Unseld und das Werk von Walter Benjamin*, Marbach am Neckar 2012. See also idem, *Scenes from a Friendship. On the Epistolary Exchange between Gershom Scholem and Siegfried Unseld*, in: *The Germanic Review* 89 (2014), no. 3, 334–340.

is a truly interesting correspondence well deserving to be published in full. Less attention has been dedicated to Scholem's exchange with contemporary historians of religions or scholars of Jewish mysticism. Exceptions have been the edition of his correspondence with the scholar of early Christianity Morton Smith,<sup>67</sup> and more recently the publication of Scholem's extremely valuable letter exchange with his pupil and eminent interpreter of Hasidism Joseph Weiss.<sup>68</sup> Weiss is no doubt a fascinating figure – perhaps no less than Scholem – who tragically took his life in 1969, and future investigations on him and his work may help to clarify even better Scholem's relationship with whom he considered the most talented among his students.<sup>69</sup>

It is not possible to provide here a complete account of all of Scholem's works that appeared in different languages in recent years. But at least two of these books, I believe, deserve to be mentioned as they address Scholem's investigations into Sabbatianism. In 2016, Princeton University Press re-published Scholem's monumental biography of Shabbetai Zevi, according to Moshe Idel the peak of his academic enterprise,<sup>70</sup> which had originally appeared in two Hebrew volumes in 1957 and later, in 1973, in an expanded English translation. The new English edition has an introduction by Yaacob Dweck, which not only has the merit of summarizing very clearly Scholem's interest in Sabbatianism, but it also intelligently elaborates on the reception of the book.<sup>71</sup> While responses to the Hebrew version have generally addressed, and even polemically problematized, Scholem's interpretation of the Sabbatian phenomenon, reactions to the English translation, particularly in the United States, shifted the focus from the book to Scholem himself, who, as Dweck notes, “became an intellectual celebrity abroad, in Germany and in the United States, well before he came to be one in Jerusalem.”<sup>72</sup>

A previously unknown series of lectures on the history of the Sabbatian movement came out in 2018, edited by Jonatan Meir and Shinichi Yamamoto.<sup>73</sup> The book is the result of a fortuitous *trouvaille* in the archive locat-

67 Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem, *Correspondence 1945–1982*, ed. with an introduction by Guy G. Stroumsa, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2008.

68 Gershom Scholem and Joseph Weiss, *Correspondence 1948–1964*, ed. by Noam Zadoff, Jerusalem 2012 (Heb.).

69 See Gershom Scholem, *The Neutralisation of the Messianic Element in Early Hasidism*, in: *Journal of Jewish Studies* 20 (1969), 25–55, esp. 25 f.

70 Moshe Idel, *Saturn's Jews. On the Witches' Sabbat and Sabbateanism*, London 2011, 90.

71 Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi. The Mystical Messiah, 1626–1676*, with a new introduction by Yaacob Dweck, transl. by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Princeton, N. J., 2016, xxix–lxv.

72 *Ibid.*, lix. See also Yaacob Dweck, *Gershom Scholem and America*, in: *New German Critique* 44 (2017), no. 3, 61–82.

73 Gershom Scholem, *History of the Sabbatian Movement*, ed. by Jonatan Meir and Shinichi Yamamoto, Tel Aviv 2018 (Heb.).



ed in the Schocken Institute in Jerusalem. It includes the transcription of a course Scholem delivered at the Hebrew University during the academic year 1939/40, as well as eight other lectures he held in Rehovot in 1941 following the invitation of Berl Katznelson, one of the founders of Labor Zionism and Scholem's good friend. As the Kabbalah scholar Yehuda Liebes wisely remarked on the occasion of the presentation of the book, this publication should be regarded more as an interesting chapter within the field of Scholem studies than a contribution to the understanding of the history of the Sabbatian movement.<sup>74</sup> There is no doubt that some arguments in the interpretation of Sabbatianism which appears in the text are not correct, and some of them have been also revised by Scholem himself in his later scholarship. Yet, this book emerges as a substantial asset to capture the development of his thought and the phases in his interpretation of one of the most dramatic episodes in Jewish history.

No less important than Scholem's lectures is the introduction to the book, in which the two editors shed light on some of the riddles that still challenge Scholem scholars.<sup>75</sup> Two points have been made particularly clear, and it is worth highlighting them since they make a crucial claim against some perhaps too hazardous recent interpretations by Scholem biographers. First, in analyzing Scholem's depiction of Shabbetai Zevi as a manic-depressive figure – Scholem even delivered a lecture expressly devoted to this topic in November 1939 at the Schocken House<sup>76</sup> – Meir and Yamamoto carefully warn scholars not to draw dangerous parallels between Scholem's pseudo-medical diagnosis of Shabbetai Zevi and some apparently similar traits that may be found in his own personality.<sup>77</sup> Second, the editors very convincingly criticize those who have speculated about possible reasons why Scholem never managed to complete the sequel to his huge monography, namely the part

74 See Yehuda Liebes, *Toldot ha-tenu'ah ha-shabeta'it* [History of the Sabbatian Movement], 14 February 2018, <<https://liebes.huji.ac.il/yehudalieber/files/toldothashabtaut.pdf>> (13 June 2022) (speech held at the Schocken Institute in Jerusalem, Heb.).

75 Meir's and Yamamoto's introduction has been recently updated, translated into English, and published together with other relevant documents on Scholem and Sabbatianism: idem, *Gershom Scholem and the Research of Sabbatianism*, 19–102.

76 Jonatan Meir/Shinichi Yamamoto, *The Open Book. Gershom Scholem and the Research on Sabbatianism*, in: Scholem, *History of the Sabbatian Movement*, 9–43, here 22 (Heb.). See also the updated English version: idem, *Gershom Scholem and the Research of Sabbatianism*, 49–51. Besides the sources quoted by the editors, a short summary of the lecture can be found also in Hugo Bergman's unpublished diaries from 1939.

77 Ibid. See, e. g., Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, 141: "This is the only instance in all of Scholem's voluminous writings where he resorted to a psychiatric diagnosis (including learned footnotes!) of one of his subjects. His argument strikingly employs terms that might have applied to his own mental states twenty years earlier. Did he see some resemblance between the Messiah of Izmir and his own youthful messianic fervor?"

that was meant to address the history of the Sabbatian movement after the death of its self-proclaimed messiah.<sup>78</sup> Instead of looking for complicated explanations based on a supposed radical change in his scientific and ideological views, Meir and Yamamoto show how Scholem was still considering to work on the second part of the book at least until the 1970s. As it becomes clear, the only reason that prevented him from completing the work was the amount of new material that he had discovered meanwhile.

These are only two examples of how the work of Kabbalah scholars familiar with the object of Scholem's analysis can be of great help to Scholem interpreters, including philosophers and historians of ideas. In that sense, a similar contribution may also come from the publication – in a French translation – of another one of Scholem's unknown university courses on Abraham Abulafia,<sup>79</sup> from the new edition of *Be-ikvot Mashiah* (In the Footsteps of Messiah),<sup>80</sup> and for sure from the future edition of his 1949 series of English lectures on Hasidism.<sup>81</sup>

A completely different corpus of Scholem's texts can now be read in the huge volume *Poetica*, recently edited in German by Suhrkamp. Coeditor of the publication is Sigrid Weigel, who has been studying Scholem's literary and poetical texts for many years. The book can be seen as the culmination of an interest that began more than twenty years ago<sup>82</sup> and was the origin of a

78 Meir/Yamamoto, *The Open Book*, esp. 36–40. See, e. g., Engel, Gershom Scholem, 158 f.: “The *Sabbatai Zevi* book poses something of a riddle. On the one hand, one could argue that this book represents nothing but an elaboration of Scholem previous studies, not a shift in his understanding. [...] Scholem had too much material and thus he might have never quite ‘gotten around’ to completing this project. And yet, on the other hand, it is in this case rather compelling [sic] to argue that Scholem's choice to avoid the more explosive and complex theological aspects of Sabbateanism and to focus mainly on the standard historiographical depiction of the movement is rather telling. I tend toward the second option.”

79 See Gershom Scholem, *La cabale du “Livre de l’image” et d’Abraham Aboulafia*. Chapitres de l’histoire de la Cabale en Espagne, ed. by Joseph Ben-Shlomo, with a foreword by Saverio Campanini, transl. by Sabine Amsellem, Paris 2019.

80 This is an anthology of texts written by Nathan of Gaza which Scholem edited. It was published in a bibliophile edition by Moshe Spitzer's Tarshish Press in 1944. A new edition prepared by Jonatan Meir has been published by Blima Books in Jerusalem in 2021.

81 See Jonatan Meir, *Scholem's Archives*, in: *Tarbiz. A Quarterly for Jewish Studies* 78 (2010), no. 2, 255–270 (Review of Gershom Scholem, *The Latest Phase. Essays on Hasidism*, ed. by David Assaf/Esther Liebes, Jerusalem 2008, Heb.); also Shaul Magid, *For the Sake of a Jewish Revival. Gershom Scholem on Hasidism and Its Relationship to Martin Buber*, in: *Zadoff/Zadoff* (eds.), *Scholar and Kabbalist*, 40–75.

82 See, e. g., Sigrid Weigel, *Gershom Scholem und Ingeborg Bachmann. Ein Dialog über Messianismus und Ghetto*, in: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 115 (1996), no. 4, 608–616; idem, *Gershom Scholems Sprachtheorie zwischen Kabbalah und Klagelied*, in: *Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde/Niklaus Largier* (eds.), *Homo Medietas. Aufsätze zu Religiosität, Literatur und Denkformen des Menschen vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, New York/Frankfurt a. M. 1999, 521–532.

collective volume which Weigel coedited with Stéphane Mosès in 2000.<sup>83</sup> In her introduction, Weigel claims that the volume intends to fill an important lacuna in current Scholem studies, revealing his hitherto largely unknown “literary side.”<sup>84</sup> The book offers more than one hundred pieces by Scholem, of various lengths, of which circa one third had never been published. It is divided into six parts. The first collects Scholem’s early translations and reflections on the genre of lamentations (*kinot*); the second provides valuable examples of Scholem’s translations from Jewish religious texts (including an hitherto unpublished rendering of many Psalms); the third comprehends Scholem’s interventions on language and translation; the fourth gives some insights on his thoughts about Hebrew writers Ḥayim Nachman Bialik and Shmuel Yosef Agnon; the fifth includes small writings on literature which reach from Franz Kafka and Leah Goldberg to Philip Roth; the sixth collects more than fifty poems that Scholem authored from 1914 to 1974. This last part is especially useful, since it constitutes a much broader selection of Scholem’s poetry than the bilingual (German and English), rather inaccurate, edition first published in 2003 and reedited in 2017.<sup>85</sup>

There is no doubt that the book is quite an achievement. It is true that some of the unpublished texts – particularly the most interesting ones, such as those dealing with language and Scholem’s disenchanted view of Zionism – have largely been known to scholars and, to some extent, extensively quoted. Nonetheless, it is useful to have them all collected in one place for the first time. However, there are at least two points that the editors do not seem to take into consideration and that appear to be relevant if we want to understand the actual significance the literary element played in Scholem’s work. First of all, there is an essential difference between the texts Scholem drafted at his early age, mainly his reflections on silence and the language of lamentation, and the very heterogeneous *pièces d’occasion*, including most of his poems, that he wrote from time to time and published from the 1930s onward. His early texts were a first serious attempt at a theory of language, conceived in mutual exchange with Walter Benjamin, which, had it ever been accomplished, may have left a

83 Stéphane Mosès/Sigrid Weigel (eds.), Gershom Scholem. Literatur und Rhetorik, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2000.

84 Gershom Scholem, Poetica. Schriften zur Literatur, Übersetzungen und Gedichte, ed. by Herbert Kopp-Oberstebrink et al., Frankfurt a. M. 2019, 11. The book also provides a German translation for some of the few Hebrew poems composed by Scholem. See also Daniel Abrams, Gershom Scholem ke-meshorer ivri [Gershom Scholem as a Hebrew Poet], in: Kabbalah. Ketav et le-heker katave ha-mistika ha-yehudit [Kabbalah. Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts] 33 (2015), 91–109.

85 Gershom Scholem, The Fullness of Time. Poems, introduced and annotated by Steven M. Wasserstrom, transl. by Richard Sieburth, Jerusalem 2003; idem, Greetings from Angelus. Poems, introduced and annotated by Steven M. Wasserstrom, transl. by Richard Sieburth, New York 2017.

trace in his later interpretation of Kabbalah. However, starting from the late 1920s it would be an overstatement to claim that a truly aesthetic or literary interest can be found in Scholem.<sup>86</sup> As reviewers have promptly remarked, an analysis of his later critical involvement in literary matters makes it very clear that his interest in those texts was far from being purely literary or aesthetic, and that Scholem rather sought answers in them to the identitarian and theological questions that preoccupied him as a Zionist and a Jew.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, the volume leaves the overall impression that the editors were not completely familiar with Scholem's Hebrew publications, and this may be the reason for at least some of the imprecisions that can be found.<sup>88</sup> Previous publications and translations in other languages are mentioned only partially and not in a systematic manner.<sup>89</sup> Other texts that may have well suited the collection are not included, although they do exist already in Hebrew.<sup>90</sup>

86 See also an anecdote recounted by Joseph Weiss, according to which Scholem confessed not to have time to read any literature, except for Kafka. See Meir/Zadoff, "Divrei Shalom" or "Hayei Moharash," 371.

87 See Lina Barouch, Ha-ḥipus ha-ikesh aḥar Gershom Scholem ha-sifrutī ve-ha-ragish [The Obstinate Search for a Literary and Sensitive Gershom Scholem], in: Haaretz, 30 April 2020, <<https://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/.premium-1.8809789?lts=1591611875487>> (13 June 2022).

88 See, e. g., the very detailed critique provided by Michael Brocke, Gershom Scholems Poetica ediert und malträtiert, in: Kalonymos. Beiträge zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte aus dem Salomon Ludwig Steinheim-Institut an der Universität Duisburg-Essen 23 (2020), no. 1, 7–10. See also the following inaccuracies: The short 1948 poem dedicated to Georg Halpern has never been published and does not appear, as the book erroneously states (Scholem, Poetica, 744–745), in the previous collection *The Fullness of Time*. The same note features both on page 706 and on page 735, but in the first case it is completely out of place. In the small poem reported on page 758 the editors forget to mention that a big "K" drafted in pencil features in the center of the manuscript, perhaps suggesting a possible reading of the text (a hint to Kafka?).

89 For instance, Scholem's short fragment on Kafka and the book of Hiob have been previously published in a Hebrew (1989) and in an English translation (1997). Other references to earlier French and English translations, both of Scholem's short reflections on language and his poems, appear only seldom in the text and not systematically.

90 For example, the part dedicated to Scholem's texts on Agnon is far from being complete. See at least Scholem's interview with Dan Miron on Agnon, in: Gershom Scholem, Continuity and Rebellion, Tel Aviv 1994, 65–87 (Heb.). Of this interview there is also a French translation by Cyril Aslanov in: Maurice Kriegel (ed.), Gershom Scholem, Paris 2009, 70–84. See also various passages from Scholem's unpublished diaries dedicated to Bialik and Agnon, as discussed, e. g., in Zadoff, Gershom Scholem, 6–12; see also Scholem's speech on the occasion of Agnon's seventieth birthday in July 1958, in: Dan Laor, "Kol ma she-ha-lev rozeh lomar ve-eino maspek lomar." Kolot me-mesibat yovel ha-shiv'im shel Sh. Y. Agnon ["All What the Heart Wants to Say but Does Not Manage to Say." Voices from the Seventieth Birthday of S. Y. Agnon], in: Alpayim. Ketav et benteḥumi le-iyun, hagut ve-sifrut [Alpayim. A Multidisciplinary Publication for Contemporary Thought and Literature] 30 (2006), 221–247. The same journal includes a CD with a recording of Scholem's speech.

Finally, a reference to more recent studies dealing with Scholem's poetry may perhaps have helped to better date some rather problematic pieces.<sup>91</sup>

### Conclusion: Scholem Studies within Jewish Studies

“A scholar is not a priest; it is an error to aspire to make a scholar into a priest.”<sup>92</sup>

Young scholar Itamar Ben-Ami recently suggested that there is indeed something ironic in the fact that academic Kabbalah research in Israel and in the United States is to a certain extent perceived as the result of the existential crisis of a young German Jew from the Weimar Republic.<sup>93</sup> To be sure, this view has already been proven wrong by many scholars who have traced the pre-Scholemian roots of modern Kabbalah scholarship,<sup>94</sup> and so has been Scholem's own claim to have established a completely new discipline.<sup>95</sup> However, if one takes a closer look at the way Judaism and its history have been grasped and represented in the works of many intellectuals – poets, artists, philosophers, literary scholars – in Europe as well as in the United States all along the second half of the twentieth century, this claim, though a little adjusted and no longer restricted to academic scholarship, may still guard a certain meaning.

91 With regard to the fragment entitled “Sprache” (Scholem, *Poetica*, 310 f.), most probably from 1964 (instead of 1970), see, e. g., Zadoff, *Gershom Scholem*, 255. With regard to the poem “Media in vita” (Scholem, *Poetica*, 727 f.), see Enrico Lucca, *Sotto il segno della gnosi. Un'approssimazione ad alcune poesie scholemiane* [Under the Sign of Gnosis. Toward a Better Comprehension of Some of Scholem's Poems], in: Tamara Tagliacozzo (ed.), *Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem e il linguaggio* [Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, and Language], Milan 2016, 167–184.

92 Gershom Scholem, *Identifizierung und Distanz. Ein Rückblick*, in: Adolf Portmann/Rudolf Ritsema (eds.), *Denken und mythische Bildwelt*, Frankfurt a. M. 1981, 463–467, here 466.

93 Itamar Ben-Ami, *Gershom Scholem. Hidat demuto shel bakhir ha-intelektu'alim ha-isra'elim* [Gershom Scholem. The Puzzling Figure of the Major Israeli Intellectual], in: Haaretz Books, 13 March 2020, 1–3, here 2, <<https://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/premium-REVIEW-1.8642905>> (13 June 2022).

94 To mention but one recent example: George Y. Kohler, *Kabbalah Research in the Wissenschaft des Judentums (1820–1880). The Foundation of an Academic Discipline*, Berlin/Munich/Boston, Mass., 2019.

95 See Daniel Abrams, *Defining Modern Academic Scholarship. Gershom Scholem and the Establishment of a New (?) Discipline*, in: *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 9 (2000), no. 2, 267–302.

It is no secret that the “European” or the “American” Scholem has often assumed the traits of a medium – to some extent even of a wizard<sup>96</sup> – of someone who alone was granted the access to, and could claim authority over, an “alien wisdom,” to borrow Arnaldo Momigliano’s famous expression, which nevertheless has always been regarded as a necessary ingredient to the regeneration of Western culture and philosophy.<sup>97</sup> Scholem seems to have understood very well the seductive power that Jewish tradition exerted over European intellectual elites during the last century. It is the fascination of something subversive which conceals the promise of a radical change,<sup>98</sup> yet it remains somewhat opaque and enigmatic, always requiring an interpreter or a translator. When Scholem half-jokingly claimed that if he believed in metempsychosis, he would likely fancy to be a reincarnation of Johannes Reuchlin, the eminent Renaissance Catholic Hebraist and first explorer of Judaism, he was probably well aware of that and of the task that he took upon himself.<sup>99</sup>

Against this background, it appears obvious that scholarship which aims to shed light on how Scholem’s work has been read and used by Western intellectuals – Jewish and non-Jewish alike – proves very useful often much

96 In a letter to his friend George Lichtheim from 4 January 1968, Scholem playfully signed as “emeritierter Zaubermeister” (master magician emeritus). See Gershom Scholem, *Briefe*, 3 vols., Munich 1994–1999, here vol. 2: 1948–1970, ed. by Thomas Sparr, Munich 1995, 193.

97 See the famous description provided by Rolf Tiedemann of Scholem’s reputation among the members of the Frankfurt School: “The fame that preceded him at the Institute for Social Research would have surprised nobody more than Scholem himself. It was the reputation of an ultimate authority, only that one could not quite say an authority on what. Of course, on the history of the Kabbalah, but we hardly knew anything about it. [...] Especially Adorno was tireless in paving the way for Scholem’s fame. He could well have said of Scholem what the latter used to say of the Kabbalists: he knows something that we do not know.” See Rolf Tiedemann, *Nachwort*, in: Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin und sein Engel. Vierzehn Aufsätze und kleine Beiträge*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt a. M. 1983, 211–221, here 212 (transl. by the author).

98 See Michael Löwy, *Rédemption et utopie. Le judaïsme libertaire en Europe centrale. Une étude d’affinité élective [Redemption and Utopia. Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe. A Study in Elective Affinity]*, Paris 1988. Löwy’s study, which has been translated into many languages (among them Italian, German, Spanish, and more recently English), is still one of the most read books on Jewish thought in many European departments of philosophy.

99 See Gershom Scholem, *Die Erforschung der Kabbala von Reuchlin bis zur Gegenwart* (1969), in: idem, *Judaica*, 6 vols., Frankfurt a. M. 1968–1997, here vol. 3: *Studien zur jüdischen Mystik*, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, 247–263.

beyond the individual case.<sup>100</sup> As a matter of fact, to investigate how highly idiosyncratic figures like Theodor Adorno, Paul Celan, Edmond Jabès, Nelly Sachs, Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas, Harold Bloom, Stéphane Mosès, or even Giorgio Agamben – to name but a few – each absorbed Scholem’s reading of Jewish history in their own way and made extensive use of his interpretation of the main concepts of Jewish tradition does not only provide a valuable example of *Quellengeschichte* or fill a gap in the history of reception of Scholem’s work. Perhaps more significantly, it also delivers insights into the way Jewish tradition has first been conceptualized, and then understood, adapted, and translated via Scholem into the languages and categories that characterize the Western literary and philosophical discourse.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly, the enigmatic aura of authority surrounding Scholem’s figure among European and American intellectual elites may be understood as an essential part in the process of cultural and philosophical reinterpretation of Judaism which took place in Germany from the nineteenth century onwards and was charged with additional emotional and psychological overtones in the aftermath of the Holocaust. To focus on Scholem and on the reception of his work in the late twentieth century – especially in Europe – means therefore to reflect, at the same time, on the symbolical role that a certain image of Judaism – its cultural and religious tradition – has played in the European intellectual imagery, and this precisely in a time when the old continent had to cope with the trauma of the almost complete disappearance of its Jewish population. We can rest assured that Scholem and his enigmatic aura will continue to haunt us for quite a long time.

100 See, e. g., Moshe Idel, Jacques Derrida and Kabbalistic Sources, in: idem, *Old Worlds, New Mirrors*, 176–192; Daniel Pedersen, *The Zohar as Poetic Inspiration. Nelly Sachs’s Reading of Gershom Scholem*, in: Zadoff/Zadoff (eds.), *Scholar and Kabbalist*, 114–123; Ansgar Martins, *The Migration of Metaphysics into the Realm of the Profane. Theodor W. Adorno Reads Gershom Scholem*, transl. by Lars Fischer, Leiden/Boston, Mass., 2020.

101 Moshe Idel spoke of an “ideatic turn,” hinting to the shift from the ritual and rabbinic praxis to the interest in more theological and philosophical aspects that characterized the interpretation of Judaism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western Europe. According to Idel, this turn well reflects the agenda both of scholars from the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and of Scholem. See Moshe Idel, *Transfers of Categories. The German-Jewish Experience and Beyond*, in: Steven E. Aschheim/Vivian Liska (eds.), *The German-Jewish Experience Revisited*, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2015, 15–44.





## Abstracts

Natalia Aleksion

When Fajga Left Tadeusz:

The Afterlife of Survivors' Wartime Relationships

This paper offers a close reading of the correspondence between Fajga Ginsburg, a Polish Jewish survivor, and Tadeusz Kobyłko, a Polish non-Jewish man, who offered her shelter and protection and whose son she bore during the Holocaust. Their letters reveal two completely different sides of a relationship presented vis-à-vis different intended audiences. Fajga, who had left Poland and immigrated to Palestine in the autumn of 1947, wrote intimate and private letters meant for her husband's eyes only. On the other hand, Tadeusz's letters appealed to a number of agencies – Jewish and Polish – and thus adopted a more official format. Fajga's account reflects more intimately on the emotional trauma of the Holocaust for Jewish survivors. Tadeusz's account outlines the pressures that postwar Jewish organizations brought to bear on Jews emerging from hiding, a topic which is not often discussed in academic discourse. Their correspondence reflects the emotional turmoil of the aftermath of the Holocaust, when survivors faced questions about their immediate future: rebuilding their personal and communal lives, while coming to terms with the scope of their loss, seeking relatives and justice, as well as reclaiming property. It emphasizes the tension some Jews felt, being torn by obligations to their rescuer or spouse versus an expectation to return to the Jewish community. Their letters shed light on the intricacies of wartime relations, family networks, and unions that often defied prewar religious and class divisions. While some of the personal drama stemmed directly from the history of rescue and a relationship that emerged from it or was key to it, this unique story needs to be interpreted in the context of other wartime arrangements between Jews and their non-Jewish rescuers.

Zarin Aschrafi

Intellektuelles Exil:

Zur Gründungsgeschichte der Zeitschrift *Babylon*

The year 1986 witnessed the publication of the first issue of *Babylon. Beiträge zur jüdischen Gegenwart*. This journal constituted the culmination of the search for an intellectual standpoint among its circle of editors. Its origins lay in a discussion begun in Frankfurt am Main in 1980 between the so-

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called *Jüdische Gruppe*, which was made up of second-generation Jews living and/or socialized in Germany. This article focuses on the biographies of these protagonists along with their specific generational and German experiences and reconstructs their conflicted political process of integration in the “land of the perpetrators.” This process resulted in their identification with the figure of the “non-Jewish Jew,” which allowed them to combine their own particular backgrounds with a universal political claim. The metaphorical adherence to Babylonian exile alluded to in the journal’s name, meaning the diasporic counterbalance to the Holy City of Jerusalem, did justice to both of these aspects: their Jewish backgrounds, on the one hand, and their intellectual homeland, spatially as well as temporally detached, on the other.

Lukas Böckmann

Gauchos und Guerilleros:

Juden zwischen Arbeiter- und Guerillabewegung im Argentinien des 20. Jahrhunderts

In the early 1960s, the *Ejército Guerrillero del Pueblo* tried to implement the example of the Cuban Revolution in Argentina. The group, which was led by the Argentinian journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti, received direct support from Havana, mainly coordinated by Masetti’s close friend Ernesto Guevara. Within the ranks of the guerrilleros, the proportion of Jews was significantly higher than in the total population. By tracing the history of Jewish experience in twentieth-century Argentina as well as the development of the Argentine labor movement and leftist radicalism in the 1960s, the article focuses on what prompted urban, middle-class university students of Jewish descent to participate in an armed group. It argues that the guerilla offered a utopian vision for future equality at a time when Soviet communism had disappointed the former promises of the labor movement. However, the subsequent trials and executions that the guerilla enacted against its own members demonstrated in a tragic manner that this hope was likewise futile.

Irit Chen

The Israeli Consulate in Munich, 1948–1953:

Conflicting Policies towards German-Jewish Communities

This article focuses on the attitudes of the Israeli Consulate in Munich towards the surviving German Jews who opted to renew Jewish communities in West Germany. In particular, it considers Israel’s boycott policy of Jewish life in this country and its economic interests in reparations from the gov-

ernment in Bonn. The article argues that in order to fulfill both expectations, namely heeding the call of the Israeli public to boycott Jewish life in Germany and advancing Israel's interests in reparations, the consulate had to consolidate a policy towards the German-Jewish communities that revolved around the duality of exclusion and inclusion, of avoidance and contact. The consulate was involved in the formulation and consolidation of political decisions relevant to the Jewish communities in Germany, but at the same time adopted a position that rejected the connection to Jewish communal life. Its actions were therefore guided by self-serving Israeli motives rather than by support for or acceptance of the community's renewal.

Arno Dusini

Das „Dritte Reich“ der Phrase:  
Karl Kraus 1913, 1919 und 1933  
(Mit einer Note zu Paul Celan)

This article analyzes the reception of Karl Kraus' language criticism, which evolved against the background of an authoritarian concept of authorship, from the point of view of three historical periods: before World War I, after the war, and under National Socialism. The central aspect is the idealistic foundation of the term *Phrase*, which played a crucial role in Kraus' epistemological understanding and whose aporias recall a linguistic social contract that is pivotal to every civil society: the necessity of an intact relationship between the object and its name. An additional note is dedicated to Paul Celan's programmatic work *Engführung*, which cites Kraus' most famous "last" poem *Man frage nicht*.

Liliana Ruth Feierstein

„Ruht er im Dunkeln der Gezeiten ...“:  
Tod und Begräbnis im Spannungsfeld konkurrierender Gesetze in Lateinamerika

This essay focuses on the productive tensions between the sovereign law of the nation-state and Jewish law (*halacha*). It draws on the practices of death and burial rites as they represent an existentially radical moment in life in which differences can become more evident. Examining various examples of conflict in the Southern Cone – the funeral of Stefan and Lotte Zweig, the cemetery of Jewish prostitutes in São Paulo, and the burial of the Jewish victims of the dictatorship in Brazil – and emphasizing the productiveness of difference in these disputes, it illuminates the possibility of a political theory

that does not have to choose between the sovereign law of the state and minority law but rather considers their coexistence as a chance for democracy.

Gregor Feindt

New Industrial Men in a Global World:

Transfers, Mobility, and Individual Agency of Jewish Employees of the Bat'a Shoe Company, 1938–1940

On the eve of World War II and the Holocaust, the Czechoslovak shoe company Bat'a transferred numerous staff to overseas factories and subsidiary companies, including approximately eighty Jewish employees. This article argues that this mobility reflected an economic strategy that attempted to utilize qualified personnel – the so-called new industrial men – in the process of decentralizing the global company. By studying the agency of these transferees, the article inquires into individual cases of Jewish employees using Bat'a to flee from Czechoslovakia and antisemitic discrimination. It also discusses the company's unsuccessful attempts to leave its headquarters in the town of Zlín. The article maintains that the mobility of Jewish Bat'a employees stemmed from both management decisions and their motility, that is the individual capability to move beyond spatial or social boundaries, and thus adds to our understanding of Bat'a's social experiment of “new industrial men.”

Frank Golczewski

Grenzland-Erfahrungen:

Die ukrainische Nationsbildung und die Juden

This article deals with Jewish-Ukrainian relations in the context of Ukrainian nation-building. As the latter had to compete with Polish and Russian efforts to include and assimilate Ukrainians, Ukrainian nationalists tended to identify Jews with their competitors. In this context, they nationalized non-national early modern events and collaborated with the Germans in World War II in organizing pogroms and rendering auxiliary services to the extermination of European Jewry. Ukrainian antisemitism can be traced to religious, economic, and national political attitudes, but it was – as in other cases – not the mindset of all Ukrainians. Thus, its development can be outlined in the light of the complicated and even today sometimes disputed nation-building process.

Gustavo Guzmán

A Community Working for Progress:

The Chilean Right Wing's Improved Attitudes toward Jews, 1958–1978

Between the 1930s and the 1970s, Chilean right-wing attitudes toward Jews changed significantly. If during the days of the November Pogrom the prevailing approach ranged from indifference to hostility, this had by the late 1970s been replaced by an unprecedentedly friendly attitude. This change was due to both external and internal factors. Israel's cooperation with Pinochet's Chile, the alignment of both countries with the USA, and the global weakening of right-wing antisemitism after World War II are reasons for the former. Regarding the latter, the incorporation of Jews into the Chilean bourgeoisie – and the right itself – played a key role. This article outlines this trajectory from the late 1950s, when the Chilean right wing embraced a businesspeople identity strongly influenced by the “American way of life,” until the late 1970s, when the right as a whole aligned with General Pinochet's dictatorship.

Emmanuel Nicolás Kahan

The Jewish Youth in Times of Political Radicalization:

Argentina, 1960/1970

Although the Six-Day War in June 1967 was neither the first nor the most relevant violent outbreak in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it was extensively treated in Argentine public debates and widely analyzed as an exceptional event. As different works on Jewish life in Argentina have shown, the country's Jewish presence during the first half of the twentieth century was primarily challenged by right-wing nationalist organizations. This situation changed during the 1960s and especially after the June War. In its aftermath, the debates began circling around the legitimacy of the State of Israel and Zionism and a growing number of the discussions' participants belonged to different sections of the national left. This article aims to reveal how these years were perceived by some of Argentina's most outstanding intellectuals – Abelardo Castillo, José Itzigsohn, Emilio Troise, León Perez, Pedro Orgambide, Horacio Verbitsky, Alfredo Varela, and León Rozitchner – and how they developed their dissimilar views on the State of Israel. It also intends to show how a spatially distant war served to formulate their positions on international politics as well as to situate themselves in the local political agenda. Finally, the article seeks to sharpen the understanding of the tensions this outbreak in the Arab-Israeli conflict generated between the organizations of the national left and the different protagonists of Jewish life in Argentina.

Borbála Klacsman

After the Storm:

The Long-Term Consequences of the Holocaust and Compensation in Hungary

Restitution and compensation for Holocaust survivors has only recently moved to the forefront of historical research. In Hungary, even though the topic has been partially covered in a handful of articles and books, an overarching synthesis is still missing, and previous scholarship addressed the topic strictly from a legal, economic, or political history perspective. This paper, however, proposes a micro-historical approach, which allows the process and results of compensation to be scrutinized from a more immediate point of view. The case studies of Holocaust survivors from Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County who submitted restitution claims illuminate their personal stories and attitudes to reparations. By connecting the prewar economic circumstances of the survivors to the confiscations and then to their initial postwar situation and reparations, this in-depth investigation sheds light on how their lives were affected by the Holocaust even years after the fact.

Yael Levi

“America – A New World for Jewish Children”:

A Recently Discovered Letter by Sholem Aleichem

In the Herman Bernstein collection at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, in a folder bearing the title “undated and unidentified,” I found what I believe to be an unknown letter from the famous Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem (Shalom Rabinowitz, 1859–1916). The letter, written to the Russian-American author and editor Herman Bernstein, is presented here for the first time, translated from the Yiddish, dated, and discussed. It adds an as yet unknown piece to Sholem Aleichem’s epistolary legacy and sheds new light on a significant issue in his writing – the image of American Jewish children. The event described in the letter is a short visit to the Educational Alliance in the Lower East Side of New York City. Although it does not bear a date, I suggest that this unofficial event took place a few days after Sholem Aleichem’s first arrival in New York, sometime between 21 October and 25 October 1906. This article analyzes the historical context in which the letter was written and raises some suggestions regarding its literary implications. It aims to reveal the origins of some of Sholem Aleichem’s insights presented in the letter, thus illuminating a new aspect in his writing.

Enrico Lucca  
Recent Literature on Gershom Scholem:  
A Review Essay

The article analyzes the most important scholarly publications on the life and work of Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), the great Berlin-born Israeli historian of Jewish mysticism, that have appeared in the last ten years. It takes into account both biographical studies and recent editions as well as re-editions of Scholem's texts and courses. Starting by questioning the growing interest generated by Scholem's person and writing, it suggests that the reception of his work has differed across various countries and scholarly audiences (Germany, Israel, and the United States). It also argues that philosophers, literary scholars, and scholars of Jewish mysticism have for many years read their own Scholem, hardly interacting with each other and thus often failing to offer a complete picture of his intellectual endeavor. It finally reflects on the importance of Scholem in shaping the way Judaism and Jewish history were conceived and (re-)interpreted by Western scholars and intellectuals during the twentieth century.

Mariano Ben Plotkin  
Psychoanalysis between Marxism and Jewishness in Argentina:  
The Parallel Trajectories of Marie Langer and José Bleger in the 1960s and 1970s

Focusing on the parallel trajectories of two prominent Jewish Argentine psychoanalysts, José Bleger (1922–1973) and Marie Langer (1910–1987), this article analyzes the possibilities and limits of articulating psychoanalysis, Marxism, and Jewishness in Argentina during the 1960s and 1970s. Although both Bleger and Langer tried to conciliate psychoanalysis, Marxism, and the social sciences, their projects diverged widely and neither was successful. This was due to both internal tensions as well as external factors associated with the violent and polarized political environment that the country (and the continent as a whole) was experiencing in those decades. These failures had far-reaching consequences for the development of psychoanalysis in Argentina.

Na'ama Seri-Levi  
“Gypsy-Nomads”:

The Refugeism of Polish Jewish Repatriates after World War II

The largest group of Polish Jews to survive the Holocaust was comprised of those who had escaped or were exiled to the Soviet Union. A main characteristic of this group was that they were refugees, uprooted from the very beginning of the war until after it ended. This unique aspect defined them for nearly ten years, as they migrated across vast geographic distances: from Poland eastward to the furthest areas of the Soviet Union, back to Poland, and then westward to Germany and Austria, temporarily residing there in displaced persons camps while waiting to emigrate and settle permanently, at last. This article illuminates the experience of wandering as a crucial component in those refugees' lives following the war. After their arrival at the DP camps, this characteristic distinguished them from other groups of Holocaust survivors who resided in the camps during this time.

Gerald Stourzh

„Denn es ist nicht alles gleich, was Menschenantlitz trägt.“ –

Die NS-Doktrin der Ungleichheit der Menschen im Lichte eines Reichsgerichtsprozesses aus dem Jahr 1936

This article examines a lawsuit between the German film production company UFA and the Swiss Theater- und Verlags-AG Zürich, focusing on the final ruling by the Reichsgericht in June 1936. The two parties were bound by a contract from 1933, in which the UFA had purchased the right to a film adaptation of a screenplay by the screenwriter and director Erik Charell as well as its copyrights. The UFA claimed its right of withdrawal from the contract based on the fact that Charell was Jewish, a cause disputed by the Swiss association. By referring to status distinctions known from the pre-liberal era, the verdict upheld the inequality of people in all clarity, thereby rejecting the principle of equal rights of the liberal democratic legal system. Its overall aim was to justify the inferior legal position that Jews were condemned to during the Nazi regime.



Rafi Tsirkin-Sadan  
 Zwischen Ablehnung und Anerkennung:  
 Simon Dubnow als Literaturkritiker

Before Simon Dubnow decided to devote greater attention to his historical works, he was active as a literary critic for the Russian Jewish newspaper *Voskhod* from 1883 to 1893. During this period, which has to date received less attention from scholars, Dubnow wrote reviews on Hebrew and Yiddish literature as well as portraits of writers. The realism of Russian literature provided him with the interpretative framework for his literary criticism, which was interwoven with parallel tendencies in Jewish literature. At the same time, he integrated elements from Jewish discourse and the literary discourse of the Haskala into his critique and articulated a national program. His reviews of Yiddish literature further show that, contrary to the usual hierarchization, he advocated a pluralistic conception of Jewish literature consisting of three languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian.

Avi-ram Tzoreff  
 “An Imagined ‘Desert’ That Is Indeed the Core of the Yishuv”:  
 Rabbi Binyamin and the Emergence of Zionist Settler-Colonial Policies  
 (1908–1914)

The period between 1908 and 1914 was crucial for the formation of the Zionist Yishuv’s political and cultural repertoire in Palestine. This repertoire was characterized by the tendency to create the Yishuv as spatially and economically distinct from its Arab surroundings and as an organic and pure space that would enable the recovery of the Jewish exilic body in order to restore its “vitality.” This was practiced through the adoption of clear settler-colonial policies that included land purchases from absentee landlords and the expulsion of Palestinian fellahin from these lands, excluding the Palestinians from the emerging economy, and creating a sphere within Palestine that distinguished itself culturally and linguistically. This article focuses on the opposition to this repertoire by Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, also known as R. Binyamin – an opposition that he voiced from his standpoint as a Zionist and as an official of the Palestine Office. Of particular interest are the various aspects of this opposition: his criticism of the hegemonic, segregationist, and economic Zionist policy and of Zionist representations of Palestinian resistance, as well as his promotion of the study of Arabic in the Yishuv. The last subject will also serve as a basis for the examination of R. Binyamin’s intensive writing during the language controversy and of the way in which he understood the place of Hebrew as a native and non-colonial language. His

turn towards opposition in these formative years of settler-colonial Zionist patterns will be revealed as an attempt to develop an alternative notion of indigenosity, against the hegemonic Zionist Biblical one.

Annette Weinke

When Irrationality Shapes Reality:

John H. Herz's Anthropomorphizing Analysis of Nazi Legal Concepts of World Order

In the course of the ongoing historicization process of international law and international relations in the “extreme” twentieth century, the contribution of European and German-Jewish émigré lawyers has increasingly attracted scholarly interest, particularly concentrating on their outsider status as “edge people” (Tony Judt). This essay follows these discussions and addresses the role of German-Jewish experts of international law as a thought collective, given their joint educational and cultural background of Weberian and Schmittian tradition and their shared experiences of persecution, escape, and exile. By focusing on John (Hans Hermann) Herz's early work on National Socialist notions of international law, it advances the argument that the liberal internationalism of this particular group distinguished its members from the rest of the Anglo-American scholarly community, enabling them to universalize a specific historical itinerary and to elevate it onto a global scale. The distinctiveness of their approach consisted in using ideas about collective emotions and intuitive assumptions about human nature as epistemological departure points for investigating international affairs. In their multifaceted attempts to renew, modernize, and fortify their field of activity against its illiberal enemies, these scholars represented a skeptical counteract to the “political studies enlightenment” movement depicted in Ira Katznelson's nostalgic group portrait.

Sarah Ellen Zarrow

Imagining and Reimagining the Encounter between Max Weinreich and Regina Lilientalowa:

Gender, Geography, and the Concept of “Yiddishland”

After ethnographer Regina Lilientalowa's (1875–1924) untimely death in 1924, several prominent Jewish intellectuals eulogized her in the Yiddish and Polish press. This article explores those eulogies, focusing on YIVO founder Max Weinreich's (1894–1969) remarks on a meeting he had with Lilientalowa just prior to her passing. It argues that Weinreich's words must

be read with attention to ideas of gender and geography. The article takes a microhistorical approach, seeing in Weinreich's description of his encounter with Lilientalowa evidence of the important role these concepts (and their intersection) played for Jewish intellectuals in the early years of the Second Polish Republic.

Susanne Zepp

*Pertencer:*

Historical Experience in the Writings of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977)

This article explores the work of Jewish-Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector and its complex approaches towards the relationship between historical experience, belonging, and literary representation. This entanglement within Lispector's oeuvre can be interpreted as a conscious artistic choice against essentialist conceptualizations – whether concerning literature, Brazilian-ness, gender, or Jewishness. These questions of belonging became the subject of her writing in multiple refractions by transcending rigid descriptions of presumed identities. Her texts insist on the autonomy of the artwork and deliberately avoid placative engagements. As the article argues, this is what constitutes their distinction, but has also led to the misunderstanding that her writings were not related to historical reality.



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