

**“Poor Jews! You Get Blamed for Everything!”: Hope and Despair in a Galician  
Yiddish Newspaper during the Revolutions of 1848-49\***

*by Rebecca Wolpe*

**Abstract**

*The revolutions that swept through Europe in 1848-49 aroused great excitement amidst many Jews in the Habsburg Empire and led to changes (albeit ephemeral) in the Jews’ status and rights. Motivated by the revolutions and the opportunity they offered, one Galician maskil, Avraham Menachem Mendel Mohr, founded a weekly Yiddish newspaper in Lemberg, the Tsaytung, in which he encouraged his readers to welcome this new age and adapt to it. In particular, he discussed extensively relations between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors, expressing his hope that a new era had dawned in Christian-Jewish relations and advising his readers on how to improve themselves within this context. Yet Mohr remained aware that the deep-rooted animosity towards the Jews would be difficult to dispel. Indeed, the editions of the Tsaytung reveal that as the revolutionary fervor faded he became increasingly pessimistic regarding the likelihood of changing Christian attitudes towards the Jews.*

**Introduction**

**Mohr’s *Tsaytung* in the Context of the Revolutions**

**Friends (mostly)**

**Enemies (mostly)**

**Mohr’s Program for Improvement**

**Stigmatism**

**Conclusion**

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## Introduction

Although the revolutions of 1848 achieved few practical long-term results,<sup>1</sup> some scholars view them as a “turning point” in the history of European Jewry. Indeed, the political status of the Jews “began to change... and their political activity took on a new, modern character, totally different from what it had been until then in Eastern Europe.”<sup>2</sup> Jews throughout the Habsburg Empire participated in the revolutionary fervor,<sup>3</sup> although this was largely limited to Jewish students and the intelligentsia or enlightened Jews (*maskilim*).<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the revolutions afforded the Empire’s Jews various opportunities and advantages: some joined the newly-

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the ephemerality of the revolutions see, for example, John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State. State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War*, (Stanford University Press, 2015), 99 ff; Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 218 ff. For a general survey of the revolutions see Peter Jones, *The 1848 Revolutions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: Routledge, 1991); Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*, translated by Chaya Naor, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 80. John Paul Himka also argues that Jewish politics in Galicia began with the struggle for emancipation during the revolutions of 1848-49. See John-Paul Himka, “Dimensions of a Triangle. Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Austrian Galicia,” *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Galicia. Jews, Poles and Ukrainians 1772-1918* 12 (1999): 19-27; 34. For a general discussion see Jacob Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848. The Anti-Jewish Riots in the “Year of Freedom” and their Influence on Modern Antisemitism*, (Tel Aviv: Moreshet, 1968), 10-16 [Hebrew].

<sup>3</sup> See Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 165; and Ernst Wangermann, “1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire,” in *1848. The Year the World Turned*, eds. Jay Boardman and Christine Kinealy, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 71.

<sup>4</sup> See Rachel Manekin, “‘Daitshen,’ ‘Polanim,’ o ‘Ostrim’? Dilemat hazehut shel yehudei Galitsya (1848-1851),” *Zion* 68 (2003): 234 [Hebrew]. Manekin notes that by no means all Jews supported the revolutions, rather its main adherents were the “Germanized” Jews with a liberal political outlook. Indeed, “the revolution of 1848 was a liberal bourgeois revolution, and Jewish liberals in all the countries of the [Austro-Hungarian] Empire stood behind with fervor.” Yet, as Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky note, in Galicia in particular the Jews were “politically divided during the revolution: some took an active part in the struggle, aligning themselves with the Poles, while others...adopted a pro-Austrian stand.” Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky, “The Jews of Galicia under the Habsburgs,” *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Galicia. Jews, Poles and Ukrainians 1772-1918* 12 (1999): 15. For further discussion see also Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 10 ff..

formed units of the National Guard,<sup>5</sup> Jews were able to serve as public officials,<sup>6</sup> the special Jewish taxes in Galicia were abolished,<sup>7</sup> and finally the 1849 constitution emancipated the Jews living in all the lands of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the changes wrought by the revolutions from above, which largely affected the intelligentsia, could not alone initiate internal changes in Jewish society or alter the day-to-day relations between Jews and their Christian neighbors. Indeed, maskilim had been arguing for some time that the Jews needed to make changes from the bottom-up—in their education, language, behavior, practices and professions—in order to gain admission to European society.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, some maskilim seized the opportunity of the revolutions to further advance their program for change.

Thus, following the abolition of censorship on 15 March 1848,<sup>10</sup> Jews in Lemberg (Lwów, modern-day Lviv) Galicia,

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<sup>5</sup> For further discussion of this see below. On March 15, 1848, Emperor Ferdinand acquiesced to the demand that a National Guard be established to ensure public order. Concerning the National Guard in Lemberg and Jewish involvement in it see Manekin, “‘Daitshen,’ ‘Polanim,’ o ‘Ostrim?’” 231; Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 179-180.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Wangermann, “1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire,” 72; Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 165.

<sup>7</sup> Specific taxes targeting the Jewish population were introduced after Galicia became part of the Habsburg Empire. See Börries Kuzmany, *Brody. A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 103; Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 76. These placed a considerable burden on the Jewish population until they were finally abolished on 1 November 1848.

<sup>8</sup> The parliament elected following the declaration of March 1848 finally agreed upon a constitution in March 1849. However, Emperor Franz Josef I disbanded the parliament and granted a constitution autocratically. See Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 215.

<sup>9</sup> In very general terms, the maskilim sought to “normalize” European Jewry in keeping with current European trends, within limits which would prevent the annihilation of Judaism. Among the vast literature concerning the Haskalah, see, for example, Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment in the Nineteenth Century*, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2010) [Hebrew]; Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto. The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 1770-1870*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, eds. Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin, (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001)

<sup>10</sup> Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, 71.

who followed the political events and read the German papers... felt it their duty to prepare the members of the public who were unable to read German for the new age that would dawn after the introduction of the constitution... As the events of the revolution continued to develop, there was a need to find a means by which knowledge could be disseminated quickly. Therefore, they chose to write pamphlets in Yiddish...<sup>11</sup>

In addition to these pamphlets, a number of Jewish newspapers were established in this period with the aim of disseminating information and advancing a maskilic agenda.<sup>12</sup> These included the Vienna-based *Österreichische Central-Organ für Glaubensfreiheit, Cultur, Geschichte und Literatur der Juden. Unter Mitwirkung mehrer Gelehrten und Volksfreunde redigirt von Isidor Busch and Dr. M. Letteris* (the Central Organ, which appeared from 24 March 1848 until 10 October 1848) and the Hungarian weekly *Ungarische Israelit. Wochenschrift zur Beförderung des politischen, sozialen und religiösen Fortschrittes unter den ungarischen Israelitn* (15 April 1848 until 30 September 1848).<sup>13</sup> As Jacob Toury notes, while the number of readers of such newspapers was limited and their “part in directing the Jewish responses and consolidating a uniform Jewish reaction during the days of the revolution was minor,” they nonetheless played an important role “in preserving the traces of the opinions and reactions among the Jewish general public in the midst of the general confusion that reigned in those days.”<sup>14</sup>

Within this context, in May 1848 Avraham Menachem Mendel Mohr<sup>15</sup> began to publish a Yiddish newspaper in Lemberg, the *Tsaytung*, which appeared weekly

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<sup>11</sup> Manekin, “‘Daitshen,’ ‘Polanim,’ o ‘Ostrim?’”, 234. For a discussion of the pamphlets see Rachel Manekin, “Taking it to the Streets. Polish-Jewish Print Discourse in 1848 Lemberg,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 7 (2008): 215.

<sup>12</sup> Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 176, also notes that “with the swift end to censorship, new newspapers sprang up (or collapsed) with remarkable speed. Increasing numbers of citizens, it seems, could not wait to express their opinions publicly.” See also Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 17 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, 71.

<sup>14</sup> Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 22.

<sup>15</sup> Regarding Mohr see Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History. The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, (Oxford, Portland: Liverpool University Press, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002), 83, 140; *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, (New York: World

(aside from a few exceptions) until fall 1849. Mohr's paper provides a rare glimpse into how a Galician maskil reacted to the events of 1848-49, how he sought to portray these events to his readers, and the maskilic platform that he advocated. The *Tsaytung* is unique among the Jewish newspapers that appeared in the revolutionary period: it was the only one in Yiddish (albeit a highly Germanized Yiddish); it focused on news reports and did not include cultural or literary pieces; and it was the longest lasting of all such endeavors. Furthermore, it was produced almost single-handedly: Mohr states that he read fourteen newspapers every week, gleaning from them the reports that he translated and adapted for his paper.<sup>16</sup> Although scholars have examined the Jewish involvement in the revolutions of 1848 and the effects of these events from a number of perspectives,<sup>17</sup> most studies refer to Mohr's *Tsaytung* only incidentally and as yet no full examination of it has been conducted.<sup>18</sup> In particular, this newspaper can serve as an important source

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Yiddish Culture Congress, 1958), vol. 5, 397-399. Getzel Kressel, *Leksikon hasifrut ha'ivrit bedorot ha'aharonim*, (Jerusalem: Poalim, 1967), vol. 2, 219-220; B.T. Wallet, "'Links in a Chain.' Early Modern Yiddish Historiography in the Northern Netherlands (1745-1812)," PhD Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2012, 301 ff; concerning his early publications see Natan Shifris, "Shelomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir), 1790-1867. Torah, Haskalah, Wissenschaft des Judenthums, and the Beginning of Modern Jewish Nationalism," PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University of Israel, 2011, 168 ff [Hebrew]; on his translation of Joachim Heinrich Campe's *Die Entdeckung von Amerika*, see Rebecca Wolpe, "The Sea Voyage Narrative as an Educational Tool in the Haskalah," PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2011, 160 ff.

<sup>16</sup> December 29, 1848 (I: 35, p. 264).

<sup>17</sup> For example Salo W. Baron, "The Revolution of 1848 and Jewish Scholarship. Part II. Austria," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 20 (1951): 52 ff; Id., "The Impact of the Revolution of 1848 on Jewish Emancipation," *Jewish Social Studies* 11/ 3 (1949): 195-248; Elisabeth Campagner, *Judentum, Nationalitaetenprinzip und Identität. Die Juedische Revolutionspresse von 1848*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), in addition to the articles by Wangermann and Manekin cited above.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Jacob Toury, *Die Jüdische Presse im österreichischen Kaiserreich 1802-1918*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983), refers only briefly to the *Tsaytung* [mentioning that it is written in poor German in Hebrew characters], 29-32. Likewise, Campagner, *Judentum, Nationalitaetenprinzip und Identität*, discusses the *Tsaytung*, although she devotes more attention to other revolutionary Jewish newspapers. See Yosef Falk, "Stilmustern fun A. M. Mohr's 'Tsaytung,'" *Tsustayer* (1930): 48-53; Yisroel Vaynlez, "Di ershter yidishe tsaytungen in Galitsiye," *Der moment* (1924); and Majer Balaban, "75-yorike yubileum fun der ershter yidisher tsayung in Galitsiyen," *Bikher-velt* 2/3-4 (1923): 175-180. The *Tsaytung* is also mentioned by A. R. Malakhi, "Vegn a yidisher tsaytung vos iz dershinen in 1849," *Tsukunft* (March 1960): 128-132, who describes it as "the mother of the Yiddish press, the first published in Galicia and the first in all of Eastern Europe."

of information regarding Christian-Jewish relations during the period of the revolutions and Mohr's hopes for their future development.

A number of scholars have discussed the effect of the revolutions on Jewish identity and national sentiments.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Toury examines the attacks on Jews during the revolutionary period, arguing that they constituted a turning point in the development of modern anti-Semitism and in how Jews perceived the hostile sentiments among the surrounding populations. Indeed, he highlights the difference between Jewish reports of these disturbances and descriptions of pogroms composed in earlier periods: writers tended to rationalize attacks on the Jews that occurred during 1848-49, attributing them to the turbulent times rather than some form of divine punishment. Many sought to separate these occurrences from traditional religious hatred of the Jews and at the same time saw the Jews as active agents,<sup>20</sup> capable of changing their situation: "The events of the revolutions aroused [Israel] to take part in the fate of the nations amongst which the people lived and to seek its redemption not through the grace of heaven but rather his own hands, through secular acts."<sup>21</sup>

This certainly applies to the depictions of attacks on Jews published in the *Tsaytung*. Mohr rarely links such incidents with traditional, religious hatred of the Jews (although he consistently refers to non-Jews as "Christians") and often includes reports of priests that spoke out in favor of the Jews. However, for Mohr the attacks on Jews constitute part of his wider discussion of relations between Christians and Jews and the hope and excitement that he experienced during the initial period of the revolutions. Indeed, he sees the Jews as agents capable of improving their own situation, urging them to seize the opportunities available. To encourage his readers that the revolutions have ushered in a new age, Mohr

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<sup>19</sup> Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 39; Manekin, "'Daitshen,' 'Polanim,' o 'Ostrim?"; Manekin, "Taking it to the Streets;" Campagner, *Judentum, Nationalitaetenprinzip und Identität*.

<sup>20</sup> "In very general terms, an agent is a being with the capacity to act, and 'agency' denotes the exercise or manifestation of this capacity." See *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/agency/>. Accessed December 12, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Toury also claims that many sought to limit these incidents to conflicts between individuals that escalated. Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 63 and 100.

includes reports of positive interactions with surrounding Christian society and at the same time explains incidents of hostility as the result of the revolutionary period or as limited to a select few. Yet despite this, Mohr held no illusions regarding the complex reality in which the Jews lived. He often expresses his exasperation at the fact that the Jews are tarred with the same brush, that the actions of the few are detrimental to the entire Jewish people. Indeed, his pessimism regarding the impossibility of changing Christian attitudes towards the Jews becomes increasingly evident in later editions of the *Tsaytung*, as the revolutionary fervor faded and the Austrian army suppressed the revolutionary uprising in Hungary.

### **Mohr's *Tsaytung* in the Context of the Revolutions**

Galicia, where Mohr published his paper, a large stretch of Eastern European territory extending north from the Carpathian Mountains, came under Austrian rule in 1772 following the partition of Poland.<sup>22</sup> Its Jewish population, the largest concentration of Jews in East Central Europe (accounting for over 10% of the population), is usually characterized as uneducated and ignorant, strongly influenced by the Hasidic movement.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, most Galician Jews spoke Yiddish and received a traditional education. However, this image must be qualified: Galician Jewry was also influenced by German language and culture<sup>24</sup> and in the early nineteenth century the Galician towns of Brody, Tarnopol and Lemberg

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<sup>22</sup> See Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia. History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 13-14.

<sup>23</sup> Jerry Holzer, "Enlightenment, Assimilation and Modern Identity. The Jewish Elite in Galicia," *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Galicia. Jews, Poles and Ukrainians 1772-1918* 12 (1999), 79.

<sup>24</sup> On the German influence see Manekin, "'Daitshen,' 'Polanim,' o 'Ostrim?'" 225 ff and Baron, "The Revolution of 1848," 62 ff.

became centers of the Haskalah.<sup>25</sup> The growing number of enlightened, so-called “German,” Jews in the cities led to increasing divisions within Jewish society. In Lemberg, the hostility between enlightened Jews and the traditionalists reached a peak with the murder of Rabbi Avraham Kohn in September 1848.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the internal divisions within Jewish society, the Jews of Galicia lived in an extremely complex demographic situation—Poles and Ruthenians (Ukrainians) each accounted for 40% of Galicia’s population, alongside German and Armenian minorities.<sup>27</sup> John-Paul Himka describes these societies as “antagonistic,” noting that their economic interests often collided.<sup>28</sup> The Jews’ close association with the Polish nobles, whose estates they leased or managed, often resulted in tensions between Jews and the Ruthenian peasants,<sup>29</sup> although in some areas the Jews enjoyed close relations with the peasants and even incited hatred of the Poles (as occurred in Podgaytsy, see below). At the same time, the Jewish intelligentsia displayed an affinity with the ruling Austrian-German culture.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 71 ff. For more information on the Galician Haskalah see Nancy Sinkoff, “Tradition and Transition. Mendel Lefin of Satanow and the Beginnings of Jewish Enlightenment in Eastern Europe 1749-1826,” PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1996; Rachel Manekin, “Hasidism and the Habsburg Empire, 1788-1867,” *Jewish History. Special Issue. Toward A New History of Hasidism* 27/2-4, (December 2013): 271-297; Raphael Mahler, “The Social and Political Aspects of the Haskalah in Galicia,” *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 1 (1946), 64-85.

<sup>26</sup> Kohn was appointed as preacher of the new Temple established in Lemberg by the enlightened “German” Jews and in 1847 was named district rabbi. However, the Orthodox opposed his appointment and sought to secure his dismissal. The tension between the factions finally culminated in the murder of Kohn and his young daughter. See Michael Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg. Politics, Religion, and Violence in Modern Jewish History*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Himka, “Dimensions of a Triangle.”

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Bartal, Polonsky, “The Jews of Galicia under the Habsburgs,” 3-4. See also Martha Bohachsvsky-Chomiak, *The Spring of a Nation. The Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia in 1848*, (Philadelphia: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1967), 10: “The national diversity of the population... was the outstanding problem in the territory and exacerbated the already acute religious and economic tensions.”

<sup>30</sup> Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 39.



The revolution that began in Vienna in March 1848 quickly spread throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Imperial army became entrenched in battles in Italy and Hungary, and street-fighting in Vienna caused the Kaiser to flee the capital. By contrast, there was relatively little violence and unrest in Galicia: the main disturbance, which occurred on 1 November 1848 when fighting erupted between Austrian troops and members of the (Polish) National Guard, was short-lived.<sup>31</sup> Yet despite the relative calm, Lemberg was swept up by revolutionary fervor. Revolutionary leaders drew up a petition demanding Polish national rights (such as the use of the Polish language in schools), and also called for the entire population (including Jews) to be accorded political and civil liberties.<sup>32</sup>

Spurred on by this revolutionary excitement, Mohr describes how he

wrote articles in the language of the people among whom I live, that is Judeo-German [Yiddish] about the histories of the peoples, and when five thousand copies of these articles had been sold in a short time, and the children of my people hastened to me saying, please, continue to give us such things ... I began to place before them chronicles of the times ... and it was called by the name *Tsaytung*.<sup>33</sup>

Mohr viewed the revolutions as an opportunity to improve the condition of the Jews in the Habsburg Empire in general and Galicia in particular. His excitement was so great that at times his tone is messianic. For example, in a Hebrew poem written in honor of the Jewish New Year in 1848, he wrote (September 29, 1848, I: 22, p. 176)

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<sup>31</sup> Chomiak, *The Spring of a Nation*, 53.

<sup>32</sup> Manekin, "Taking it to the Streets," 216, 220. For a description see Mohr's letters to his brother-in-law Jacob Bodek published at the end of the work *Korot ha'itim* (Lemberg, 1851).

<sup>33</sup> Mohr included a short autobiographical account in the third volume of *Shvilei olam*. This geographical text was composed by the maskil Shimshon Halevi Bloch (vol. 1, Zolkiew, 1822 [Asia]; vol. 2, Zolkiew, 1827 [Africa]). Mohr reprinted the first two volumes and compiled a third volume concerning Europe, first printed in Lemberg in 1856. The quote here is taken from the 1881 edition printed in Yozefov (Józefów), vol. 3, 117.

The last day of a dear and wonderful year  
Unique in the history of the world in how awe-inspiring it is.  
Freedom and liberty, good and grace came forth from its midst,  
News that our fathers never dreamed of were heard.  
Rulers were removed from their thrones, into exile they went  
...  
Also on Yeshurun, the sun shone and light glimmered,  
Religious hatred was blown away like chaff in the wind

However, despite changes in the Jews' legal standing and in how the authorities treated them, Mohr was aware that internal (bottom-up) changes were necessary before Jews could become true members of European society. As such, his paper advanced a maskilic platform for the reform and improvement of Jewish society. In addition to encouraging his readers to acquire a general education (and provide one for their children),<sup>34</sup> to refrain from marrying young, to engage in professions aside from moneylending, he frequently returns to the matter of Jews' relations with their non-Jewish neighbors.

Mohr was far from the first or only maskil to see the revolutions as an opportunity to improve relations with the Christians. Indeed, a pamphlet describing the revolutions which was published in Lemberg on 26 March 1848 by Itzhak Yehudah ben Avraham, *Kol kore devar be'ito*,<sup>35</sup> concludes with a strongly optimistic message:

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<sup>34</sup> For this purpose Mohr also published a translation of the 1848 constitution (which he refers to in his newspaper on 22 May 1848 as a *Konstitutsiyon-bikhḥ, Konstitutsiyon. Dos kayzrlithe patent mit alle nayn und finftsig pinkte fon der konstitutsyion*), the 1849 constitution (*Di naye konstitutsiyon fun unzr gnedign kayzer Frants Yozef I* [Lemberg: 1849]); and a geographical work (*Kanfös ha'arets. Velt beshraybung... ale berihmte stedt in der velt... nokh alef beys ordnung* [Lemberg: J. Schnayder, 1848]), to help his readers navigate his reports of the events taking place all over Europe.

<sup>35</sup> For further discussion of this pamphlet see Manekin, Manekin, "‘Daitshen,’ ‘Polanim,’ o ‘Ostrim’?", 235-236.

And today, as the Christians are throwing off their hatred, their jealousy of the Jews, we, the children of Israel, who have always had good hearts, will certainly be with the Christians of one heart and one soul.

Our Rabbi Hillel, of blessed memory, the great sage, already two thousand years ago said that all the Toray rests on one verse: Love your neighbor as yourself. This means that you should love as yourself other people, whatever their religion. We should engrave this verse with gold letters on our hearts and on all our dealings, and we should always live as the verse instructs. Amen.<sup>36</sup>

Such sentiments are echoed repeatedly in Mohr's newspaper. Furthermore, he uses reports of Jewish-Christian interactions throughout the Habsburg Empire (and even outside it), both positive and negative, to support his platform for the reform and improvement of Jewish society. Mohr sees the Jews as agents capable of both defending themselves and improving their situation. To this end, he depicts instances of friendship and solidarity between Christians and Jews, demonstrating that such interactions are possible, and at the same time rationalizes the eruptions of violence, often attributing them to personal tensions enflamed by the circumstances or as limited to certain base individuals. Yet Mohr remained aware that animosity towards the Jews was deep-rooted and would be difficult to dispel. While he expressed this in early editions of the *Tsaytung*, as well as in a pamphlet published during the initial period of the revolutions (*Kos yeshuos*, see below), at first such sentiments were mitigated by his optimism and hope for improvement. However, in later editions of the *Tsaytung*, Mohr's tone becomes increasingly permeated with despair. While he continues to urge his readers to change their behavior in order to convince the Christians that they are worthy of full civil and political rights, he is aware that such an aspiration is not realistic, because no society is perfect. Thus, despite his hopes and his counsel, in increasingly frequent moments of pessimism Mohr laments that it may never be possible to change hostile attitudes towards the Jews.

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<sup>36</sup> p. 8. I would like to thank Rachel Manekin for sharing her copy of the pamphlet with me.

The following sections examine Mohr's commentary on and interpretation of Jewish-Christian relations in the context of the revolutions and how he used these events to advance his agenda for Jewish improvement. Subsequently, the paper explores the advice that Mohr offered to his Jewish readers concerning how to improve their situation. Finally, it discusses Mohr's reservations and his pessimism with regard to changing how the non-Jews perceive the Jews.

### Friends (mostly)<sup>37</sup>

Mohr seeks to encourage his readers that relations with their Christian neighbors are improving, bringing examples that demonstrate the possibility of friendship and brotherhood on all levels of society. He highlights the positive relationship between Poles and Jews, which as was noted enjoyed a short-lived golden age during the revolutions.<sup>38</sup> Likewise on 26 May 1848 (I:4, p. 23), Mohr reports the sudden death of a wealthy Jewish merchant in Bielitz (Bielsko-Biała), noting that the funeral was attended by the National Guard, the president of the magistrate's court and other officials. According to Mohr, this proves that not all Christians hate the Jews. He later describes how the funeral of Rabbi Abraham Kohn, who was murdered in September 1848, was attended by two companies of the National Guard and many Christians; one Christian even offered to provide the widow with a home (September 15, 1848, I:20, p. 155)

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<sup>37</sup> Significantly, just as Mohr complains about the generalizations levelled against the Jews, so too his depictions of interactions between Jews and Christians indicate the impossibility of making sweeping statements. Some reports include friends and enemies from among the same populations: for example, not all of the Polish intelligentsia favored the Jews, while not all peasants hated them.

<sup>38</sup> However, "seven and a half months of leaflets was not enough time to enable the new Polish-Jewish relationship to take hold, and the fissures in the wall that separated the two groups were sealed. Even more: new layers of suspicion were added when the Poles discovered that their Jewish supporters had abandoned the new-found Polish patriotism in favor of supporting the centralist and pro-German Austrian policy that was put into place after the revolution." See Manekin, "Taking it to the Streets," 226. For further discussion of this see Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 39 ff and Campagner, *Judentum, Nationalitaetenprinzip und Identität*, 101-123.

Mohr's positive portraits of Jewish-Christian interactions are not limited to the Poles. In his description of unrest against the Jews of Lipník (May 22, 1848, I:3b, p. 23), (in the modern-day Czech republic), Mohr depicts how the deputy Governor-president Count Lezansky calmed the rioters:

In Lipník and other towns in Moravia, the Christians began to make trouble for the Jews and wanted to attack them. However, the deputy governor, Count Lezansky, [...] begged them to be calm and showed them with very clever words that they should not hate the Jews because there are a few bad people among them. Now calm has been restored.

Yet not all officials regarded the Jews favorably. Indeed, some officials in Brody (June 16, 1848, I:7, pp. 53-54) refused to swear in the newly formed National Guard: "And why? Because there are many Jews among them!" However, the district commissioner overruled them, and the oath-taking ceremony proceeded as planned.

Mohr also depicts local preachers or priests who did not hate the Jews and succeeded in imparting to this to their communities.<sup>39</sup> For example (May 26, 1848 I:4, p. 26):

In Kalin the Christians wanted to start up with the Jews, they also did not want the Jews to be in the National Guard. The commander of the guard, however, explained that if Jews would not serve in the guard he would resign from his post. So too the priest preached in the church that God will take revenge for the Jews on anyone who does evil to them, because God 'keepeth Israel' [Psalm 121:4]. This worked and the Christians lived with Jews in the peace.

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<sup>39</sup> According to Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 55, this was characteristic of contemporary Jewish reports, which often noted the clergy's opposition to attacks on the Jews. Similarly, Toury notes that in Galicia in particular Jewish reports emphasized the positive influence wielded by the priests. *Ibid.*, 64.

Sometimes the simple people also showed their support of the Jews. On 21 July 1848 (I:12, p. 95) Mohr reports that when a Christian made a derogatory comment about the Jews in Ułaskowce, both Jews and Christians gathered outside his shop to protest. He was forced to apologize and ask for forgiveness, calling out “Long live the Israelites! Long live the Poles!” and providing refreshments free of charge all day long. Mohr is certain that this shopkeeper will not make derogatory comments about the Jews again. Here he expounds on the value of loving one’s fellow man: “We are all brothers,” he says, urging his readers to bear this in mind with regard to their Christian neighbors.

### Enemies (mostly)

Despite these rays of hope, depictions of hostile relations with the neighboring non-Jews recur frequently in the *Tsaytung*, demonstrating that the situation in the Austrian Empire remained highly volatile and complex. Indeed, during the initial months of the revolutionary period there were numerous eruptions of anti-Jewish sentiment (although comparatively few such cases occurred in Galicia),<sup>40</sup> and the increased prominence of Jews in public life, in politics and in the newly formed units of the National Guard often aroused animosity.<sup>41</sup> However, Mohr for the most part rationalizes these events, rooting them in the context of the upheaval caused by the revolutions, or attributing them only to a limited number of ‘bad’ people. Likewise, he frequently reports that the National Guard defended

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<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Toury discerns a great difference in this respect between Austrian-Poland and the rest of the Habsburg lands, apart from Austria proper and the Italian territories, where there were many more attacks on the Jews. See *Ibid.*, 55. For discussions of the attacks on Jews in Alsace, the German lands, Austrian Poland and the rest of the Habsburg Empire, see *Ibid.*, 22-62.

<sup>41</sup> Among the reasons for hostility towards the Jews in this period was the fact that Jews joined the units of the National Guard, which was seen as a step towards emancipation. *Ibid.*, 101 ff. Likewise, the early days of the revolutions coincided with the Easter holiday, which for generations had been known as a time of attacks on the Jews. Over time, due to inflation and currency devaluation caused by the revolutions and the ensuing wars, social factors came to play a significant role in triggering attacks on the Jews: “The situation of the working classes became worse from day to day.” *Ibid.*, 55 ff. See also Wangermann, “1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire,” 72 ff, who argues that increasing liberalism towards the Jews played a role in triggering these outbreaks of hostility.

and protected the Jews. He seems to suggest that with the correct behavior and the restoration of order, it will be possible to dispel these sentiments.

Thus, in the first issue (May 5, 1848, I:1, p. 1), Mohr notes that the simple people in Prague hate the Jews very much, as was demonstrated by graffiti on the wall of a Jewish shop calling for death to the Jews, followed by an attempted attack on the shop.<sup>42</sup> The reason for this, Mohr explains, was that the shop owner had petitioned the authorities in Vienna for a permit to open a shop in Prague's new town, where Jews were not allowed to do business. He also emphasizes that the intervention of the National Guard prevented physical violence. Mohr also reports that the simple people in Hungary hate the Jews, although the expression of this was sparked by an altercation between a Jewish member of the National Guard and a Christian citizen: 'The hatred of the Christians against the Jews continues on. It has now become greater because a Jewish National Guard member quarreled with a citizen and wounded him.' Consequently, residents of Pest demanded that Jews be excluded from the National Guard and that all Jews who had settled in the city since 1840 be expelled (*Ibid.*, p. 2).<sup>43</sup> On 23 April 1848, young men attacked the Jewish street in Pressburg (modern day Bratislava)<sup>44</sup> and rumors that the Jews had kidnapped Christians led to searches of Jewish homes. The guards found it impossible to subdue the rioters and the situation escalated: soldiers opened fire, resulting in a number of deaths, and "the people's anger was boundless." The following day, the seventh day of Passover, the people again gathered and mercilessly plundered all Jewish homes and shops. All Jews were forced to leave the city, the sick were driven from their beds and the rioters even dug the dead from their graves. Mohr ends his report with a verse from Psalm 94: "O Lord, Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth."<sup>45</sup> (*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3).

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<sup>42</sup> Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 52-53.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 48. See also Wangermann, "1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire," 73 on the violent backlash in Hungary.

<sup>44</sup> See Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 49-52.

<sup>45</sup> All Biblical quotes are from *Tanakh*, (JPS: 1917).

In issue 3b (May 22, 1848, p. 24 [original mistakenly numbered 22])<sup>46</sup> Mohr reports attacks on the Jews in Hungary that required the intervention of the National Guard. In Nitra and Neustadt, for example, up to 10,000 peasants attacked the Jews, robbing, beating, and killing them, and then driving them out of their homes. In the next issue (26 May 1848, I:4, p. 26) Mohr reports incitement against the Jews in Almitz, although he emphasizes that this was limited to a “few bad people.”

Mohr also rationalizes an attack on the Jews of Yaslo (a district capital in Galicia) (July 14, 1848, I:11 pp. 82-83). The citizens of Yaslo had long refused to allow Jews to settle in their town. Nevertheless, for some time two Jews, one a soap maker and the other a baker and the owner of an inn, had been permitted to reside there with their families and had done so in peace. When the constitution of 1848 was issued,<sup>47</sup> the citizens demanded that they be driven from the city. The Jews’ requests that they be allowed to stay until after harvest so as not to lose everything fell upon deaf ears.

In Moravia, Mohr writes, hatred of the Jews erupted as the authorities called upon the Jews to join the National Guard (September 27, 1848, I:22, p. 169):

In Prosnitz, the Christians agreed amongst themselves not to allow any Jews into the National Guard. One magistrate told the Jewish leaders that should a Jew appear in a guard’s uniform, blood would flow (what lovely officials!). The district authorities however gave an order that every Jew must report to the guard. The Jews obeyed and two hundred reported to the national guard.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Mohr divided the third issue into two installments published a few days apart. He explained that he did so because when the first installment went to print he was waiting for further information.

<sup>47</sup> The Pillersdorf constitution, issued on April 25, 1848, among other things guaranteed all state citizens freedom of faith, conscience and personal freedom (paragraph 17). For the full text see E. Bernatzik, *Die österreichischen Verfassungsgesetze mit Erläuterungen* (Manz, 1911), doc. 36, 102-109; for a discussion see Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, 72 ff.

<sup>48</sup> For further information see See Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 61.



This act incited the simple people, who sought to fall upon the Jewish street. However, the Jewish guards chased them away and the rioters instead turned their attention to Christian homes. This, Mohr notes, is proof of the fact that people do not attack Jews because of religion, as the Christians claim, but simply due to their evil character and lust for robbery: they know that the Jews are weak, so they can take out their aggression on them.

Mohr only occasionally refers to such attacks as a continuation of the long-standing tradition of religious anti-Jewish sentiment. For example, when the monstrance (receptacle for the consecrated host) was stolen from the church in Groß Meseritsch (Velké Meziříčí) (May 19, 1848, I:3a, p. 18 and May 26, 1848, I:4, pp. 24-25), the priest blamed the Jews and incited the people to attack them (it was later discovered that the monstrance was stolen by a Church functionary).<sup>49</sup> Mohr concludes sarcastically that the people of that town have always been very good to the Jews. Indeed, a few years previously, a Christian girl went missing on the Easter holiday and the Jews were accused of murdering her. However, this was a ploy by Christians, who had hidden her, to provide a pretext to kill and rob the Jews.

### **Mohr's Program for Improvement**

In describing Jewish-Christian relations, Mohr does not simply report facts. He adds commentary and interpretation and offers advice to his readers on how they can become active agents, working to change this situation.<sup>50</sup> Mohr's advice encompasses a number of different avenues of change.

#### **I. Finding Alternative sources of income**

As Jacob Katz comments,

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<sup>49</sup> Toury also describes these events, see *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

Both Jewish *maskilim* and their non-Jewish counterparts found the economic structure of Jewish society to be distorted and illogical, and with good reason.... Hostile critics censured the Jews for their attachment to commerce and finance and their shunning of the crafts, physical labor, and the liberal professions. All of the opprobrium that was normally the lot of merchants, moneylenders, and financiers in general was applied with special force to the Jews. True, the *maskilim* tended to soften the implicit moral censure by arguing that the one-sidedness of Jewish economic activity was the result of restrictive legislation imposed on the Jews by the state.<sup>51</sup>

Accordingly, Mohr argues that the one of the major factors motivating Christian hatred of the Jews is the fact that many Jews earn their living through moneylending and changing for commission<sup>52</sup> (July 14, 1848, I:11, p 88):

I believe that you won't be offended if I will say that whoever engages in exchanging [money] ... for large percentages, he is an enemy of Israel and an evil person who doesn't care about his own life and all of Israel.

Likewise, he continues (*Ibid.*, pp. 87-88):

We should also not forgive the people who make a living going around in the shops, inns and taverns, selling silver and copper money, and with large percentages change banknotes, because of this the Christians hate us, and we are responsible for the banknotes falling.

Mohr continues in this vein in the following issue (July 21, 1848, I:12, p. 90), praising the *herem*, ban, that was imposed in Zhuravno (Żurawno) on speculators

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<sup>51</sup> Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis. Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, translated and with an afterword and bibliography by Bernard Dov Cooperman, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 226-227. For a discussion of this topic in the Jewish press during the revolutions of 1848 see Campagner, *Judentum, Nationalitaetenprinzip und Identität*, 207-211.

<sup>52</sup> In Galicia the Jews also played a prominent role as innkeepers and this too often aroused hostility. See Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia*, 27; Himka, "Dimensions of a Triangle," 30.

of both religions.<sup>53</sup> The leaders of this town, he says, have distinguished themselves as wishing to preserve the honor of all Jews. So too, he comments, in Lemberg the committee considered how to proceed with regard to this matter, issuing a ban against taking a commission of more than 1% on banknotes. He encourages all Jewish communities to follow this example, since if they do, the Christians will not be able to accuse the Jews of any wrongdoing.

Mohr also mentions on a number of occasions the restrictions that forced Jews to seek out their livelihood in this way. Indeed, on 2 March 1849 (II:9, pp. 65-66) he expresses his desire that Jews be allowed to enter other professions:

Dear Christians, open up all professions to him, treat him as a brother, a person and not as a slave, then you will see that all Jews are honest.

This echoes Mohr's words in his earlier pamphlet, *Kos yeshuos*.<sup>54</sup>

Apart from this, those who accuse us never consider that they themselves are guilty, they demand from the bird whose wings they have cut off that he shall fly, and from the man whose feet they have tied up that he shall swim. Is this possible? From what shall the poor Jew, poor thing, to whom every way is closed, live? He cannot be an official, they do not allow him to be a master, he must not be a property owner, he cannot do this, he cannot do that ...

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<sup>53</sup> See Baron, "The Revolution of 1848 and Jewish Scholarship," 72-73. "In July 1848, the Progressive Committee in Lwów issued an appeal against such speculators, demanding that there be no charge in excess of 1 per cent for any exchange of paper money. This step was soon followed by a more regular *herem* issued by the Lwów rabbinate. In Żurawno, whose rabbinate had anticipated that of the capital promulgating such a ban, two local leaders proceeded to save off the shortage of currency by issuing private scrip in small denominations."

<sup>54</sup> *Kos yeshuos. Dos iz di beshraybung fun alles vos es hot zikh gitrofin in Vin in di dray berihmte teg, der 13te 14te und 15 Merts 1848, in oykh vos in Lemberg iz fōrgigangin in der tsayt* [A cup of salvation. This is the description of everything that happened in Vienne in the three famous days, 13, 14 and 15 March 1848, and also what happened in Lemberg at that time], (The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, P9/20 [n.d.]), 2. I am indebted to Rachel Manekin for sharing her copy of the transcription with me.

Now, however, that a new world is opening up, Christians are accepting us as brothers, and will let us be employed in the same professions as them...we must make an effort with all our power to show that while some of us until now were occupied with [changing currency] and other low sources of income, this was not for enjoyment, but only due to need, because they had nothing better...

He continues, urging Jews to stop taking large percentages, advising merchants on how to behave toward their customers, and calling upon people of the middle and lower classes to teach their children a trade so that they will not need “to earn their bread with swindling.”<sup>55</sup> Then, he concludes, “our Christian brothers will admit that they made a mistake until now with everything that they accused us of.”

Similar ideas are also found in another pamphlet attributed to Mohr, *Etsa tova: Gute rate und etsa vos man zoll tsund in dizr tsayt tuain hir in Lemberg, und in alle kleyneri krayzin und shtetlikh*, published in Lemberg in 1848,<sup>56</sup> which discusses why so many Jews make their living as agents or middlemen. With no other options available to them, circumstances forced them to follow this path. It also expresses the hope that the new reality will provide them with other options. However, this pamphlet goes even further, laying out a utopian picture of Jews working the land:

Our fathers were always workers of the earth and field... had our forefathers not been farmers, why would our teacher Moses have ordered that the *pe'ah* be left in the field and that tithes be given.

The plan to buy and cultivate fields is very good. Think only about how happy a simple man will be, when he will have his own a field, with a few beasts, a bit of bread in the house... True, in the beginning it will be a bit

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16. He also adds that Jewish women should not make Christians envious by flaunting their jewelry.

<sup>56</sup> [Good advice. Good counsel and advice that one should enact now in Lemberg, and in all small districts and small towns]. On this see Manekin, Manekin, “‘Daitshen,’ ‘Polanim,’ o ‘Ostrim?’”, 238 ff.

difficult, however one will quickly learn—every Jew has a brain in his head, thank God, and he will soon know it...<sup>57</sup>

Thus, in typical maskilic fashion Mohr argues that moneylending and currency changing play a major role in arousing anti-Jewish sentiment. He sees the revolutions as an opportunity to change this. However, both the Jews themselves and the surrounding environment must be parties to such change.

## 2. Exemplary behavior

In addition to changing their livelihood, Mohr calls upon his readers to improve their behavior, urging them to avoid offending Christians in any way or committing any crime. He wishes for his readers to understand that the act of one Jew taints the entire nation.

For example, in Drobitsh (14 July 1848, I:1, pp. 87-88), the local priest preached to his community that they should live in peace with the Jews. However, after this sermon, tiles fell from Jewish houses onto the people leaving the church. The priest sought to persuade his incensed congregation that surely this was the work of Christians, trying to incite an attack on the Jews. However, an investigation discovered that two Jewish lads (Mohr uses the German word *buben*, “knaves”) were responsible. The whole community was endangered because of two fools. Here Mohr quotes a Biblical verse (Numbers 16:22), with a slight alteration: “Shall one man sin, and the wrath will come out on all the congregation?” (the original verse reads: “Shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?”). Mohr explains that his readers should take this as a warning and be careful not to offend Christians, since so doing puts Jews in danger: “I know for sure that every Jew with a bit of understanding does not do this, but because we see in the above mentioned case that there are a few fools among us [...] there I bring it to your attention that it is a great sin.”

By contrast, Mohr also cites examples of exemplary behavior. For example on 24 August 1849 (II: 34, p. 267) he describes how Jews are helping the Austrian war

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<sup>57</sup> *Etsa tova*, (Lemberg, 1848), 6. I am indebted to Rachel Manekin for sharing her copy with me.

effort against Hungary: “This causes us great happiness and shows that we are true sons of Abraham and have the positive qualities of doing good deeds (*gemilut ḥasadim*) and are thankful to the regime as our holy religion commands.”

He then continues to describe a terrible fire that devastated the city of Brody, calling upon his readers to demonstrate their good qualities:

Dear brothers, now we have the best opportunity to show also our other good qualities, namely that we are merciful, we share the suffering of our unfortunate brothers and support them as much as possible. Hear what a misfortune happened in the famous city of Brody...

He urges his readers not to leave it to the Christians to help those affected by the fire, asking rhetorically, “Is it not our responsibility also to do something for our unfortunate brothers?” Mohr notes that although he and his readers may not be able to solve the problem, they can help alleviate the pain (and in particular, as the new year approaches, it is a good time to do a good deed). In subsequent issues Mohr reports the money raised for this purpose (August 24, 1849, II:34; 7 September 1849, II: 36), including contributions by Jews and non-Jews.

### 3. Loyalty

Mohr reports with pleasure on 16 March 1849 (II:II, p. 84) that the supplement of the Viennese paper *Morgenblatt* published a biography of Rabbi Shmuel Oppenheimer (who lived 180 years previously) stating that without his involvement, Austria would have been conquered by Turkey. It also emphasized that his actions were not motivated by gain, but rather loyalty to and love of his fatherland.

Mohr contends that enemies of the Jews fear the emancipation, among other reasons due to the suspicion that Jews are republicans. Therefore, it is necessary to prove that the Jews are loyal. Here Mohr inserts an example from Jewish history regarding the Jews’ loyalty to their countries of residence. Following the destruction of the First Temple and the exile to Babylon, Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem. However, only the poor returned, while the well-to-do

chose to remain: they knew that in future times the Jews would be accused of being disloyal to the regimes under which they lived and faithful only to the land of Israel, which is always in their hearts. Therefore, the wealthy Jews remained in Babylon to prove that Jews recognize every land as their fatherland.

Furthermore, he continues, Jewish adults must show their love of the fatherland and the Emperor, demonstrating that they are faithful children and giving their enemies no cause to doubt their loyalty. He quotes the words of Jeremiah 29:7: “And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”

#### 4. Other advice

Mohr counsels the Jews to help themselves (I:4, pp. 24-25) “as for example they did in Leipzig.” There the Jews wielded their economic power wisely: by threatening to close the markets when their neighbors opposed emancipation, they forced their opponents to withdraw this request.<sup>58</sup>

Yet at the same time, Mohr urges the Jews not to become embroiled in fights or in inciting hatred. Indeed, in issue I:13 (July 23, 1848, p. 99-101) he dedicates a very long description report events in Podgaytsy, where Jews incited the local peasants against the Poles. This is much longer than most of his other incident reports, demonstrating how important he deemed it: “Listen my friends,” he begins, “while writing this newspaper for you I did not share a tragic report. It’s heartrending, it is hard for my pen to share it. When I imagine what I am going to write...”. Indeed, Mohr says, “I wouldn’t have written this if it had not been published openly already. Was this right, is this good for us?”<sup>59</sup> Jews became involved in a fight between a smith and members of the National Guard, inciting the peasants to join the fight. These evil people, he argues, will bring harm to

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<sup>58</sup> On opposition to emancipation of the Jews see Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 102 ff.

<sup>59</sup> According to Mohr the report was published in *Gazeta Narodowa*.

everyone, as happened in Poznań, where “blood flowed like water.” Mohr concludes with a rhetorical question: “Do you want this here too?”<sup>60</sup>

### Stigmatism

However, despite all these pieces of advice and his optimism, from the outset Mohr recognized the difficulty involved in dispelling the widespread animosity towards. Indeed, he first addressed the stigmatization of the Jews in his early pamphlet *Kos yeshuos*. There he notes that although there are “many here among us who earn their bread in a pleasant and honest way,” yet

Nevertheless we are the most unfortunate [people] in the entire world, because when one makes a mistake, people do not say that he did this and that, but that the Jews did this and that, and the hatred applies to the entire nation.<sup>61</sup>

Mohr relates in the *Tsaytung* (December 29, 1848, I:34, pp. 258-259) that after the Frankfurt Reichstag emancipated the Jews, a Christian expressed similar hopes in a Viennese paper. In response, the enemies of the Jews continued to demand that the Jews first clean themselves of their defects. However, Mohr argues, among so many people, one will always find both good and bad. Any sincere Christian must surely know that this applies to them too. Likewise, in his report on the murder of Rabbi Avraham Cohen (September 8, 1848, I:19, p. 148), Mohr laments that “sadly, in a big river there are also bad fish. In such a large community there must be a few bad people.”

So too, when military clothes were discovered buried in a box in the Jewish cemetery in Vienna (August 4, 1848, I:14, p. 106), “the people screamed that the Jews stole them and hid them there. However, an investigation found that

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<sup>60</sup> In Poznań many Jews sided with the Germans against the Poles during the revolutions of 1848, see Krzysztof A. Makowski, “Between Germans and Poles. The Jews of Poznań in 1848,” *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Jews in the Polish Borderlands* 14 (2001): 68-82.

<sup>61</sup> *Kos yeshuos*, 15.



Christians were responsible for it.” Likewise, Mohr reports rumors in Vienna accusing the Jews of advocating republican ideas:<sup>62</sup> “What will people not believe about the Jews?” he asks despairingly (July 23, 1848, I:13, pp. 98-99).

As the conflict in Hungary intensified, accusations of treachery were increasingly levelled at all Jews, causing Mohr to lose hope. On 2 March 1849 (II:8, pp. 65-66), he complains that the papers never write “the Christians did...”<sup>63</sup> However, the Jews are unfortunate: if one sins, they are angry at the entire population. He asks what a Jew is supposed to do when all ordinary ways of making a living are blocked:

The newspapers created a panic about the seizure of sixty wagons of military clothing that the Jews wanted to take to Kossouth in Debrecen. In each one of these reports, however, it states: the vendor, a Jew.... Accordingly we see that the beginning is incorrect. It was not the **Jews**, but rather a **Jew** that wanted to do this. So why is the panic so great? Does this not happen a thousand times more among Christians, yet they do not say the **Christians** did such and such. Rather, they refer to them by their names. But we Jews are so unfortunate that “shall one man sin,” the wrath will pour out on the “entire congregation” [Numbers 16:22]. As for the rest, I ask you, what should the poor do, all ways are blocked to him. Every normal source of livelihood is forbidden to him. So from what shall he live? Dear Christians, only make Jews officials, open to them all shops, treat them as brothers, as people, and not as slaves, they you will see that they are just as honest as you—but now you must forgive the Jews all that they do. It is wonder enough that they have survived until now. [Emphasis in original]

His pessimism intensified, nourished by further accusations that Jews were spying for the Hungarians, providing them with necessities for the battle against the

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<sup>62</sup> On the anti-Jewish sentiment in Vienna and Austria see Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 42-44.

<sup>63</sup> Mohr returns to this topic again on May 4, 1849 (II:18).

Austrians, and spreading false reports of Hungarian victories (February 23, 1849, II:8, p. 64). In response to such claims, Mohr argues:

We know that Jews have so much trouble making a livelihood that revolution cannot enter their thoughts, yet everyone blames us that we act against the regime. I will also add ... that among a thousand of us there are one or two spies... but does one not find among Christians a hundred times more. However, ... they say **the Jews are rebels**, all Jews must suffer for one—"Nay, but for Thy sake are we killed all the day" [Psalm 44:23].

In the final stages of the war in Hungary, Mohr again refutes the claim that all Jews are disloyal—indeed, he states, the commandments that Jews must not revolt against the regime in which they live and that they must pray for the good of the kingdom make this impossible. If the people of Pest sinned, he continues, Jews and Christians alike should be punished, not only Jews (August 3, 1849, II:31, p. 243). He also reports the accusations of Jewish treachery published by a Viennese paper (September 7, 1849, II:36, p. 284).

In a similar vein, in summer 1849 (June 1, 1849, II:22, p. 170), Mohr complains that only the Jews are blamed when Russian soldiers in Moravia lose money exchanging currency exchange. "Poor Jews!" he laments. "You get blamed for everything!"

Concluding this report, while he continues to encourage his readers to change their ways, his despair is evident:

See, my friends, how you must guard yourselves; we are stepchildren, the regime treats us as true children, but the people consider us stepchildren. The smallest mistakes are blown out of proportion. Therefore, we must avoid giving them any opportunity, especially now. The simple people hate us very much because of the emancipation, so we must show that we are useful citizens and not bad, as they claim.

## Conclusion

Among the last reports of violence against Jews in the *Tsaytung*, on 1 June 1849 (I:22, p. 170) Mohr informs his readers that when a Jew sought to buy a house in Weisskirchen—where previously Jews were not allowed to reside—he received threatening letters. Mohr despairs, “God knows when this old stupidity will end.” Indeed, it seems that Mohr increasingly lost hope of changing attitudes towards the Jews. While in the initial period of the revolutions Mohr believed that change was possible—urging his readers to become active agents, to improve relations with their Christian neighbors, and at the same rationalizing outbreaks of anti-Jewish sentiment in the context of the revolutions—his pessimism in this regard is increasingly evident in later issues of the paper, in particular as the war in Hungary reached its end. While continuing to offer his readers advice on how to improve their ways, Mohr appears to have understood that despite the emancipation, and in spite of any changes the Jews would make, dispelling the deep-rooted anti-Jewish sentiment among the population was a task of Herculean proportions.

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