Thinking Europe in Yiddish

edited by Marion Aptroot

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Cover image credit: *Pariz. Yidish hant-bukh: veg-vayzer un firer*, eds. A. Bekerman et al., (Paris: Naye Prese, 1937). Cover detail of the Yiddish language guidebook published for the World's Fair in Paris.

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Editorial: Ten Years of *Quest*

by *Guri Schwarz*

Ten years ago, we published the first issue of our journal. *Quest* had been in the works for well over a year, the idea stemmed from the need of the Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (CDEC) of Milan to equip itself with a scientific periodical. As a result of the discussions that took place within the CDEC's Scientific Board, it was decided to take what Michele Sarfatti, Editor in Chief for the first eight issues of *Quest* and Director of the CDEC, qualified as "a leap of faith:"[1] the creation of an English language, online, open–access journal devoted to publishing contributions on any aspect of Jewish history from the 18th century onwards. Not merely the house-organ of the CDEC – which was, and still is, the main Italian research center for the study of the Holocaust, modern Italian Jewish history and antisemitism – but a more ambitious project.

It was not an obvious choice. There was no lack of Jewish history journals, so why the need to create a new one? The team that conceived the project was based in Italy – a country with a tiny Jewish minority and at the same time a long and rich Jewish past – and our intent was to create a venue for scholarly discussion that could further stimulate the field of Jewish studies, and Jewish history in particular, in Italy where, despite the fact that some significant scholarly works were and are being produced, the field has little autonomy and is confined to being a subset of wider disciplinary sectors (such as modern history, religious studies, Hebrew literature etc.). If that had been the only objective, we could have done it in Italian, and in many ways it would have been easier. There was also another, maybe more ambitious goal: as we discussed the various options, we realized that one of the things that we yearned for was a venue that could promote dialogue between different academic traditions. It is a fact that the U.S. represents the vital core of Jewish Studies worldwide. This reflects availability of funding, the recognition awarded to the field within academic institutions and, of course, the quality of the works produced. Then there is Israel, with its own traditions and institutions, which also constitutes a crucial point of reference. In the 21st century, if one wants to find a place in the global discussion in this field English is the obvious medium,

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[1] "A New Journal: Quest, Alessandro Cassin interviews Michele Sarfatti, historian and Director of CDEC," *Printed_Matter: Centro Primo Levi Online Monthly*, January 28, 2010; https://primolevicenter.org/printed-matter/a-new-history-online-journal-quest/

but language is not the only barrier. A European scholar could find a way to be read by having his/her work translated into English and publishing in American academic journals. What is required though is, often, not a mere linguistic transformation, but an adaptation to a different cultural milieu. We must recognize that there are varying, sometimes diverging, certainly autonomous historiographic traditions that deserve to retain their identity and that – at the same time – could benefit from a closer dialogue. With this journal our goal was to foster such scholarly conversation, creating bridges that could put different schools and approaches in communication with each other. Consequently, we chose to create a journal that would guarantee the easiest access to the widest possible audience. That was one of the reasons why *Quest* was "born digital."[2]

It is of course not up to us to measure our success. In these first ten years we published 17 issues, striving to come out twice a year, an objective that was reached most of the time, and concentrating primarily on the publication of special, monographic issues, revolving around a unifying theme. Only three issues have not followed this course and have instead taken the form of *miscellanea,* in which we gathered unrelated contributions that we received. Next to the *Focus* section, which hosted the research articles, we also published book discussions and reviews. Overall, we published 133 research articles as well as a total of 130 other contributions, summing together *Discussions* and *Reviews.* The topics and time periods covered varied widely, as did the methodologies employed, reflecting the open approach that we selected. The authors of said articles and contributions were based in various parts of the world: in the Americas (Canada and the U.S.), in Israel, in Europe (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, U.K.), and in Australia. Through time the journal gained traction, it is currently indexed in DOAJ, Scopus, WoS, Rambi and other platforms. Last spring the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR) has classified *Quest* as a top tier journal ("Fascia A") in the fields of Early Modern History, Modern History, Religious Studies, Hebrew Literature and Culture, History of International Relations and of Extra-European Societies and Institutions. This is a fundamental recognition for a journal based in Italy; it suggests that – at least in part – with this

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[2] Heide Lerner, "Jewish Studies 'Born Digital'," *AJS Perspectives,* Spring 2011, 40-42; https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/professional-development/professional-development/digital-jewish-studies/perspectives-on-technology/jewish-studies-born-digital

endeavor we were able to stimulate the Italian academic system into acknowledging the relevance of the field of Jewish History.

Programming the issues and pursuing our project, year after year, was an arduous enterprise, made possible by the fruitful teamwork of a tight-knit group of Editors, wonderfully supported by the Editorial Staff and by the Editorial Advisory Board. I take this opportunity to thank the Editors of the special issues and all the authors who collaborated with us, writing articles, discussions and reviews. And I cannot forget the invisible but crucial work of all the external peer-reviewers who accepted to lend their expertise, reading and commenting on the texts we submitted to their attention. In celebrating what was accomplished in these first ten years my memory turns in grateful appreciation to all those who supported us. I wish to express my gratitude to the Fondazione CDEC, which allowed us to work free of constraints while offering an unrelenting financial and institutional support. I also feel the need to remember, in particular, those colleagues and friends who followed our project since its inception and who are no longer with us. I believe it is appropriate to honor here the figures of the medievalist and scholar of Italian-Jewish history Michele Luzzati (1939-2014) – founder and first director of Italy's first Jewish Studies Center set inside a university[3] – and of Giovanni Miccoli (1933-2017), scholar of the Catholic Church who made several key contributions to the reframing of the interconnections between antijudaism and antisemitism. As members of the CDEC's Scientific Board, both supported the project of launching *Quest* and then joined in as members of the Editorial Advisory Board. Last but not least, my thoughts turn with gratitude to David Cesarani (1956-2015), the pioneering historian of Anglo-Jewry and the Holocaust, who accepted to join *Quest's* Editorial Advisory Board with enthusiasm and then contributed with critical and constructive feedback since the early stages of the journal's life.

For this tenth anniversary we gifted our readers and ourselves with a new, more modern and more flexible website. The transition to this new website proved to be more complex than expected and there are still some small problems that need to be resolved. Nonetheless it was time to go online with a new issue, the few remaining bugs will be fixed in the upcoming weeks. This renewed infrastructure will, hopefully, allow us to make a more proficient use of the potential of digital technology. One of our future goals is in fact to go beyond the conventional journal format that basically publishes online the contents of a traditional paper

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[3] The Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Ebraici (CISE) was established at the University of Pisa in 2003.

periodical. We would like to implement the full potential of a digital journal, publishing contributions that make use of audio and video content. The easiest and most obvious option is, of course, to publish audio or audio/video recordings of interviews and/or roundtable panels. We will consider that, but would like to be bolder and, if possible, go further. In fact, if the future of scholarly communication is digital, then the way in which we conceive and write our papers will have to adapt, allowing for a better and more efficient use of recorded sources and materials that could not fit into a printed medium. We are thus considering future issues revolving around cinema, tv, and/or music, as these could represent the most obvious pathways to experiment with the full potential of a digital journal. We are thus looking forward to receiving proposals for articles or special issues that move in this direction, ideally with contributions that will not be merely illustrated by links to audio/visual resources, but that establish a new kind of interaction between the scholarly text and the digital resource analyzed.

Among the new features that we present to our readers, along with a renewed graphic interface, is a new section, denominated *Research Paths*, that will host research articles not connected by a unifying topic and unrelated to the *Focus* section. Thus, we encourage scholars to send us essays to be considered for publication in that framework. We are delighted to inaugurate this new section of our journal with two original contributions authored, respectively, by Rebecca Wolpe, and by Tamir Karkason, two junior scholars based in Israeli academic institutions. Through the analysis of the Yiddish periodical *Tsaytung*, published in Lemberg, Wolpe explores the Jewish reactions to the 1848-49 revolutions; instead Karkason, drawing insight from the work of scholars such as Matthias Lehmann and Yaron Tsur, reconstructs the interactions between maskilim in the Ottoman world and in the Austro-Hungarian empire, investigating intellectual networks and shared cultural frameworks.

The *Focus* section of this 17th issue, entitled *Thinking Europe in Yiddish*, is edited by Marion Aptroot. It includes five contributions – by David E. Fishman, Marc Caplan, Daria Vakhrushova, Debra Caplan, Gennady Estraikh – selected among those presented in a conference with the same title organized at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf in 2018.[4] The *Introduction* illustrates the rationale of the operation and how those five articles fit together, here it may suffice to say that this special issues does not merely reflect on Yiddish as an expression of European culture, but it explores the ways in which European spaces, cultures, identities

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[4] The conference was organized by Marion Aptroot, Efrat Gal-Ed, Andrea von Hülsen-Esch.

were conceived and represented by the Yiddish speaking world as well as how, and to what degree, the Yiddish cultural community related to those concepts.

As usual, this issue is enriched by a *Discussion* of a book that we believe reflects trends and key questions debated in the field. In this case we selected Daniel Boyarin's thought-provoking synthesis *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, that here is critically analyzed by Luca Arcari, and by Daniel Barbu. Furthermore, in accordance with what is the established tradition for our journal, we publish also ten shorter book reviews, with the aim of offering to the reader a taste of recent contributions to scholarly research on variety of topics and time periods, considering books published in several languages (in this case in English, German, and French).

These have been ten years of hard work and passionate discussions. We learned a lot, heard new voices, confronted with different approaches. It is nice to look back and think of all the path covered together. It is even better to be able to look ahead, thinking of all the projects that we will be able to share in the future. Even now. Especially now, in a disquieting time in which our horizon seems encompassed in an overwhelming present, perhaps the best thing we can do is to strive to do our job as historians and scholars, keeping on the incessant struggle to reconnect the present and the past.

Thinking Europe in Yiddish

Introduction

by *Marion Aptroot*

This issue of *Quest* follows the conference "Thinking Europe in Yiddish," organized in June 2018 by Efrat Gal-Ed, Andrea von Hülsen-Esch and myself at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany.[1] The topic of the conference emerged from Efrat Gal-Ed's work on the biography of Itzik Manger, a Yiddish poet who had spent each of the phases of his life in a different country and was part of a transnational cultural community often referred to as "Yiddishland."[2] Gal-Ed's research made clear the need for a renewed focus on questions about Yiddish culture as a European culture that, though posed in the past, have never yet been discussed in depth.

The Yiddish language has its origins in Europe, more precisely in German-speaking lands. On the eve of the Second World War, there were, roughly, eleven million speakers of Yiddish in the world. That may not seem a large number to speakers of German or English, but it was, at the time, more than the number of speakers of all the Scandinavian languages combined.

Yiddish has always been a minor language. It was never a state language, nor even the majority language of a region. Yiddish was spoken, written and printed in language enclaves dotted across large swathes of Europe. Some of these enclaves were small, consisting of a few families in a little town; in recent centuries some of these Yiddish-speaking areas encompassed tens of thousands of speakers. In the first half of the twentieth century, some of them numbered a few hundred thousand, as was the case in Warsaw. There were regions of Europe where Jews had not been allowed to settle for centuries, while in others they were part of the social and cultural fabric of their area during the same periods. It is hard for us today to imagine a Europe with millions of Jewish inhabitants, but such was Europe in the late nineteenth century and up to 1939, the period the conference focused on. During this period, the Yiddish-speaking

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[2] Efrat Gal-Ed, *Niemandssprache. Itzik Manger – ein europäischer Dichter*, (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016). The concept of Yiddishland is not clearly defined; see, e.g., Jeffrey Shandler, "Imagining Yiddishland. Language, Place and Memory," *History and Memory* 15/1 (2003), 123–149. Efrat Gal-Ed is currently working on a monograph on this topic.

world in Central and Eastern Europe changed dramatically. Beginning from the time of the French Revolution, Jews were gradually granted civil rights. Following the revolution of 1905, Jews in the Russian Empire were accorded civil rights, as well, the last in Europe to receive equal status as state subjects. As a result of the First World War, the Hapsburg and Romanov empires disintegrated; following this and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, nation states were created in Europe where Jews were no longer a minority among many, but the single recognizable minority or one of a small number of minorities next to a much larger majority. During the early years of the interbellum, minority cultures were able to flourish, but only a few years later growing nationalism in Europe became a danger to these very same cultures. The conference set 1939 as the year ending an era and a moment when Yiddish culture was still vital and its *kultur-tuer*, its culture activists, thought was worthwhile to formulate thoughts about its then present-day place in Europe along with hopes and fears for its future.

Considering Yiddish concepts of Europe at the conference evoked a population and a culture that have almost entirely disappeared from the continent; the questions discussed had broad ranging implications. Questions about a minority culture beyond borders, about its views of its position on the European continent, about its future and about the conditions that would allow it to co-exist with majority cultures.

Thinking Europe in Yiddish leads us to pose questions such as: What is Europe? How did Yiddish speakers, members of a transnational minority, regard Europe? What did Europe mean for speakers of Yiddish? In what ways were speakers of Yiddish part of Europe and its cultural landscapes? How were they included or excluded socially, politically and culturally? How did their culture adapt to developments in European majority cultures or react against them?

Ideas expressed in Yiddish sources cannot be representative of all of European Jewry, not even of all East European Jewry, which relied on different languages and art forms as its modes of expression. Focusing on Yiddish perspectives on Europe does, however, enable us to see nuances more clearly.

The papers included in this collection, as well as others presented at the conference, show that Europe as seen by Yiddish authors and artists before the Second World War was less of a geographical region than a fluid, shape-shifting idea. It was a cultural ideal of the Yiddish-speaking intelligentsia and the so-called *halb-inteligentn*, the autodidacts. For many it stood for "high culture" and embodied the aspiration of becoming part of a greater, positive ideal. Ideas about Europe were different in

different authors' political ideology and changed over time, not least in light of changing attitudes toward Jews and the opportunities Europe was deemed to offer. Europe as an ideal became less prominent or even tarnished in the 1930s; with hindsight, we can see how this was justified.

This issue of *Quest* begins with David Fishman's essay in which the author returns to his book *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*,[3] considering it from the new perspective of Europeanness and the part that familiarity with European culture outside the Russian Empire contributed to the rise of modern Yiddish culture. Marc Caplan, in his essay "Marking Territory: A *Flâneur*'s Failure in I. L. Peretz's *Mayses*" traces the setting of Peretz's story *"Mayses"* not in the prototypical, imaginary Eastern European *shtetl,* but in the modern metropolis, Warsaw. Influenced by European – mainly French – literature, Peretz adopts the perspective of the *flâneur.* The story is rooted in Yiddish culture but also aspires to transcend conventions established early on in the history of modern Yiddish literature as the author looks to European cultural precedents for inspiration.

The enthusiasm of young Yiddish poets and artists after the First World War about becoming part of new avant-garde European culture, thus putting Yiddish works on a par with European "high culture" publications, is the topic of Daria Vakhrushova's essay "*To Hell with Futurism, Too!* The Metamorphoses of Western and Eastern European Modernism in Yiddish Manifestos." Focusing on manifestos, she shows how they are the expressions and virtual centers of the multilayered and polycentric Yiddish culture created by multilingual poets and artists, dispersed among many countries and continents and familiar with numerous cultural and literary traditions.

Debra Caplan's "An American in *Shtetl.* Seeing Yiddish Europe through the Eyes of Molly Picon" presents the story of the American Yiddish theater personalities actress Molly Picon and her impresario husband Jacob Kalich. The two traveled to Europe in the early 1920s to help Picon improve her "bastardized" American Yiddish through contact with the language as it was "correctly" spoken in Eastern Europe.[4] They regarded Yiddish theatrical culture in Eastern Europe both as authentic and more sophisticated than its counterpart in the United States, even though European Yiddish sophistication was recent and the result of transcultural processes. New York had already become the world capital of Yiddish theater by this time; European

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[3] David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

[4] They traveled through different countries in Eastern Europe but not the Soviet Union.

Yiddish culture offered a view of a world different from the stereotypical representations of Jewish life that Picon had encountered in the USA, as well as freedom and recognition for the unconventional theater performer that she was.

Whereas the protagonists creating avant-garde manifestos shortly after the First World War brought artists together in a virtual Yiddishland, the intellectuals who organized the 1937 World Yiddish Cultural Congress in Paris saw their aim of bringing like-minded people together to safeguard Yiddish culture in the future thwarted by international political strife. As Gennady Estraikh shows in "A Quest for Yiddishland: The 1937 World Yiddish Cultural Congress," the conference was well attended, but the international unity aimed for was not achieved. The organization founded following the congress, the World Yiddish Cultural Association (IKUF or YIKUF) in Paris, did not succeed in establishing this city as the hub of Yiddishland located between America, Poland and the Soviet Union.

The papers in this issue of *Quest* are meant to provide an impetus for further discussion and research on the topic of Europe in Yiddish thought.

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Marion Aptroot is Professor of Yiddish Culture, Language and Literature at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. She has co-written a Yiddish textbook for speakers of German and a history of the Yiddish language. She has published editions of early modern Yiddish texts such as *Storm in the Community: Yiddish Polemical Pamphlets of Amsterdam Jewry, 1797–1798* (with Jozeph Michman, Cincinnati 2002), *Isaak Euchel. Reb Henoch, oder: woß tut me damit? Eine jüdische Komödie der Aufklärungszeit* (with Roland Gruschka, Hamburg 2010) and *Libes briv (1748/49). Isaak Wetzlars pietistisches Erneuerungsprogramm des Judentums* (with Rebekka Voss, Hamburg, forthcoming).

How, When, and Why Did Yiddish Become a Modern Culture?

by *David E. Fishman*

Abstract

The paper seeks to expand the area of modern Yiddish culture beyond literary fiction. It explores the rise of modern Yiddish theatre, press, poetry, and political literature in Imperial Russia in the 1880s. The essay argues that these forms of Yiddish cultural expression first became significant and widespread phenomena in the 1880s. It also highlights the emergence of a diverse Yiddish readership and audience, with different levels of Jewish and European cultural background, in order to counter the common dichotomy that Yiddish was for the masses, whereas Hebrew and Russian were used by the Jewish elites. Finally, the article places the rise of Modern Yiddish culture within the context of major social and economic transformations in East European Jewry: urbanization, population growth, and downward economic mobility. Overall, the article refines and revises certain conclusions offered in the author's book The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture (2005).

Defining a Modern Culture

The Development of Modern Jewish Culture in Russia

A Surge of Theatre

The Ascent of the Press

Political Pamphlets in the Mother Tongue

The Rising Status of Yiddish Literature

The Rise of Yiddish in Historical Perspective

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David E. Fishman

In this paper, I would like to examine the infancy of modern Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe, in the second half of the nineteenth century, and revisit from a new perspective some topics that I dealt with more than a decade ago in my book *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*.[1]

Most scholars study the advances made by Yiddish literature and culture in the 20th century – great works of prose and poetry, drama and theatre, journalism and scholarship.[2] We tend to forget that the appearance of modern Yiddish culture was totally unanticipated and even inconceivable to Jewish intellectuals in the middle of the nineteenth century. The very venture of creating modern culture in Yiddish was then considered counterintuitive. For most Jews in the Russian Empire, modern education and culture were something one acquired in Russian, or in German. And modern Jewish writing was something done in Hebrew. To modernizing Jews of the mid-nineteenth century, Yiddish symbolized the old world they were rebelling against – Jewish social isolation, religious superstition, and cultural backwardness. Yiddish was the shtetl, the *kheyder*, the Hasidic *shtibl*. It was the opposite of modernity.

While Hebrew was likewise the language of despised religious texts – such as Midrash, Talmudic commentaries, and Kabbalistic literature – it was for the adherents of the Haskalah first and foremost the language of the Bible, and secondarily of Maimonides and Jewish rationalistic philosophy, texts they adored. It was easy for the Maskilim to conceive of the secularization and modernization of Hebrew as a literary language. Not so Yiddish. The words of Judah Leib Gordon (1830–1892), a central Haskalah poets and activist, in a letter to the young Sholem Aleichem, were quite typical for intellectuals of Gordon's generation:

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[1] David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

[2] Dan Miron's pioneering study *A Traveler Disguised. The Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Schocken, 1973), did not generate a school of scholarship on nineteenth century Yiddish literature and culture. Instead the field (including Miron himself) has focused on the 20th century. See the annual surveys of Yiddish studies in English published by the blog *In geveb*, e.g.: https://ingeveb.org/blog/the-latest-in-yiddish-studies-in-english-2018.

You ask for my opinion about Jargon. [...] I always considered the existence of this dialect in the mouth of our people to be the saddest phenomenon in all its historical existence. [...] I considered it the duty of every educated Jew to strive that it [Jargon, DEF] gradually be obliterated and disappear from our midst. One can tolerate it as a necessary evil [...], but one must not strive for its consolidation and flourishing. [...] Honestly, I'm surprised by you. You write well in Russian, and you have wonderful command of our literary (Hebrew) language. How can you devote yourself to *culture* in Jargon? [...] It would be sinful if you raised your children in this language. It would be like forcing them to promenade down Nevsky Prospect wearing a *talis koton* and worn out shoes.[3]

And yet, modern Yiddish culture did indeed emerge. The questions therefore are how, when and why.

Defining a Modern Culture

I'd like to begin by tentatively defining my terms. By a modern culture, I mean, first of all, a body of writing, and of artistic and other expression, that is basically secular in its assumptions and orientation. Literature that is homiletical, basing its ideas on Biblical verses or Talmudic passages, is not modern literature. There must be other values – aesthetic, social, political, philosophic – beyond the religious tradition. In a modern culture, secularity is part of the deep structure, an underlying assumption. In the sphere of mentality: modern Yiddish journalists did not explain events as acts of God, of providence. Traditionalists before the Haskalah routinely did so. Natural causation was taken for granted. And in the sphere of action: Yiddish theatre was performed In Odessa, Warsaw, or New York on Friday night and on a Saturday matinee, that is on Shabbat, when the purchase

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[3] Letter dated June 4, 1888, in Alexander Frenkel, "Perepiska sholom aleikhema s ieguda leibom gordonom," *Judaic–Slavic Journal* 1 (2018), 164; paraphrased by Michael Stanislawski, *For Whom Do I Toil? Judah Leib Gordon and the Crisis of Russian Jewry,* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 225. A *talis kotn* [talit katan] is a fringed garment worn by Orthodox Jewish men in fulfillment of the commandment in Numbers 15: 38–41.

of tickets and playing of musical instruments were forbidden by rabbinic law. Such theatre performances in the big cities were not demonstrative anti-religious acts, just a natural part of life.

There were, of course, various attempts to combine secularity with tradition or faith, and the impact of the religious tradition on secular Yiddish culture was quite pronounced. But the appropriation of religious themes was self-conscious, voluntary, and selective.

Second, in order to call a body of creativity a modern culture, there must be more than just belletristic literature. European cultures consist not only of stories and novels, but of newspapers, magazines, music, theatre, political and social thought, a modern educational system, scholarship, and public organizations for the advancement of culture. A language whose cultural output consists exclusively of belletristic fiction, is not a culture in the full sense of the word. The overwhelming predominance of a single mode of expression (fiction) is itself a sign of weakness. It indicates that people are satisfying their other modern cultural needs or interests in other languages. That was indeed the state of Yiddish, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There was fiction, but nothing else.

It may well be that artistic literature is the aspect of culture that endows it with its greatest prestige and fame. The great French or Russian writers put their cultures "on the map." But belle lettres is only the tip of the iceberg. It cannot thrive without a support system of other outlets – schools, periodicals, public gatherings.

Finally, modern cultures consist not only of authors, but also of readers and audiences. A vibrant modern culture has a numerically significant audience that is diverse, with different levels of education and refinement, and with different areas of interest. An undifferentiated "mass" of readers, all of whom who have negligible educational baggage beyond their functional literacy, cannot be the social basis for a modern culture.[4]

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[4] A recent study that stresses these three points, secularity, diverse modes of expression, and diversified audience is Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in Late Imperial Russia,*

When we apply these three criteria to Yiddish culture – secularity, diverse modes of expression, and a sizeable, diversified audience – all signs point to the emergence of such a culture in the last quarter of the 19th century, around the time of Judah Leib Gordon's letter to Sholem Aleichem.

The Development of Modern Jewish Culture in Russia

In Russia, the emergence of modern Yiddish culture needs to be viewed in the context of the development of modern *Jewish* culture in three languages – Hebrew, Russian and Yiddish, in that chronological order.

Between the 1830s and 1850s, works of modern Jewish culture were produced overwhelmingly in Hebrew. Maskilim published modern poetry, novels, autobiographies, philological and historical scholarship, popular science – predominantly in Hebrew. By the 1860s, there were four weekly Hebrew newspapers serving the Russian Jewish communities – *Ha-Melitz* in Odessa, *Ha-Tzefirah* in Warsaw, *Ha-Karmel* in Vilna, and *Ha-Magid*, published in East Prussia, for a readership in the Russian Empire – all with Maskilic perspectives.

The social base of this early modern Hebrew culture, its readership and audience, consisted of three groups: former Talmudists and former Hasidim who rebelled against "darkness," well-to-do merchants in the Pale of Settlement, and semi-modernized members of the rabbinic class.[5]

From the 1860s through the 1880s, Jewish culture in the Russian language became a significant force, supplementing the Hebrew-language culture. There arose Russian-Jewish novelists (Lev Levanda, Grigory Bogrov), and there were a large number of modern Jewish schools using Russian as their language of instruction

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(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009). It focuses on the years between 1900 and World War I.

[5] For a study that pays careful attention to the diverse forms of Haskalah creativity including scholarship, See Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History. The Emergence of Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness,* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2002); on the Hebrew press in the nineteen century, see Menucha Gilboa, *Leksikon ha-'itonut ha-ivrit ba-me'ot ha-shemona esre ve-tesha esre,* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992).

(both state-sponsored and under private Jewish auspices). A series of Russian-Jewish weekly newspapers appeared in Odessa and St. Petersburg, culminating with the high-brow monthly journal *Voskhod*, which began publication in 1880. One of its authors was the young Shimon Dubnov.

The social base (readership, audience) of Russian Jewish culture consisted mainly of three groups: Jews who graduated from Russian gymnasia and universities, including professionals (doctors and lawyers); auto-didacts and "externs;" and the Jewish bourgeoisie in cities outside the Pale of Settlement – St. Petersburg, Kiev, Moscow – as well as in new frontier cities such as Odessa.[6]

Yiddish culture was the newest branch. And it really began to take off in terms of the three criteria mentioned above – natural secularity, diversity of media and genres, size and range of audience – in the final quarter of the 19th century.

To demonstrate this point, I'd like to survey Yiddish cultural activity in Russia in the 1880s. From a strictly literary perspective, the 1880s are not a very important period – Abramovitsh (Mendele Moykher-Sforim), the grandfather of Yiddish and Hebrew literature, was inactive in Yiddish during that decade. Sholem Aleichem was just a beginner (he debuted in 1883), and his major masterpieces were still ahead of him. I. L. Peretz, the father of Yiddish literature, debuted in Yiddish in 1889, at the end of the decade. By 1890, he had not yet published a single short story, feuilleton, essay, or drama – the genres for which he later became famous. But from the perspective of cultural history, we can see a lot happening in the 1880s. I would like to focus on four subjects: Yiddish theatre, press, political

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[6] The chronological progression from Hebrew to Russian and Yiddish is documented (albeit unconsciously) in Israel Zinberg, *History of Jewish Literature,* translated and ed. Bernard Martin, (Cincinnati – Ohio – New York: Ktav Publishing House, 12 vols, 1972–1978). Volume 11, "The Haskalah in Russia" deals almost exclusively with Hebrew writing, while volume 12 "The Haskalah at Its Zenith" deals with Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish writing. On Russian-Jewish culture in the nineteen the century, see *An Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature. Two Centuries of Dual Identity in Prose and Poetry,* ed. Maxim D. Shrayer, vol. 1, 1801–1953, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2007); Brian Horowitz, *Empire Jews. Jewish Nationalism and Acculturation in 19th and Early 20th Century Russia,* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Press, 2009).

pamphlets, and the social recognition of Yiddish literature. Finally, I'd like to offer a broad historical explanation for the burst of Yiddish cultural activity at that time.

A Surge of Theatre

The early 1880s are marked by the explosion of Yiddish performance culture in Russia. In the summer of 1879, Avrom Goldfaden, the father of modern Yiddish theatre, moved his theatre company from the backwater of Romania to the metropolis of Odessa, the city with the largest Jewish population in the Pale of Settlement. (in 1897, there were 124, 511 Jews in Odessa, 30% of the city's total population.) Goldfaden's theatre took Odessa by storm. Within a few weeks, his company's performances moved from the hall of the craftsmen's club to the Marien Theatre, which held 1,500 seats. In the early 1880s, the Marien theatre presented Russian shows four nights per week, and Yiddish shows three nights per week. Soon there were two or three competing Yiddish companies in Odessa, and ushers sold program booklets with the biographies of the various actors for five kopecks. There was, in other words, a bona fide theatre culture.[7]

Yiddish theatre was secularity incarnate. It was entertainment for entertainment's sake, a leisure activity to pass time pleasurably. The mingling of men and women in the audience and on the stage was taken for granted, its plots included love stories, and its main modes of expression were humor and satire.

Of course, there had been some Yiddish performance culture before the advent of theatre – mainly musical programs performed in wine cellars. But the scale and social significance of what happened in Odessa beginning in 1879 was unprecedented. The main antecedent that paved the way to Goldfaden's smash success was the fact that Jews had frequented Russian theatre in Odessa and other

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[7] The literature on Goldfaden is vast. For a broad overview, see Zalmen Zylbertsvayg, *Leksikon fun yidishn teater*, vol. 1 (New York, Hebrew Actors' Union of America, 1931), 275–376. For an in-depth new treatment, see Alyssa Quint, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theatre,* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019). Recent studies of Goldfaden's comedies and operetta are contained in *Yiddish Theatre. New Approaches*, ed. Joel Berkowitz, (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003).

cities for years beforehand. One memoirist, Berish Vaynshteyn, was struck by the diversity of Goldfaden's audience. "In those years, people sang Goldfaden's songs in all Jewish homes, including among the 'intelligentsia'. Even gymnasium-students, who spoke only Russian and who had previously attended only Russian theatre, suddenly became lovers of Yiddish theatre."[8]

Between 1880 and 1882, Goldfaden's company toured various cities inside and beyond the Pale of Settlement. In 1880 it was in the south: in Kharkov, Kherson, Poltava, Rostov. Beginning in 1881, when pogroms broke out in Ukraine, the company spent its time in the north, mainly in Minsk and St. Petersburg. What is noteworthy about this tour is that Goldfaden performed only in major cities, not in towns (shtetlekh), i.e. locales with less than 10,000 inhabitants. I do not think this was mainly because of financial or organizational reasons. Rather, it had to do with the cultural gap between the city and shtetl in the 1880s. City dwellers were more secularized in their life-style, while the shtetlekh were bastions of traditionalism. City dwellers were accustomed to theater, and eager for theatre. Shtetl dwellers were not, or not yet, in the 1880s.

The greatest surprise of Goldfaden's tour was his success in the capital city, in St. Petersburg. Petersburg was outside the Pale of Settlement, and Jews constituted a very small minority of its massive population (less than 2% of its 1 million inhabitants in 1890). The St. Petersburg community was socio-economically and culturally atypical: Its Jews were literate in Russian, and partook of Russian culture. But Goldfaden succeeded among them as well. His performances attracted university graduates, professionals, and members of the bourgeoisie. In order to do so, Goldfaden altered his repertoire and shifted from slapstick satire and comedy to historical operettas (from "The Two Kuni-Lemels" to "Bar Kokhba").[9] St. Petersburg Jews had higher cultural expectations.

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[8] Berish Vaynshteyn "Di ershte yorn fun yidishn teater in odes un in nyu york," *Arkhiv far der geshikhte fun yidishn teater un drame*, vol. 1, ed. Jacob Shatzky, (Vilna–New York: YIVO, 1930), 243–254, quote from page 248.

[9] Uri Finkel and Nokhem Oyslender, *A Goldfaden. Materyaln far a biografye,* (Minsk, 1926), 65–69.

While the Russian-Jewish press, both in Odessa and St. Petersburg, was quite negative in its evaluation of Goldfaden's plays, the reviews in the general, non-Jewish, Russian newspapers (*Odesskii Vestnik*, and *Novosti*) were favorable, if slightly condescending. The St. Petersburg paper Novosti wrote in 1881:

> We can only welcome the appearance of such performances. ... From an artistic perspective, the plays have no significance for us. But that criteria is entirely inaccurate. The Jews cannot stage good theatre all at once. Theatre is something new for them, and Goldfaden needed to begin ab novo.... Everything will be accomplished with time and work...[10]

This theatrical explosion was short lived. In April 1883, the Tsarist Ministry of Interior issued a ban on Yiddish theatre, for reasons still debated by scholars. (Some say that Jewish plutocrats denounced the theatre to the authorities as a harmful impediment to Russification, others say that the authorities were alarmed that plays such as Bar Kokhba could serve as revolutionary propaganda.)[11] For a few years after the ban, Goldfaden was able to perform to packed audiences in Warsaw, in the nominally autonomous Kingdom of Poland, where the ban was not yet enforced.[12] But in general, after 1883, Yiddish theatre led a difficult existence, operating in a legal grey zone as "German" theatre, hounded by police and censors. Nonetheless, the flourish of those four years (six years, if one includes Warsaw) indicated to all that Yiddish theatre was a cultural institution of tremendous power and social reach.

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[10] Finkel-Oyslender, *A Goldfaden*, 67.

[11] Y. Riminik, "Redifes kegn yidishn teater in rusland in di 80-er un 90-er yorn", in *Teater-bukh. zamlung tsum fuftsik yorikn yubiley fun yidishn teater,* (Kiev: Kultur-lige, 1927); Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, 25–29. The most recent treatment is John Klier, "Exit, Pursued by a Bear. The Ban on Yiddish Theatre in Imperial Russia," in *Yiddish Theatre. New Approaches*, ed. Berkowitz,159-174.

[12] Jacob Shatzky, "Goldfaden in Varshe" *YIVO bleter* 15/4 (May-June, 1940), 265–280.

The Ascent of the Press

At about the same time, there was an important development in the area of the Yiddish periodical press. In October 1881, the authorities issued a permit for the publication of a Yiddish weekly newspaper in St. Petersburg, after nearly a decade during which there was no Yiddish periodical in the Russian Empire. The new weekly, *Yidishes folksblat*, was edited and owned by Alexander Zederbaum, the long-standing editor of the Hebrew weekly *Ha-Melitz*. In the scholarly literature, *Yidishes folksblat* has been overshadowed by its predecessor *Kol mevaser* (1862–1872), which is widely credited as the first modern Yiddish newspaper, and by the similarly named literary almanac, *Yidishe folks-bibliotek*, edited by Sholem Aleichem, which appeared in 1888–1889. As a result, the newspaper is virtually unstudied.[13]

Compared to its predecessor, *Yidishes folksblat* was a giant leap forward in terms of journalistic and literary sophistication. The newspaper's format was based on a European model – a mix of news and opinion, politics, Jewish affairs, business news, popular science, literature and criticism. The paper was divided into sections and featured regular columnists. (By contrast, *Kol mevaser*, relied heavily on non-paid reports sent in by readers in cities and towns of the Pale.) On pages of *Yidishes folksblat*, we encounter, probably for the first time ever in the Yiddish language, such terms as "layt-artikl," "korespondentsye," "biografie," "zhurnalnii un bibliografishe khronik," "literaturnii kritik," "felieton." The Russified forms of some of these words indicate that Zederbaum's cultural model was Russian. But the staff members who put together the international news section also read German newspapers.[14]

Politically, the newspaper occupied an ambiguous position: Zederbaum's editorials praised the Tsarist government for its overall wisdom and kindness to Jews. But the paper's news section reported on pogroms, and it published poems

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[13] On *Kol mevaser*, see: Alexander Orbach, *New Voices of Russian Jewry,* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 95–123, 155–181; on the *Yidishe folks-bibliotek*, see Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, 27–30.

[14] Zitron, *Di geshikhte fun der yidisher prese fun yor 1863 biz 1889,* (Vilna: Fareyn fun Yidishe literatn un zshurnalistn in Vilne, 1923), 121–123.

lamenting Jewish suffering and the rise of anti-Semitism. Numerous articles paid close, enthusiastic attention to the new Jewish colonies in Palestine and the *hibat tziyon* movement. But Zederbaum himself opposed emigration anywhere (to America or Palestine) as a solution to Jewish problems. It was a delicate balancing act.[15]

Even more than its predecessor, *Yidishes folksblat* devoted many pages to literature – short stories, novels in serialization, and poetry. In fact, the paper changed its sub-title in 1884 to "a politish-literarishe tsaytung," and added a special literary supplement, which printed longer pieces of fiction. Among the authors who debuted on the newspaper's pages, and published there frequently, were Sholem Aleichem and Mordkhe Spektor. Zederbaum added the supplement because literature, more than news and opinion, was the drawing card for the newspaper's growing number of subscribers. He was a businessman, not a lover of the arts.

It is on the pages of *Yidishes folksblat* that one witnesses the remarkable linguistic transformation among the Russian-Jewish intellectual elite: established Hebrew and Russian-language authors began to write regularly in Yiddish, and some of them even switched mainly to Yiddish. In the opinion section, the newspaper's prize catch was Moshe Leib Lilienblum, a central Hebrew Haskalah author who became a leading proto-Zionist during the pogroms of 1881–1882. In the 1880s, Lilienblum was a fully bi-lingual (Hebrew-Yiddish) writer, and published numerous articles calling for a Jewish national revival in the land of Israel on the pages of *Yidishes folksblat*.[16]

The surprise convert from Russian to Yiddish on the pages of *Yidishes folksblat* was Shimen Frug, then considered the Jewish national poet in the Russian language, and the unofficial poet laureate of hibat tziyon. Frug's Yiddish debut in Zederbaum's newspaper in 1887 with mournful national poems, and lyrical nature poetry, added a new dimension, and a sense of gravitas to Yiddish verse. These

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[15] Zitron, *Di geshikhte fun der yidisher prese*, 125–127. On Lilienblum, see Michael Stanislawski, *Autobiographical Jews*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 54–102.

[16] Zitron, *Di geshikhte fun der yidisher prese*, 133–136. On Frug see Horowitz, *Empire Jews*, 51–64.

were poems for personal reading, not for singing or public performance, as were the verses by Goldfaden, Zunser, or Mikhl Gordon. The American Yiddish critic N. B. Minkov remarked half a century later:

> Frug introduced long accepted features of Russian poetry into Yiddish – sonorousness, flexibility, and rhythm. While these things were obvious and taken for granted in Russian, they were new and refreshing in Yiddish poetry. In Russian he was a rather unoriginal poet, in Yiddish he was the father of modern Yiddish poetry.[17]

Frug's poetry is perhaps the best evidence that *Yidishes folksblat* was geared toward a multi-tiered readership, including readers with more refined or developed tastes. It seems that many of the newspaper's readers were likewise readers of Hebrew or Russian. When the paper began publishing Russian novels in translation, Mordkhe Spektor took the editors to task: "Such items cannot have much value for readers of the *Yiddishes folksblat*. Because most of them read novels in the Russian language. *Folksblat* readers are not from the simple folk, but are rather half-educated people."[18]

Zederbaum estimated that his Yiddish weekly had 7,000 subscribers, scattered across the Pale of Settlement. While this was enormous leap from the 500–750 subscribers to *Kol mevaser* in the 1860s, it was a far cry from the circulation of 175,000 by the two largest Warsaw Yiddish dailies *Haynt* and *Moment* in 1912, on the eve of World War I. But the relatively modest number of subscribers was deceptive, and for its own time quite impressive: In the 1880s, many subscriptions to *Yidishes folksblat* were shared (that is paid for) by two or three people, and copies of the newspaper passed through many more hands than its co-subscribers. Zederbaum claimed that there were ten readers for every subscription. The Yiddish newspaper was beginning to emerge as a mass phenomenon. And the

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[17] N. B. Minkov, *Yidishe klasiker poetn. Eseyen,* (New York: Farlag Bodn, 1937), 14–15.
[18] Spektor in *Hoyzfraynd* 2 (1889), 174.

number of subscribers to *Yidishes folksblat* surpassed the combined circulation of the Hebrew newspapers in the Empire, an important linguistic tipping point.[19]

Political Pamphlets in the Mother Tongue

The 1880s also saw the emergence of Yiddish political pamphlet literature, most of it published by or on behalf of the proto-Zionist movement, Hibat Tziyon. In 1884, Abramovitsh (Mendele Moykher-Sforim) published an adapted Yiddish translation of Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*, under the title *A segule tsu di yidishe tsores* ["A Remedy to Jewish Woes"], with a print run of 10,000 copies. In all, six Yiddish Palestinophilic booklets were published in the 1880s, all of them in Odessa, the movement's headquarters. Most were purely informative such as "Di Menoyre fun Eretz Yisroel: Statistishe Tsifern" ["The Palestine Menorah: Statistical Figures"], which provided details on seven colonies (hence "Menorah"). The most ambitious was Moshe Leib Lilienblum's almanac, *Der yidisher veker*, published in 1887. It consisted of ideological essays, mainly polemics with assimilationists, reportage, poetry and fiction on Eretz Israel.[20] The compendium brought together prominent writers and intellectuals, including Sholem Aleichem, Goldfaden, Yehoshua Khona Ravnitsky, Eliakum Zunser, and Avrom Ber Gottlober, all of whom identified with the ideas of Hibat Tziyon.

Yiddish socialist literature was miniscule in the 1880s. According the Elias Tscherikower's study, "The Beginning of Illegal Literature in Yiddish", the only brochure that was widely distributed was *Fun vos eyner lebt* ["From What One Lives"] a translation from Polish of Jan Mlot's *Kto z czego Zyje*. First published in Yiddish in 1887, it gave a readable primer on Marxism – the exploitation of labor, class conflict, workers' solidarity, and the ideal of socialism, which it defined as the workers owning the means of production. *Fun vos eyner lebt* subsequently

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[19] Zitron, *Di geshikhte fun der yidisher prese*, 132; "Tsederboym," in Zalmen Rejzin, *Leksikon fun der yidisher literatur, prese un filologye*, vol. 3, (Vilna: Kletzkin, 1929), 337–338; http://web.nli.org.il/sites/JPress/Hebrew/Pages/hmlets.aspx , Zalmen Rejzen, *Leksikon fun der yidisher literatur un prese*, (Warsaw: Tsentral, 1914), 679, 711.

[20] Miriam Katchansky, *Hibat Tziyon and Yiddish*, PhD Thesis, (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2001), 73–113.

became of staple of Yiddish socialist literature, and went through five editions, under various party auspices, between 1900 and 1906.[21]

Needless to say, socialist pamphlets faced special challenges. They needed to be printed illegally, or smuggled into the country from abroad. "Fun vos eyner lebt" is a great early example of the transnational, pan-European character of Yiddish socialist literature – something that became a standard feature in the 1890s and 1900s. The translator, one Shimon Rabinowicz, was a native of Oszmiana (today in Belarus), who spent his school years in Warsaw, where he became involved in socialist and revolutionary politics. He emigrated to Paris in order to avoid arrest, and studied in Geneva. Publication of the pamphlet was funded by Polish and Jewish socialists in Paris, but it was printed in London, where there was a Yiddish socialist newspaper edited by Morris Winchewsky. Rabinowicz, the translator, personally smuggled hundreds of copies of *Fun vos eyner lebt* into Russia, sewing onto them false covers of siddurim, to deceive the border police. He then travelled across the Pale of Settlement and Russian Poland, distributing copies in Kovna, Vilna, Warsaw, Pinsk, Minsk, Bialystok, Mohilev, Odessa and elsewhere. After his grand book-distribution tour, he returned to Paris, and was arrested during his next attempt to enter the Russian Empire with illegal literature.[22]

But generally speaking, Russian Jewish socialists showed no interest in using Yiddish for political propaganda in the 1880s. They believed that literacy in Russian was a pre-condition for becoming class-conscious, and taught Jewish workers Russian, and the basics of socialism, in Russian, to small "workers' circles". The shift to Yiddish took place in the 1890s, in the pre-Bund years and early Bund. So the socialists were relative latecomers to the rise of Yiddish. In that respect, they took a leaf out of "bourgeois culture," and were not pioneers.[23]

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[21] Elias Tscherikower, "Di onheybn fun der umlegaler literatur literatur af yidish," *Historishe shriftn fun yivo, 3. Di yidishe sotsialistishe bavegung biz di grindung fun bund,* (Vilna/Paris: YIVO, 1939): 577–603.

[22] Sh. Rabinowicz, "Mit fuftsik yor tsurik," *Historishe shriftn* 3 (1939): 314–347.

[23] On the circles and Russian, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

The proto-Zionist and socialist pamphlets of the 1880s were the first sprouts of a genre of Yiddish writing that would flourish in later decades. Their appearance indicated that there was a Yiddish readership capable of, and interested in, devoting their sustained attention to matters of politics. After all, a fifty-page pamphlet, or a 150-page almanac, demanded much more effort from the reader than a two-column newspaper article.

The Rising Status of Yiddish Literature

When it comes to Yiddish literature in the 1880s, the great event was not literary per se (the creation of a great masterpiece), but cultural-historical: the recognition of Yiddish literature by members of the Russian-Jewish and Hebrew intelligentsias as a legitimate and even valuable entity. The main Russian-Jewish author to offer such a positive view was the young Shimon Dubnov, who was then the literary critic of the Russian-Jewish journal *Voskhod*.

Until 1887, the Russian Jewish press basically ignored Yiddish literature as if it did not exist, or was not worthy of attention. There were virtually no reviews of the Yiddish works of Mendele, Isaac Mayer Dik, Y. Y. Linetski and others. Then Dubnov, who wrote under the pseudonym "Kritikus", burst forth with a series of articles. In the first article, he reviewed three new Hebrew works of fiction, and Sholem Aleichem's story "dos Meserl" ["The Little Knife"], and reached the surprising conclusion that only the latter, the story in "Jargon", had any literary value. "This little work is a modest exception from the general rule of the extreme poverty of contemporary Jewish fiction."[24]

Then a year later, he expanded upon this observation in a review essay called "On Jargonic Literature in general."[25]

> We observe a very noteworthy phenomenon, which should not be considered transitory or ephemeral... We have before us a new trend...

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[24] Kritikus [Shimon Dubnov], "Novie svidetel'stva o bednosti evreiskoi beletristiki," *Voskhod*, July-August 1887.

[25] Kritikus, "O zhargonnoi literature," *Vokhshod*, October 1888.

which will stimulate new talents in our literary scene. I refer to the progressive development of Jargonic literature. ...Before our eyes we observe the gratifying transition of Jargon from light popular works [....] to serious works which stimulate thought. [...] Today, even a simple Jewish woman cannot be satisfied by reading *Tsene-rene* and *tkhines*.[26]

Dubnov viewed the new trend in a broad European context:

How is the Jewish Jargon worse than, for instance, the Bulgarian language, or than the small Slavic, Germanic and Romance dialects, which no one denies the right to have a literature in their language? Are there less Jews who speak Jargon than Czechs and Bulgarians, who have their own literatures? Jargon does not have scientific or philosophic terminology, but it can acquire it, just as Hebrew acquired it.[27]

"We can only rejoice at the increase of literary forces, and the creation of a new school of Jargonists."[28] It should be noted that Dubnov's article was published before the appearance of Sholem Aleichem's land-mark almanac *Yidishe folks-bibliotek*.[29]

By the time of Dubnov's third article, in 1889, he both celebrated Yiddish literature and at the same time complained that it had advanced too far too soon, lamenting that Peretz's poem "Monish" and Mendele's novel "Dos vintshfingerl" ["The Wishing Ring"], were inaccessible to simple readers.[30]

In the Hebrew *Ha-Melitz*, the old Maskilic anti-Yiddish attitude prevailed, but the attacks on Yiddish literature now had a new tone. Not merely contempt and disdain – but a sense of worry that Hebrew writers were abandoning ship for

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[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] "Novosti zhargonnoi literatury (sbornik sholom aleikhema)," *Voskhod*, July 1889. On Dubnov's positive evaluation of Yiddish literature in the late 1880s, see Sh. Niger, "Sh. Dubnov vi a literatur-kritiker," *YIVO bleter* 23 (1944): 163–177.

Yiddish, and expressions of concern about a rising competitor which could threaten Hebrew literature. Elhanan Levinsky began his article attacking Sholem Aleichem's almanac *Yidishe folks-bibliotek* by quoting the verse in the Book of Proverbs: "The earth trembles... at a hand-maid who is heir to her mistress." Yiddish should know its place, as hand-maid, and not aspire to higher literary functions.

But there were pro-Yiddish voices in *Ha-Melitz*, most notably the Hebrew journalist and hibat tziyon activist Yehoshua Khona Ravnitsky. The latter argued that the rise of Yiddish literature would not harm Hebrew, but on the contrary would help it. If the simple folk were drawn to good works of literature in Yiddish, their love and study of Hebrew would grow. As for hand-maids and mistresses, Ravnitsky retorted, "the hand-maid has no aspiration to be heir. The hand-maid seeks to serve the masses, whom the mistress does not invite to her table. May the Yiddish writers continue to build and plant among the masses. The Jewish people will bless them."[31]

The Rise of Yiddish in Historical Perspective

Finally, I'd like to offer some reflections on the historical causes for the outburst of modern Yiddish cultural activity beginning in the 1880s. Usually, scholars have pointed to the change in the attitude of the Jewish intelligentsia toward Yiddish as the key factor, and have tied it to the changed atmosphere of the 1880s, in the aftermath of the pogroms, when the quest for integration lost its plausibility, and various proto-nationalist views grew. [32] I'd like to question this top-down interpretation, and in fact invert it. In my opinion, audience for modern Yiddish culture grew and changed first, and the intellectuals followed suit in response to

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[31] Getsel Kressel, "A historishe polemic vegn der yidisher literatur," *Goldene keyt* 20 (1954), 338–356.
[32] Emanuel Goldsmith, *Modern Yiddish Culture. The Story of the Yiddish Language Movemen*, (New York: Shapolsky Publishers and the Workmen's Circle Education Department, 1987, 45–70; Miron, *Traveler Disguised*, 1–66.

that. To understand these changes, one needs to connect Yiddish cultural history to the broader social history of Russian and Polish Jewry.

The greatest social transformation in Ashkenazic Jewry in the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteen century was urbanization, migration from shtetlekh to cities. Between 1855 and 1897, the Jewish population of Odessa increased from 17,000 to 139,000, and of Warsaw from 40,000 to 220,000.[33] Similar processes took place in many other cities. The primary social base of modern Yiddish culture – literature, theatre, press, pamphlets – consisted of shtetl Jews who moved to the cities.

The city was a joltingly new world for these migrants, no less than America was a new world for Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Here, in the city, there was no social control by the kahal and rabbis – there was freedom to grow lax in religious observance. Here, Jews were a minority rather than a majority population; and Jews were exposed to modern Russian and Polish culture, some of them superficially, some more deeply. The migrants to the cities felt a need for modern types of information and modern forms of entertainment. For most of them, their primary language was Yiddish – though a minority of the migrants did become fully literate in Russian, with no or little Russian schooling (just as Mendele and Sholem Aleichem had done).

In the 1880s, the audience for modern Yiddish culture was in the cities, and not (or not yet) in the shtetlekh, which were bastions of tradition. Urbanization and the rise of Yiddish culture went hand in hand. Kol Mevaser's circulation in the 1860s was 500–750 copies, while *Yidishes folksblat*'s was 7,000; the Yiddish musical shows of the 1860s were set in modest wine cellars, while Goldfaden's theatre company in the 1880s performed in halls with 1,500 seats.

An Important facilitating factor for the rise of modern Yiddish culture was the growth of the Russian railway system. (In 1855, the Russian Empire had 570 miles

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[33] See Jacob Leshchinsky, *Dos yidishe folk in tsifern,* (Berlin: Klal-farlag, 1922), 69–82; Shmuel Ettinger, *Bein polin le-rusiyah,* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Shazar and Mosad Bialik, 1994), 257–279.

of rail track. In 1890, it had more than 19,000 miles of track.) *Yidishes folksblat* actually had few readers in St. Petersburg, where it was published. But it could be distributed with ease, speed, and at modest expense by rail to all major cities in the Pale of Settlement. Goldfaden's theatre company could tour from city to city travelling by train, moving its stage set and costumes along with its actors. The Yiddish book business was likewise transformed, as book-stores and mail orders displaced wandering peddlers. Most shtetlekh were not yet connected to the railway system, and were therefore not in contact with modern Yiddish culture, in the 1880s.

The second major social trend in Russian Jewry in this period was impoverishment, or downward economic mobility (not by all, but by most Russian Jews). The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and the rise of the Russian railway system beginning in the 1860s, sent economic shock-waves through the Jewish Pale of Settlement. They led to a decline of traditional Jewish occupations in the shtetlekh (in trade, transport, and estate administration). Jews migrated to the cities more out of necessity than out of opportunity, in search of work. Downward mobility meant that the sons of successful merchants became wage-earners and workers. These sons came from formerly elite families, went to good cheders and sometimes to yeshivas. Their fathers had been readers of *Ha-Melitz* and of Hebrew Haskalah literature.[34]

These sons (we know little about the daughters) became the more sophisticated readers of Yiddish literature, the press, political pamphlets, and attendees of the theatre. Many of them had to interrupt their Hebrew studies as youngsters, in order to find employment, but they could read and think complex thoughts in Yiddish. Some of these young migrants had the skills and inclinations to acquire Russian and became bi-cultural. And many of their declassee fathers and mothers moved to the city as well, in their middle age years, and began to partake of Yiddish theatre and literature there.

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[34] For a recent analysis of these socio-economic processes, see Eli Lederhendler, "Classless: On the Social Status of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50/2 (2008): 509–534.

My point is that modern Yiddish literature had a ready-made elite contingent to its readership – declassee merchants and especially their children, who migrated to the cities. The notion that Jewish society was divided into two groups – a modernized intelligentsia and the "simple masses" – is a myth, a trope used by Russian Jewish intellectuals such as Dubnov, who lifted it rather mechanically from Russian social thought. Instead, there was intricately stratified community in the throes of dramatic social change, which produced a diverse Yiddish readership and audience.

When the founders of modern Yiddish literature and theatre produced works in the 1880s that were not for the simple masses, works that Dubnov and Levinsky complained about as inappropriately high-brow, their authors knew what they were doing. They were not ahead of their audiences; they were responding to the interests and needs of a growing and changing readership.

In conclusion, my broader point is that modern Yiddish literature and culture in Russia are a product of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Only then did the conditions arise for a culture that was naturally secular, multi-faceted, and geared toward a large and diverse audience. The rest, as we say, is history.

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David E. Fishman is Professor of Jewish History of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and director of the Jewish Archival Survey in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. His recent book on the "Paper Brigade", *The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis* was awarded the National Jewish Book Award for a book on the Holocaust, and has been published in eight languages. He recently completed editing a collection of Yiddish discourses by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, from manuscripts. *Droshes vegn shivas-tsiyon un kiyum ha-umo [Discourses on the Return to Zion and Jewish Destiny]* will be published in Yiddish by the Orthodox Union Press in 2021.

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Marking Territory: A *Flâneur*'s Failure in I. L. Peretz's *Mayses*

by *Marc Caplan*

Abstract

As the first prominent Yiddish writer from the Polish territories of the Pale of Settlement, I. L. Peretz (1852-1915) was from the beginning of his career an outlier in the geographical politics of Yiddish culture. He dramatized this difference in a number of ways: insisting on the linguistic difference of his Yiddish from that of his colleagues, dispensing with the overt appeals to oral discourse which Yiddish literature had adopted and adapted from Russian literary models, and demanding of himself and his readers a sensitivity to literary style on the highest level of sophistication. As an outlier, these aesthetic differences find representation in analogously exceptional approaches to the question of literary space. Unlike his primary colleagues, and competitors, in Yiddish literature of the day – Sh. Y. Abramovitsh (c. 1835-1917) and Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) – Peretz dispenses with the convention of creating prototypical, imaginary shtetlekh *in order to situate his stories, including his most fantastic and parodic narratives, in a verifiable Eastern European geography. He is moreover the first great Yiddish writer to describe these traditional communities from a perspective of the writer living in a modern metropolis, even if the metropolis itself figures in comparatively few of his narratives. What emerges from these strategies is a writer who situates himself not only as an "outlier" with respect to the linguistic and literary conventions of his contemporaries, but also with respect to the territories he describes. His narratives are neither traditional nor modern, neither metropolitan nor peripheral, neither realistic nor phantasmagoric, but in each instance somewhere in between and, more significantly, constantly in a state of flux among these contrasting locations. This essay will trace the narrational techniques and representations of space in Peretz's fiction to demonstrate the dislocations which determine his best writing and provide a model for the leading trends in Yiddish modernism that follow in his wake.*

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Marc Caplan

The Yiddish language has several terms to describe an indigent idler: a *leydik-geyer* ("one who goes around with empty pockets"), a *luftmentsh* ("one who lives on air," a person with his or her head in the clouds), a *batlen* (a perennial student who lives on community charity), a *kasriel* (someone so poor that his or her continued sustenance depends on God's grace);[1] with a culture so mired in poverty as Eastern European Jewry was, it is no surprise that its language developed such an overabundant lexicon for designating the character types produced by privation. What Yiddish lacks, because the term exists in no other language but French, is an equivalent for the *flâneur*, a wanderer who despite his material limitations is able to remake the city in his own image, whose urban itineraries transcend hierarchies of class, wealth, and custom by transforming the city into a spectacle choreographed for his private entertainment in public spaces.[2] The *flâneur* is what Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) would describe as a dialectical image of modern capitalism – in the crowd but not of the crowd, an observer-participant in the new sociology of the marketplace who collects images of everyday life in lieu of collecting commodities, in equal parts a rag-picker and a poet, who mediates between the two roles through his perambulations in the public square.

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[1] This term provides the name for the prototypical shtetl in the work of Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916), Kasrilevke. For an explanation of how this town got its name and what this signifies about its inhabitants, see *Di Shtot fun di kleyne mentshelekh* in Sholem Aleichem's *Ale verk*, vol. 3, (New York: Morgn Frayhayt oysgabe, 1937), 9-17. A translation of this story by Julius and Frances Butwin can be found in *Selected Stories of Sholom Aleichem*, ed. Alfred Kazin, (New York: Modern Library, 1956), 28-34.

[2] Perhaps the best conceptualization of how walking signifies a politically transgressive gesture against the social order of the city is the section "Spatial Practices" in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; 1988), 91-130.

The development of the *flâneur* as a character type therefore reflects a shift in the depiction of urban space in modern literature. As Benjamin himself notes in the transition reflected from E.T.A. Hoffmann's final narrative, *Des Vetters Eckfenster* ("The Cousin's Corner Window," 1822) to Edgar Allen Poe's story "The Man of the Crowd" (1840),[3] Poe's narrator watches the street from the window of a public coffee-house, whereas the cousin is sitting at home. Poe's observer succumbs to the fascination of the scene, which finally lures him out into the whirl of the crowd. The cousin in Hoffmann's tale, looking out from his corner window, has lost the use of his legs; he would not be able to go with the crowd even if he were in the midst of it. His attitude toward the crowd is, rather, one of superiority, inspired as it is by his observation post at the window of an apartment building.[4] Benjamin in turn traces the influence of Poe's story on Charles Baudelaire's poetry, and through Baudelaire (1821-1867) to the subsequent development of modernist literature in Europe.[5] Yet in spite of the *flâneur*'s declared resistance to the marketplace's imperative to produce and consume, *flânerie* nonetheless reinforces the cultural hegemony of the West and capitalism, insofar as it is a social role unavailable to groups marginalized in the social life of Europe, regardless of the *flâneur*'s own willful marginality.[6]

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[3] Although Poe (1809-1849), of course, was an American writer, his story takes place in London, a city where he had spent his formative years; the imprint of the story on European literature, in fact, is greater than on United States literature, thanks to a translation that Charles Baudelaire made of it into French.

[4] Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" [1940], in *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 189.

[5] As Benjamin elsewhere describes the *flâneur*, "The street becomes a dwelling place for the *flâneur*; he is as much at home among house façades as a citizen is within his four walls. To him, a shiny enameled shoe sign is at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his living room. Buildings' walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; newsstands are his libraries; and café terraces are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done." See "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire" [1938] in *The Writer of Modern Life*, 68-69.

[6] One can liken the social status of the *flâneur* to one of his attenuated descendants in the United States, the Beats of the 1950s. Although the Beats declared themselves in opposition to the conformity and imperative to produce in the post-war social economy, their identification with African American and Native American cultures, along with Eastern religions such as Buddhism or Hinduism, only reinforced the conspicuously bourgeois origins of the Beats themselves. What Norman Mailer (1923-2007) misses in his 1957 encomium to the Beats, "The White Negro," is not their identification with African American culture, but their indelible, indomitable whiteness.

The *flâneur*'s ability both to mimic and invert the logic of the marketplace is contingent on his ability to move through the crowd anonymously, uninflected by markers of ethnicity, class, or gender. There is, for example, no feminine counterpart to the *flâneur* (*flâneuse*), because according to the logic of European modernity, a woman in public not purchasing or selling commodities was herself a commodity, i.e., a prostitute.[7] In nineteenth-century Europe, a Jewish man, one could argue, would similarly be marked in a way that would preclude him from functioning as anything other than an agent of commerce.[8] At least in Eastern Europe during the nineteenth century, this is certainly the case[9]; in the greatest realist novel of nineteenth-century Polish literature, Bolesław Prus's *Lalka* (*The Doll,* 1889), the danger posed by Jewish characters consists not of their exemption from the commercial sphere, but in their usurpation of Poles' roles in urban and economic domains through stereotypically superior financial instincts and commitment to hard work.[10] In Yiddish literature of the nineteenth century,

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[7] As Anke Gleber has written, "When a woman signals the *flâneur*'s aimless and purposeless drifting along the streets, she risks being perceived as a 'streetwalker,' as the object of a male gaze usually characterized by the *flâneur*'s disinterested attitude." See "Female Flanerie and the *Symphony of the City,*" in *Women and the Metropolis. Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 76.

[8] One hastens to add for separate though related reasons that in the context of the United States an African American, whether historically or today, could not comfortably play the role of a *flâneur* because his presence is always under surveillance, for reasons both too apparent and too complicated to be elaborated upon here. For one of the best and most succinct accounts of the surveillance that has been imposed upon African Americans in Europe, see James Baldwin's classic essay "Equal in Paris," first published in *Commentary* (March 1955), more recently included in the volume *Baldwin. Collected Essays*, (New York: Library of America, 1998), 101-116.

[9] A credible argument can be formulated that in Western Europe, Jewish *flânerie* was possible as a consequence of assimilation; such an argument is suggested, for example, in the family history that Edmund de Waal chronicles of his ancestors in nineteenth-century Paris and Vienna, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* (New York: Picador, 2010). Similarly, the most significant exposition of *flânerie* in German literature, and a foundational influence on Benjamin's conceptualization of it, is *Walking in Berlin. A Flâneur in the Capital*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), written by Franz Hessel (1880-1941), a writer of Jewish origins. In Eastern Europe, however, such assimilation remained unattainable, and for the most part undesired, during the nineteenth century.

[10] See Bolesław Prus, *The Doll*, translated by David Welsh, (New York: New York Review of Books Classics, 2011). Despite the sinister tone that Prus (1847-1912) sets in his depiction of Jews, the novel is nonetheless relatively liberal in its outlook; the Jewish characters come in for less rebuke than the lazy and decadent Polish characters who allow the Jews to take over their affairs, and the clannish, conspiratorial Jews are counterbalanced with other Jewish characters who have sought to create a common culture with liberal Poles, however few and far between such Polish liberals were

urbanization as such is seldom depicted, since the preferred setting for Yiddish writing in that era was the shtetl rather than the large city.[11] When Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) depicts the metropolis in his epistolary series *Menakhem Mendl* (in print, 1887; in book installments, 1892-1909),[12] his protagonist does not stand aloof from modern capitalism, but struggles continuously, preposterously, at times poignantly, to participate in a game, the rules of which he cannot understand and which are stacked against him from the first.

Sholem Aleichem's greatest counterpart, I.L. Peretz (1852-1915), similarly depicts urban spaces only intermittently in his fiction, most notably in his relatively late short story *Mayses* ("Stories").[13] The themes that he schematizes and dramatizes there were first suggested earlier in his career, in his debut Yiddish ballad *Monish* (1888) and the prose sketch *In Post-vogn* ("In the Mail Coach," 1891), though in both examples the setting is the shtetl rather than the city. *Monish* figures a young yeshiva prodigy's attraction to European culture as his seduction by a she-demon disguised as a beautiful non-Jewish woman.[14] *In Post-vogn* similarly describes the dilemmas facing modern Yiddish writers such as Peretz through the unhappy marriage of a still-traditional man and a modern Jewish woman involved in a love affair with a non-Jewish Don Juan. As Peretz writes in that story of the domestic situation that prompted this affair

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in the novel or in real life. Prus's attitude toward Jews apparently darkened considerably later in his career.

[11] The definitive (Anglophone) treatment of the shtetl in Yiddish, and Hebrew, literature is Dan Miron's essay "The Literary Image of the Shtetl" (1995) in his collection *The Image of the Shtetl and Other Studies of Modern Jewish Literary Imagination*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 1-48.

[12] In the original, see *Menakhem-Mendl*, vol. 2 of Sholem Aleichem's *Ale verk*, (New York: Morgn-frayhayt, 1918; 1937). In translation, see *The Adventures of Menakhem-Mendl*, translated by Tamara Kahana, (New York: Sholem Aleichem Family, 1969).

[13] The dating of the story, in fact, is contested: Ruth Wisse in the *I.L. Peretz Reader* indicates the story was written in 1903; the *Ale verk* edition published in New York in 1947 groups the story in the years 1905-1910, making it one of the last stories Peretz would have written before focusing in the final years of his life on drama, memoir, and programmatic essays. Since I'm consulting both sources I'll happily split the difference by dating it in the final decade of his career as a fiction writer, and accordingly "late."

[14] For a (revised) version of *Monish* in Yiddish, see Y.L. Peretz, *Ale verk*, vol. I, (New York: CYCO, 1947), 3-27. In translation see *The I.L. Peretz Reader*, ed. Ruth Wisse, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990; 2002), 3-15.

Two separate worlds, a man's world and a woman's world – a world of
the Talmudic "Four Categories of Damages," and a world of storybooks,
bought by the carton... When he reads, she falls asleep; when she reads, he
falls asleep. At the least, I think, we ought to unite the two worlds. It is the
obligation of every Yiddish writer – but Yiddish writers carry too many
obligations of their own. If only we had some supplement to our income![15]

Rather than articulating the balance that the narrator seeks in Peretz's earlier story,
between Jewish tradition and European modernity, the newly urbanized male
protagonist in *Mayses* replays the seductions and apocalyptic downfall of Monish
to depict not a bridge between the two worlds the author evokes, but a trap leaving
the character, and his generation, stuck in a condition of irresolvable desire.

Mayses is one of relatively few Peretz stories that takes place in Warsaw rather than
a shtetl – often in Peretz's stories a geographically identifiable shtetl rather than
the prototypical yet parodic shtetlekh favored by his contemporaries Mendele
Moykher-Sforim (c. 1835-1917) and Sholem Aleichem. There is much that should
be said about the diffidence among the authors of "classic" Yiddish literature in
the late nineteenth century to depict the urban experience in Yiddish fiction. This
ambivalence is evident in the term *mayse* itself, a word integrated into Yiddish
from Talmudic rhetoric. It literally means "deed" and it conveys simultaneously
an actual occurrence, as in the expression *mayse shhoyo* (a tale that actually
happened), as well as a fabricated incident (a *bobe-mayse*, or old wives' tale). The
favored term for describing literary narrative among nineteenth-century Yiddish
writers, a *mayse* is situated between the traditional and the modern, the real and
the fantastic, the oral and the written. For Peretz, an ostensibly assimilated, Polish-
speaking Jewish community leader in Warsaw, the modern, urban perspective
simultaneously situates his production as a writer and eludes its own self-
representation. This can be likened to a remark attributed to Peretz's
contemporary Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) about eating at the restaurant in

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[15] See Y. L. Peretz, *In Post-vogn*, *Ale Verk*, vol. II, 74-75. In English, "In the Mail Coach," *The I. L. Peretz Reader*, 110-111. My translation slightly modifies the published version, done by Golda Werman, to convey more explicitly the double meaning of the Yiddish word *khoyv*, signifying both "responsibility," in an ethical sense, and "debt," in a financial one – hence, "obligation."

the Eiffel Tower because it was the one spot in Paris where one couldn't see the Eiffel Tower; as Roland Barthes (1915-1980) uses this remark to critique Structuralism, the position from which a particular perspective is achieved is that location which cannot be depicted in the system it generates.[16]

Maupassant's remark also signifies the paradox of the *flâneur* in architectural and technological terms. At the moment when *flânerie* was becoming obsolete via the replacement of open air bazaars and covered arcades with department stores, new skyscrapers transform the *flâneur*'s roving voyeurism vertically; the cousin's perspective in Hoffmann's story becomes integrated into the logic of city planning, and with the introduction of ticketed access to the top of these constructions, the Olympian perspective on urban space could become another commodity. If *flânerie* promised the *flâneur* both the anonymity and the amnesia of the marketplace, just as the new high-rise buildings promised to erase prior urban histories, including the periodic transformation of the European urban landscape into a revolutionary battleground, Peretz's urban protagonist finds himself continually trapped, "read," both by his memories from the shtetl and the expectations of non-Jews identifying him in the streets he roams. In an attenuated sense, therefore, Peretz uses the techniques of the *mayse* in his urban storytelling to dramatize and complicate the specific paradoxes of the male Jewish gaze. Instead of the verticality of the new urban landscape that enables tourists to escape themselves and their surroundings in order to perceive the city as a panorama, it is the inescapability of memories and shtetl life that prevents his ostensibly emancipated protagonist from living the life of a spectator or an uninflected subject. *Mayses* as such offers a meta-textual commentary on Peretz's status as a writer, as well as his location in Warsaw.

The story begins with the unnamed protagonist, an aspiring Jewish writer transplanted to Warsaw from the shtetl, strolling on the banks of the Vistula and imagining his love interest, a non-Jewish seamstress, visiting him in his rented room. The perspective from the very beginning of the narrative shifts between

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[16] See "The Eiffel Tower" in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag, (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), 236-250.

inside and outside, private and public, in ways that continue to structure the story and spatialize the conflicts that Peretz previously identifies with the "obligation" of Jewish literature from the beginning of his career. Less than half a page into the narrative, Peretz indicates that these star-crossed lovers – it's unclear in fact if they have consummated their relationship in any meaningful sense – first met at the Saxony Gardens (*Ogród Saski*), a telling detail because long before Peretz wrote this story it had served for both Poles and Jews as a stereotypically "Jewish" yet upwardly mobile space, akin perhaps to Central Park West in twentieth-century American fiction or popular culture.[17] The Saxony Gardens is a provisionally Jewish space, yet the presence of Jews there is a source of resentment for nativist Poles who consider them interlopers or outsiders in the cityscape, while a working class Pole such as the seamstress in this story is from an opposing perspective equally displaced there.

The detail moreover reveals part of the political motivation for this exceptional narrative in Peretz's writing: to critique the aspirations toward Polish-Jewish "symbiosis" among the generation of assimilationist intellectuals in the era following the brutally suppressed Polish uprising against Russia in 1863. One of the features of Polish Positivist literature in the immediate aftermath of the 1863 uprising was the motif of doomed love between a Jewish man and a Polish woman; though their relationship was often thwarted by the convenient death of the Jewish man fighting for the Polish cause, or the less melodramatic decision that he remain loyal to the religion of his ancestors, this plot device expressed the naïve hope in liberal circles that cultural and linguistic differences between Jews and Poles could be overcome in the creation of a new, autonomous, yet homogenous Poland of the future.[18] On the opposite side of this political divide, but with

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[17] For a historical discussion of Polish and Jewish perceptions of the Saxony Gardens, see Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal, *Poles and Jews. A Failed Brotherhood*, (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1992), 25-26.

[18] This motif figures, for example, in Prus's great novel, though here it functions to evoke an explicitly bygone era: the best friend of Wokulski, the narrative's Polish protagonist – whose adventures offer a picaresque chronicle of Polish life from before the 1863 Warsaw uprising up to the novel's present in the 1880s – is a Jewish doctor, Szuman, who had contemplated suicide over an unhappy love affair with a non-Jewish woman. Saved from suicide, Szuman is "born again" as an objective observer of both Jewish and non-Jewish life in Warsaw, the last witness to the shattered dream of symbiosis between Jews and Poles.

increasing virulence in the growing historical distance from the events of 1863, anti-Semites used the figure of the assimilating Jew to warn against the dangers of Jewish materialism, financial corruption, and sexual predation as symptoms of Poland's reverse assimilation or "Judaization."[19] By the first decade of the twentieth century, the anti-Semitic attitude toward Jews had won over even former adherents of Positivist liberalism. For Peretz, writing in Yiddish, the notion of Jewish assimilation among Poles – whether in linguistic, political, or erotic terms – is at best the material for bleak irony, rather than hope or fear. Hence, the narrative he creates on the subject in *Mayses*.

Although the aesthetic logic of the narrative depends on the seemingly inflexible contrasts between inside and outside, naturalistic detail and Symbolist fantasy, a close reading of the story indicates not only a blurring of boundaries separating these ostensibly clear oppositions, but also a deeper engagement through the story with wider currents both in contemporaneous European literature and the aesthetic antecedents that fed the imagination of the fin-de-siècle avant-garde. The Saxony Gardens in this respect locates the story in a liminal yet recognizably Jewish space, but the actual encounter between the two unnamed protagonists shares unmistakable affinities with the first encounter between Golaud and Mélisande in Maurice Maeterlinck's *Pelleas et Mélisande*, an international sensation in Symbolist theater that attracted several artistic adaptations during Peretz's most active decade as a writer.[20] Seen through the lens of the drama's second scene, Peretz's female protagonist, lost in the rain, seeking insufficient shelter under a

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[19] For a thorough summary of philo-Semitic treatments of Jews in nineteenth-century Polish literature, contrasted with their anti-Semitic counterparts – including in both categories a discussion of Bolesław Prus, to which my own understanding of his writing is indebted – see Magdalena Opalski, "The Concept of Jewish Assimilation in Polish Literature of the Positivist Period," *The Polish Review* 32/4 (1987): 371-383.

[20] Maeterlinck's play debuted in 1893. The most famous adaptation today is Claude Debussy's operatic setting, which premiered in 1902. Preceding Debussy's work is the incidental music that Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) provided for an 1898 production. Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) also provided incidental music for a Finnish production in 1905 and the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) composed a tone poem inspired by the play in the same year. These incidental settings have been collected in a single recording on the Supraphon label, conducted by Serge Baudo with the Czech Philharmonic in 2007. Of the many recordings of Debussy's opera, perhaps the best is Herbert von Karajan's 1978 recording with the Berlin Philharmonic on EMI Classics.

tree, and initially reluctant to speak to the male protagonist, before relenting and taking his hand as he escorts her home, resembles Mélisande – lost, traumatized, and incommunicative – weeping at a well in the depths of a dark forest. With this literary precedent in mind, not only does Peretz's inspiration come more clearly into focus, but the ultimate fate of the male protagonist, never clearly depicted within the story itself, is insinuated at the outset to be unhappy, since Golaud is betrayed in Maeterlinck's drama and becomes his brother Pelleas's murderer.

Given the recent death of Philip Roth (1933-2018), it is difficult to dissociate the thematic affinities between Peretz's story and *Portnoy's Complaint*. Although there is never anything sexually prurient in Peretz's fiction, as much as one might wish there were, the taboo of Jewish and non-Jewish erotic relations against which he struggles is more fraught for Peretz than it would be for Roth six decades later. As much as Roth makes explicit the "national allegory" in his novel of Portnoy's desire toward non-Jews as an effort at staking his claim as an American,[21] Peretz's male protagonist also tries to use his more tentative pursuit of a Polish woman to locate himself, if not in a Polish nation-state that in Peretz's lifetime did not exist, at least in an "emancipated" status of European modernity – the status of the flâneur. Both narratives figure the divide between Jews and non-Jews not just in sexual terms, but also in class and linguistic terms. The male protagonist notes, as does Alexander Portnoy of his partner's written English, that the seamstress's Polish is nearly illiterate, so that at issue in their relationship is not just the conflict between Polish and Jewish culture, but a conflict between European high culture, represented by the Jewish writer, and localized low culture, represented by the working-class Polish woman.

Indeed, the first encounter between the two underscores the disparity of their tentative coupling. While the writer takes note of his love interest's hands – the parenthetical description of her "nicked fingers" confirms that she really is a

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[21] As Roth puts the matter, more explicitly than Peretz would ever dare, in Portnoy's explanation to his psychiatrist, "What I'm saying, Doctor, is that I don't seem to stick my dick up these girls, as much as I stick it up their backgrounds – as though through fucking I will discover America. *Conquer* America – that's more like it..." See, of course, *Portnoy's Complaint*, (New York: Vintage International, 1969; 1994), 235-236 [emphasis in original].

seamstress and not a prostitute – she dwells on physical markers such as his eyes, his hair, his accent, and his nose that identify his Jewishness. Neither of them can escape the social designations that prevent them from behaving or believing themselves to be emancipated subjects; each scrutinizes the other in ways that frustrate the fantasy of the *flâneur* to liberate himself from the past, to merge with the marketplace by remaining aloof from it. With these surface details, the seamstress matches the writer's apprehension about the nature of her work with another stereotype: she is willing to visit his room to hear one of his stories, but she warns him that any effort at taking amorous advantage of the situation would be met with screams of outrage. "And touching me is forbidden," she states. "Not me, I mean. You are so hateful. If you touch me, I'll scream and run away. You understand?"[22] When the seamstress writes these lines, Peretz describes her written Polish as *Noyekh mit zibn grayzn* (Y 463), like writing the name Noah (נח) and making seven mistakes. Even when asserting his literacy in Polish, he does so in a thoroughly Yiddish idiom, thereby underscoring the paradox that while the male protagonist asserts a better command of Polish than his Polish love interest, their dialogue and every other detail in the story is conveyed to the reader in Yiddish. This linguistic strategy forecloses the dramatic tension in the narrative, since the interaction between characters and cultures is depicted in the language that in fact separates Jews from non-Jews in Peretz's society.

In *Portnoy*, the reference that encodes the parameters of the dramatic situation is William Butler Yeats's sonnet "Leda and the Swan"; in Peretz's story, it is a tableau of fairy tales that serves simultaneously to connect and dissociate Jewish folklore from Polish folklore, and also the neo-Romantic strain of Peretz's aesthetic from the urban, modernist circumstance in which he found himself and which he struggled to render in an acceptable aesthetic form over the final decade of his career – never more vividly in narrative than in *Mayses*. The stories that the protagonist in *Mayses* tells himself, ostensibly to rehearse for a recitation to the seamstress, resemble both the fractured fairy tales of Reb Nakhman of Breslov (1772-1810), otherwise a prototypical influence on fantastic narrative in modern

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[22] See Peretz's *Ale verk* in the 1947 CYCO edition, vol. III, 463. In English, see *The I.L. Peretz Reader*, 201. Subsequent references to these editions recorded in text as "Y" and "E," respectively, though translations will be my own.

Yiddish literature, and the stylized romances of late-nineteenth century Symbolism, including his own *folkstimlekhe geshikhtn*.[23] This self-fashioned genre is – like the concept of the *mayse*, held up for comparable critique in the narrative – a term that encodes its own history, a *mayse mit a bord*, to quote the Yiddish expression for a "shaggy dog story." As Yasemin Yildiz notes, in the same era that Peretz began his Yiddish-language literary career, 1888-1889, the German historian Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) published a *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden* ("A People's History of the Jews") in which he refers to Yiddish, or *Jargon* as it was pejoratively known at the time, as *lallendes Kauderwelsch* ("mumbling gibberish").[24]

Peretz's fashioning of a literary pastiche on Yiddish folklore thus parodies Graetz's claims to German respectability by playing on the double meaning of the term *Geschichte*, which like comparable terms in several European languages means simultaneously "history" and "story." By replacing history with legend, written record with (ostensibly) oral traditions, realism with (neo-) romanticism, Peretz

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[23] Peretz first designated a segment of his writing under this term in 1908, referring specifically to a category of his fiction that might more generically be described as "literary fairy tale," a dominant genre in Symbolist literature throughout Europe at the time. It should be noted that the story *Mayses* itself is not included among the *Folkstimlekhe geshikhtn*. For a lively debate on the term *folkstimlekh*, see Shoshke Erlich (credited as Sh. E.) and Mordkhe Schaechter (M. Sh.), *Vos iz taytsh folkstimlekh?* ("What is the meaning of the term *folkstimlekh*?") and *Folkish un Poshet-folkish* ("Popular and Simple-folk," roughly), respectively, in *Yidishe Shprakh*, Vol. XXXIII, 1-3 (1974), 51-55. Although both philologists trace the origin of the term *folkstimlekh* in Yiddish to – or at least through – Peretz, their explanations fail to account for the irony implicit in his importation of a contemporary German term into Yiddish literary discourse. Schaechter, who first spots the word *folkstimlekh* in Alexander Harkavy's 1893 English-Yiddish dictionary, dismisses the term as *daytshmerish* (an unidiomatic importation of German into Yiddish), but he nonetheless doesn't account for the fact that the literary style of Peretz's stories in this genre is anything but *daytshmerish*. With thanks to my friend Sam Spinner for calling my attention to these articles and providing them to me on short notice.

[24] See Yasemin Yildiz's *Beyond the Mother Tongue. The Postmonolingual Condition*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 51. Yildiz relates these remarks as part of a discussion of Franz Kafka's fraught, complicated relationship with Yiddish, noting that Graetz's work was a fundamental part of Kafka's reading lists on Jewish topics. Peretz was well acquainted with Graetz's work, as befits their reciprocal status as leading Jewish intellectuals in their respective languages. As such, it is certain that Peretz would have also been aware of the German author's contempt for Yiddish. A translation of Graetz's volume first appeared in 1926 under the title *A Popular History of the Jews*.

creates an alternative to historicism, anticipating analogous strategies in twentieth-century "magical realist" writing. In Peretz's work, as in "magical realism," the apposition of history with fantasy ironizes a political predicament: how a people without territory, institutions, or autonomy, a predicament as much Polish as Jewish during Peretz's lifetime, can lay claim to a "history" of its own. The valorization of legends in lieu of history signifies the politicization of the legendary, and that politicization becomes further ironized, scrutinized, and mobilized when it is set in a context of ostensibly realist narration, as in the example of *Mayses*. The powerlessness of urban, secularizing Jews such as the story's male protagonist is set against the spectacle and scrutiny of what in the moment is an equally powerless yet nonetheless dangerous, potentially menacing non-Jewish Other. The erotic potential of inventing stories as a mode of seduction thereby acquires an immediate political resonance, because their shared ability to invent a story, collaboratively, provides a mode of agency – a power of life or death over his characters – that either he or the woman he would seduce lack in historical, "real" life.[25]

The circumstance of the protagonist's material condition – his hunger, his anxiety, his guilt, his isolation – conspire to undermine the aspirations to enchantment in the stories he imagines, just as they have undermined his aspirations to the empowered anonymity of a *flâneur*. The pretext of elevating both writer and seamstress through fantasy into royal figures, the prince and princess of a fairy tale, constantly collides with the reality of their powerless and impoverished circumstances. In one scenario, the writer imagines himself a prince sent to rescue his princess (Y 465-466; E 203); relying on a crow to guide him through the treacherous terrain, he searches for grain in the field to eat, but is warned that he is lost among bitter, poisoned herbs. These bitter herbs foretell the looming revelation that the story is told at Passover, but the contrast between the writer's quest and his character's is the absence in the frame-narrative of a helper-animal to

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[25] As Peretz writes, "And if he feels like it, he can throw the queen's daughter into a dungeon in a strange land, while somewhere else, he leads the king's son to the gallows... And then the listener throws herself on her knees before him and catches his hand; or she strokes his face in sheer pity for the unfortunate lovers. Then, for one kiss on the lips, he conjures away the dangers and brings prince and princess together with fanfare and music to the marriage canopy" (Y, 463-464; E, 201).

guide the protagonist through the jungle of the city. But the reality of his own circumstance intrudes even on this treacherously fantastic scenario, because when he leaves the poisoned fields he encounters a peasant woman who will only provide him bread if he will marry her. Should he betray his one true love, the princess, for the sake of bread? The writer in this dilemma presents the choice between devotion and commerce against which all artistic production is measured. His character's acquiescence to the need for material sustenance offers a further clue toward the disenchantment of the designs the writer directs toward the seamstress.

As he continues to spin this scenario he recasts his protagonist as a teacher, and as such revisits the pedagogical role that in large part constitutes his relationship with the seamstress, cast forward as a parable on his seemingly inevitable fate as a *meshumed*, a convert to Christianity, as any groom of a non-Jewish bride necessarily would become in the Russian Empire. It is when he decides to tell this story to the non-Jewish waitress in the restaurant where he is sitting that the decisive temporal and cultural break structuring the story occurs, because she reminds him that the day is *erev* Pesach (Y 468; E 205). The city thereby becomes a space where Jews such as the protagonist forget Passover, so that the festival is seen, at least in external and social terms, through non-Jewish eyes. Sholem Aleichem performs a similar inversion, with more deliberate comic effect, in *Iber a hitl* (1913), but it may be noted that Peretz's protagonist, unlike Sholem Aleichem's, is already in violation of the prohibition against eating bread on the afternoon of *erev* Pesach.[26] The writer's transgression, nonetheless, is one of custom, rather than religious law, and the distinction reiterates the socio-spatial conflict between the shtetl – a place defined by custom and community – versus the city, a space defined by law and institutions, in which the ostensibly anonymous citizen could cast off the seemingly voluntary obligations of tradition and family.

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[26] Sholem Aleichem, *Fun Peysekh biz peysekh*, vol. 27, (New York: Morgn-frayhayt, 1937): 241-254; in English, "On Account of a Hat" in *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, ed. Irving Howe adnd Eliezer Greenberg, (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 111-118.

The dramatic force of *Mayses* demonstrates that the exchange of custom for law and *Gemeinschaft* (community) for *Gesellschaft* (society) is easier said than done. Nonetheless, this critique of *Gesellschaft* and valorization, however ambivalently expressed, of *Gemeinschaft* is indicative of a larger pattern in European thought at the turn of the century.[27] These questions continue to haunt the male protagonist as he walks through Krasinski Park, where he sees a group of four Jewish children – suggestive of the four sons in the Passover *Haggadah* – playing with their non-Jewish nurse while waiting for the start of the festival. The protagonist re-casts the children and their nurse into his fiction, thereby reversing the frame narrative with the interior narratives, and admitting that his identification is with the children, in that they perform his dramatic function with respect to the nurse, recast as the princess and thus standing in for the seamstress. In their pursuit of her, each suffers a different cautionary fate (Y 472-473; E 207-209): the first is distracted in his pursuit of love when a witch offers him food, the second when a magician offers him a book, suggestive of the corruption of faith through secular knowledge. The third is distracted by a serpent offering him wealth, while the fourth suffers the worst fate of all – to continue his pursuit of the princess, who rejects his advances with the same contempt that the seamstress shows the writer. In this sequence, Peretz contrasts the various forms of poverty of the tradition that drives its young men to abandon it and in this way disenchants the fairy tales that the writer has been creating.[28]

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[27] The defining analysis from Peretz's day of how the dissociated life constituted in the modern city disrupts patterns of community passed down through traditional social ties is Georg Simmel's "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903) in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, eds. David Frisby, Mike Featherstone, (London: SAGE Publications, 1997; 2000), 174-185.

[28] Elen Rochlin provocatively suggests an allegorical allusion of these four children to the four sages who entered Pardes (BT Hagigah 14b); of the four sages in this Talmudic *aggadah*, Ben Azzai died, Ben Zoma went mad, Elisha ben Abuye became a heretic, and only Rebbe Akiva emerged unscathed by the experience. So too in Peretz's version three of the four children are ensnared in their pursuit of the Princess, but a fourth survives the ordeal when the Princess rejects his advances. On a metatextual level, the significance of four exegetes entering Pardes poses the additional allegorical complication that Pardes refers simultaneously to "paradise" and the four-pronged exegetical strategy of *Peshat* (plain or contextual meaning), *Remez* (parabolic meaning), *Derash* (comparative meaning), and *Sod* (esoteric meaning): *PaRDeS*. For more on the evolution of these exegetical strategies in Rabbinic culture, see my rabbi David Weiss Halivni's *Peshat and Derash. Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinical Exegesis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991; 1998). My thanks to Elen Rochlin for her suggestion as well as her meticulous editorial review of my work in progress.

By relegating such stories to the realm of childhood, Peretz places the impulse to fantasy in a psychological as well as historical past while underscoring his identification of the present with urban modernity. The paradox in this gesture hinges on the juxtaposition of fairy tales, the task of the writer, with urban modernity, the negation of an enchanted world. This strategy of negation, moreover, characterizes the story as a whole: almost all the personal information one learns of the writer is conveyed in connection with the arrival of a holiday he no longer celebrates. As much as the dynamic between the writer and the seamstress resonates with the Symbolist aesthetics of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the isolation and poverty of the writer calls to mind another proto-modernist literary sensation, Knut Hamsun's 1890 novel *Sult* ("Hunger"). Yet though Hamsun's protagonist, like Peretz's, is an anonymous writer living alone in the capital city – Kristiana or Oslo in Hamsun's novel, Warsaw in Peretz's story – what distinguishes Peretz's writer is the interpenetration of his disembodied status in the modern city with the mythopoetic connotations of Passover that structure his memories and determine his thoughts. Indeed, his poverty causes him to remark that his apartment is at least free of leaven, *hametz*, at the start of the holiday (Y 474; E 210)! This means in a sense that his presence in the city is inextricable from his absence in the shtetl, yet despite his estrangement from tradition, he remains connected to what he no longer observes via the temporal demands of memory, regardless of his professed refusal to observe its rituals.

The structural divisions of the narrative are thus predicated on the rupture between the secular, modern space of the city in contrast with the chthonic, traditional temporality of the protagonist's consciousness. These are the disruptions that simultaneously the protagonist connects and remains trapped between; his presence can be likened to a hyphen, which both links and separates the clauses of a sentence or line of poetry. Passover similarly serves as a temporal hyphen in the story, through which the irreparable divisions between Jews and non-Jews are schematized. In recalling his previous anniversaries of the holiday in Warsaw, the writer notes that his first Passover in the city was consumed with guilt, loneliness, and homesickness for foregoing its celebration. One can fairly infer that his physical hunger during the holiday intensifies his emotional longing for home. In the following year, however, when he returns to the shtetl, his

observance of the Passover Seder breaks down at the parts commemorating the plagues of Egypt (Y 469; E 206) – that is, the retribution against the non-Jewish world for their persecution and enslavement of the Children of Israel. The writer has come to the metropolis in order to evade distinctions between Jew and non-Jew, yet cosmology conspires with politics throughout the narrative to foreclose his ecumenicism.

The writer's efforts at reconciliation between these modes, his modern spatiality and his traditional temporality, bring the story to its climax. Abandoning the fairy tale, which had reached its apex in the Krasinski Park when the princess's rejection of the "fourth son" implies the reversal of power relations between the writer and the seamstress, he imagines instead an apocalyptic, rather than erotic, confrontation between Jew and non-Jew. As readers can recall from both *Monish* at the beginning of Peretz's career, and *Ba Nakht afn altn mark* at its end,[29] there is essentially no distinction between Eros and *Thanatos* in Peretz's conceptualization of this dynamic; they each signify an indivisibility between power and desire in his imagination. The particulars of this confrontation are the tale of a blood libel involving the "founder" of modern Hasidism, the Baal Shem Tov (c. 1700-1760) – ostensibly a step backwards chronologically from the stories of Reb Nakhman, from which Peretz had cribbed, knowingly, the stories interpolated previously in the narrative. Yet one can also recognize this as a shift in storytelling genre from *Märchen* (*vunder-mayse* or fairy tales) to *Sagen* (*legende*, legends). Like most such "local legends," the supposedly historical and socially rooted stories that the protagonist fashions at the end of *Mayses* are far more prototypical than documentary. The story borrows, obviously and purposefully, from Heinrich Heine's narrative fragment *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*.[30] In this pastiche – part allusion, part acknowledgement – Peretz signifies how connected his protagonist is to the larger history of assimilation and its discontents for European Jews, starting with Heine (1797-1856), the poet laureate of the subject.

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[29] For a critical edition of *Ba Nakht afn altn mark*, see Chone Shmeruk, *Peretses yiesh viziye* [Peretz's Vision of Despair], (New York: YIVO, 1971). For an English translation, see "A Night in the Old Marketplace," in *The I.L. Peretz Reader*, (2002 edition), 361-432.

[30] For an English translation of this fragment, see Heine's *The Rabbi of Bacharach and Other Stories*, translated by Charles Godfrey Leland, (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1987), 19-80.

The first vision that Peretz records (Y 475; E 211) – one the protagonist himself acknowledges is beyond his creative powers – imagines a grotesque, perhaps Expressionistic rendering of the blood libel motif in which the guests at the Seder discover the murdered body of the Christian child and in a desperate attempt to avoid being charged with the murder actually consume the corpse: a graphic parody not only of the accusations of cannibalism encoded in the blood libel, but also of the communion ritual consecrated in the New Testament Last Supper. If the dysfunctional prurience toward relations between Jews and non-Jews in *Portnoy's Complaint* is inevitably portrayed in carnal terms, in *Mayses* this dysfunction receives brief but charnel depiction as ritualized violence. Yet soon Peretz recovers the tone of ironic equilibrium characteristic of his writing, which he had momentarily disrupted consciously, by revising the scene to portray a paradoxically miraculous reconciliation between Jews and non-Jews, in which the Baal Shem Tov averts a blood libel by reviving the murdered Christian boy and, in a more sublimated parody of the Easter Passion, promising him Eternal Life if he will bury himself inconspicuously in a Jewish cemetery.

Before the denouement of this salvation of Jew and non-Jew alike can be delivered, the seamstress knocks at the door, dispelling the narrative's fantastic aura, and reducing these tales to the writer's merchandise. Once again, as was perennially the fate of Jews in Peretz's Warsaw, the protagonist is transformed from *flâneur* to salesman. The ultimate act of disenchantment, accordingly, is not to dislodge the role of fantasy from the writer's imagination, but to reveal that imagination itself functions as a commodity in the modern marketplace – for the *flâneur* who fantasizes himself to be emancipated from the logic of capitalism as much as characters such as Peretz's aspiring writer or his seamstress who know from their respective status that they are not. The writer's erotic passion in this sense becomes indistinguishable from his quest for bread, a quest rendered more dissolute for occurring during the festival in which consuming bread is forbidden. This mode of disenchantment, in fact, is identical in means and in mood to the denouement of the earlier stories *Mekubolim* and *Tsvishn tsvey berg*.[31] Where Romanticism

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[31] See *Ale verk* (CYCO, 1947), vol. IV-V, 20-25 (*Mekubolim*) and 103-117 (*Tsvishn tsvey berg*). In English, "Kabbalists" and "Between Two Mountains," in *The I.L. Peretz Reader*, 152-156, 184-195.

had invested faith in the power of Eros to re-enchant a fallen humanity, Peretz recognizes that within the regime of modernity, both Romanticism and Eros have been reduced to the status of a writer's wares, and with the cultivation of this irony he finesses the distinction between Romanticism and Modernism to create a narrative space that is not traditional or modern, shtetl or city, Jewish or Polish, but, somehow, despairingly, neither at the same time.

Subsequent generations of Yiddish and Hebrew writers in Europe seem to have made as little use of the *flâneur* as Peretz had. In the Hebrew fiction of writers such as Uri-Nissan Gnessin (1879-1913) or Yosef Haim Brenner (1881-1921), the dominant character type that emerges is the *talush*, the uprooted or "superfluous" man who perhaps remains in the shtetl, travels to the metropolis, or even emigrates to Palestine, but remains trapped in an inner psychic dysfunction for which the pleasures or adventures of the marketplace offer no solace. The Yiddish-language contemporary of these Hebrew modernists whose writing most resonates with theirs is Dovid Bergelson (1884-1952), whose protagonists, whether male or female, typically remain in the shtetl or return from the big city to lead lives of "quiet desperation," to quote a phrase[32]; significantly, although Bergelson lived in Berlin from 1921 to 1933, during the heyday of that city's fascination with *flânerie* in both print and cinema, his collected fiction about Berlin amounts to less than 100 pages in translation, none of which considers this theme.[33] For Soviet Yiddish writers, the theme remains unavailable because the marketplace as such had been abolished and even the rhetorical figure of an unproductive observer was anathema to the Stalinist strictures of Socialist Realism. In Poland, despite a lively popular press in Yiddish, the most noteworthy depiction of urban life in the interwar era, Yisroel Rabon's novel *Di Gas* ("The Street," 1928), reverts to the earlier genre of the

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[32] The best Yiddish source Bergelson's early writings is an edition published in eight volumes by B. Kletskin in Vilna, 1928-1930 (while Bergelson was living in Berlin). In English see, in particular, *Descent* [in Yiddish, *Opgang*, 1919], translated by Joseph Sherman, (New York: MLA Texts and Translations, 1999). Also *The End of Everything* [in Yiddish, *Nokh aleman*, 1913], translated by Joseph Sherman, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). For critical appraisals of Bergelson see *David Bergelson. From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, eds. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraikh, (Oxford: Legenda Books, 2007). Also Harriet Murav, *David Bergelson's Strange New World. Untimeliness and Futurity*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

[33] For this collection, see *The Shadows of Berlin. The Berlin Stories of Dovid Bergelson*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2005).

picaresque to chronicle the melancholy adventures of its *Lumpenproletariat* protagonist.[34]

The fate of the *flâneur*, however, is quite different for Yiddish writers in the United States.[35] In particular, Yiddish poets in New York, taking Peretz as a guiding inspiration toward aesthetic trends such as Symbolism and Expressionism,[36] invested in the urban landscape with linguistic verve and the *flâneur*'s characteristic combination of celebration and critique, ironizing both their poetic voice and their new environment while working past – as few of their contemporaries in Europe were able or willing to do – the imprint of the shtetl on their writing, their conception of Jewish culture, and their perception of themselves. In part the emancipation they articulate is attributable to their medium; although Peretz had essentially created modern Yiddish poetry with *Monish*, poetry had lagged conspicuously behind prose both in quantity and quality among European Yiddish writers. The American Yiddish avant-garde's embrace of poetry enabled new perceptions of their surroundings, which came to influence the subsequent development of avant-garde Yiddish verse in Poland and the Soviet Union during the interwar period. But at the same time that American

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[34] Yisroel Rabon, *Di Gas*, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1986). Translated into English as *The Street* by Leonard Wolf, (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1985; 1990). For an outstanding critical consideration of the picaresque in modern Jewish literatures, see my friend Miriam Udel's *Never Better! The Modern Jewish Picaresque*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).

[35] *Flânerie* is a significant motif for many prominent American Yiddish poets, including A. Leyeles (1889-1966), Jacob Glatstein (1896-1971), and perhaps most remarkably Anna Margolin (1887-1952); indeed, the theme is too complex to be discussed in its fullness here, particularly in an essay devoted to the absence of the theme in European Yiddish literature. The most representative poet to use the theme, however, was Moyshe-Leyb Halpern (1886-1932), particularly in poems such as *Der Gasn-poyker* ("The Street-Drummer"), "Watch Your Step" (title in English), and *Memento Mori* (title in Latin), all included in his first collection, *In Nyu-york* [In New York, 1919]. The particular prominence of the theme in Halpern's work is attributable in part to the demonstrable influence that Charles Baudelaire exerted upon his poetry, which Halpern would have encountered through Stephen George's influential 1889 translations into German. For a wonderful treatment of Baudelaire's presence in Halpern's poetry, see my friend Julian Levinson's "On Some Motifs in Moyshe-Leyb Halpern. A Benjaminian Meditation on Yiddish Modernism," *Prooftexts* 32/1 (Winter 2012): 63-88.

[36] Halpern himself comments on the pervasive influence Peretz had on him and among his peers in a memorial poem that mixes Expressionism with Juvenalian satire. See *Yitskhok Leybush Peretz*, *In Nyu-york*, (New York: Farlag Matones, 1954), 147-149.

Yiddish poets succeeded in changing their literary aesthetics, they were also able to change their relationship to the city itself. As a later Jewish American memoirist was able to express, the Jewish walker in the city[37] was fundamentally different from his or her counterpart in Eastern Europe. The *flâneur*, whom Baudelaire had imported to Europe from a story that Poe had set in London, could only emerge in Yiddish after Yiddish writers had left Europe.

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Marc Caplan is a native of Louisiana and a graduate of Yale University. In 2003 he earned his Ph.D. in comparative literature from New York University. Since then he has held professorial appointments at Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, Yale, and the University of Wroclaw (Poland), as well as research fellowships at the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, Universität Konstanz (Germany), the Center for Jewish History (New York), and the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor). In 2011 he published *How Strange the Change: Language, Temporality, and Narrative Form in Peripheral Modernisms*--a comparison of Yiddish and African literatures--with Stanford University Press. His second book, on Yiddish literature written in Weimar Germany, considered in comparison with contemporaneous German literature, critical theory, and film, is forthcoming from Indiana University Press. Currently he is a Brownstone Visiting Professor in Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College.

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[37] The reference, of course, is to Alfred Kazin's memoir *A Walker in the City* (1951).

"To Hell with Futurism, Too!"
The Metamorphoses of Western and Eastern European Modernism in Yiddish
Manifestos

by *Daria Vakhrushova*

Abstract

After World War I, Yiddish poets and artists in Lodz, Warsaw, Kiev, Vilna, Moscow, Paris, London, and New York created a number of short-lived publications such as Yung-idish, Khalyastre, Albatros, Di vog, Ringen, Milgroym. The editors spoke different languages beside Yiddish, were familiar with numerous cultural and literary traditions and, while living all over the world, created common networks of cooperation. Their artistic programs as formulated in the manifestos opening the magazines are complex hypertexts referring to the Torah and the Talmud in the same breath as to futurist and expressionist images. These manifestos form the core of the multilayered and polycentric Yiddish modernist culture. The article traces the threads connecting the Yiddish modernist magazines to various cultural traditions with special attention to the processes of cultural translation and hybridization.

Introduction: Little Magazines

Yung-Idish: The Group

The *Yung-idish* Manifestoes

Text translation as cultural translation

Albatros

Conclusion

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Introduction: Little Magazines

The late 19th and particularly the early 20th century saw the emergence of a new genre that provided a forum for discussion and enabled both differentiation and interconnectedness among modern artists, writers, and intellectuals – the little magazine.[1] Yiddish modern art as a case in point is unthinkable without these short-dated publications. Self-published, they granted artists the required autonomy, leaving them free to decide about layout, contents, circulation, and publication frequency. The new medium made possible an international cooperation of artists and writers, who contributed in different languages.[2] The variety in the repertoire went beyond multilingualism, stemming also from the publishers' interest in diverse contemporary art movements: a little magazine is usually impossible to identify with any "ism."[3] The publishers of these magazines – in their different ways – aimed to realize the same project of modern art,[4] the

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[1] For an extensive critical history of little magazine see *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Europe 1880–1940*, eds. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In their foreword, the editors' note the importance of the genre for modern art: little magazines are "points of reference, debate, and transmission at the heart of an internally variegated and often internationally connected countercultural sphere" (p. 2).

[2] On specific features of modernist little magazines such as multilingualism, internationalism and stylistic pluralism, see *Breaking the Rules. The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900–1937*, ed. Stephen Bury, (London: British Library, 2008); Id., "'Not to Adorn Life But to Organize It.' Veshch. Gegenstand. Objet. Revue internationale de l'art moderne (1922) and G (1923–6)," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, 3, Europe 1880–1940, Part II*, eds. Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker and Christian Weikop, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 855–867.

[3] The German magazine *G* edited by Hans Richter is characterized as "cut[ting] across Dadaism, Expressionism, Futurism, Constructivism, and De Stijl," while the Russian-German-French magazine *Veshch,* eds. El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg "included Cubism, Constructivism, De Stijl, Purism, and Dadaism" (*Ibid.*, 867).

[4] The concept of "project" as related to avant-garde movements and opposed to Habermas' "unfinished project of modernity" has been treated extensively by Asholt and Fähnders; see Wolfgang Asholt, "Projekt Avantgarde und avantgardistische Selbstkritik," in *Der Blick vom Wolkenkratzer. Avantgarde – Avantgardekritik – Avantgardeforschung*, eds. Wolfgang Asholt and Walter Fähnders, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 97–120; Walter Fähnders, "Projekt Avantgarde und avantgardistischer Manifestantismus," in *Ibid.*, 69–96; Walter Fähnders, "Avantgarde – Begriff und Phänomen," in *Literarische Moderne. Begriff und Phänomen*, eds. Sabina Becker and Helmuth Kiesel, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 277–290; "Einleitung," in *Metzler Lexikon Avantgarde,* eds. Hubert van den Berg and Walter Fähnders, (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2009), 1–20; 11–14.

agents were not merely aware of each other's work, but typically participated in several publications simultaneously. The relationship between the magazines was based on rivalry and support in equal measure: little magazines promoted each other, placed advertisements and reviewed works published by their rivals.[5] In the Yiddish milieu, intensive efforts to integrate the specifically Jewish-Yiddish element into the transnational avant-garde resulted in a range of little magazines appearing immediately after World War I, between 1918 and 1924. Among the best known of these are *Yung-idish* ([Young Yiddish] 1919, Lodz), *In zikh* ([In oneself] 1920–1940, New York), *Ringen* ([Rings] 1921–22, Warsaw), *Albatros* (1922–23, Warsaw/Berlin), *Khalyastre* ([Gang] 1922, 1924, Warsaw/Paris), *Di vog* ([The Scales] 1922, Warsaw), *Milgroym* ([Pomegranate] 1922–24, Berlin).[6] Less well known are *Heftn far literatur un kunst* ([Notebooks for literature and art] 1919, Lodz) and *Kveytn* ([Flowers] 1922, Panevezys).[7] Besides periodicals, there were literary almanacs, or *zamlbikher* – collected volumes devoted to a specific philological or historical problem or expressing the publishers' views on art: *Eygns* ([One's Own] 1918, 1920, Kiev), *Oyfgang* ([Rise] 1919, Kiev), *Der inzl* ([The Isle] H. Leyvick, 1918, New York), *Glokn* ([Bells], Alter Kacyzne, 1921, Warsaw), *Sambatyen* (Maks Shats-Anin, 1922, Riga). This article presents a case study of the programs of two Yiddish modernist magazines: *Yung-idish* (Lodz), the first Yiddish little magazine, and *Albatros* (Warsaw/Berlin), recognized as the culmination of the Yiddish modernist movement.

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[5] *Die Aktion*, 18–19, May 1, 1915 published an advertisement (including the contents) of *Die Weißen Blätter* [White Pages], a monthly by René Schickele. The last column of the same issue featured a letter asking for a review of the first issue of *Deutsche Kriegsklänge* [German War Sounds] and the review written in response. Yiddish magazines promoted each other's work: The Lodz Yiddish modernist *Yung-idish* [Young Yiddish] was reviewed in Leo Kenig's *Renesans,* see Melekh Ravitsh, "Dikhter-yugnt," *Renesans* 2/3 (June 1920): 183–189. The magazine *Albatros* announced an issue of *Khalyastre* [Gang] (Albatros 2, 1922, 19). *Albatros* itself was reviewed in the Berlin *Milgroym* [Pomegranate], (*Milgroym* 5, 1923, 40).

[6] For a more recent perspective on *Milgroym,* see the special issue of the online magazine *In geveb* – *The Milgroym Project*, https://ingeveb.org/issues/the-milgroym-project. Accessed on June 18, 2019.

[7] Art magazines remained popular in the 1930s, too: *Tsushtayer* [Contribution], Lwów, 1929–1932), *Pasifik*, (Los Angeles, 1929), *Globus*, (Warsaw, 1932–1934), *Studyo*, (New York, 1934–1935), *Yung-Vilne*, (Vilna, 1934–36), *Pasifik*, (Santiago 1938–1939).

Yung-Idish: The Group

In his memoirs, Yekhiel Yeshaye Trunk, a Yiddish and Hebrew writer from Lodz, describes the historic evening that saw the emergence of Yung-Idish:

אויפֿדערנאַכט האָט מאַקס שידלאָווסקי געמאַכט אַ קבלת־פּנים פֿאַר די ייִדישע
קינסטלער פֿון לאָדזש מיט יאַנקל אַדלערן און משה בראָדערזאָנען בראָש [...]. משה
בראָדערזאָן האָט ביד־רחבה אימפּראָוויזירט גראַמען לכבוד די חנען פֿון פֿעלאָן.
איטשל ברוינער האָט אימיטירט פֿאַרשײדענע פּאַרשוינען און דערצײלט מעשיות וועגן
אַלערלײ הינט. יאַנקל אַדלער האָט זיך געמאַכט רעדן ספֿרדיש לשון־קודש, הגם ער
האָט פֿאַרשטאַנען העברעאיש ווייניקער ווי אַ טערק. מען האָט געזונגען ייִדישע
פֿאָלקס־לידער און געמאַכט אַ חסידיש רקודל. כאור איז דער עולם געוואָרן ערנסטער.
מען האָט באַשלאָסן אַרויסצוגעבן אַ ליטעראַריש־מאָלערישן זשורנאַל אונטערן נאָמען
„יונג ייִדיש“.

In the evening, Maks Szydłowski organized a reception for Lodzer Jewish artists, with Jankel Adler and Moyshe Broderzon at the head of the list. [...] Moyshe Broderzon improvised rhymes in great abundance in honor of Fela's charms. Itshe Brauner imitated various people and told stories about a series of different personalities. Jankel Adler pretended to read in Sephardic Hebrew, even though the holy language was Greek to him. Yiddish folk songs were sung and a Hasidic dance was performed.

Towards dawn, the gathering grew more serious. They decided to publish a literary-artistic magazine titled *Yung-idish*.[8]

Maks Szydłowski was one of the numerous entrepreneurs who prospered in post-World War I Lodz. The reception took place upon his return to Lodz from Warsaw, where he had married Felicja (Fela), the art-loving daughter of the Warsaw 'iron tycoon' Shaye Prywes. Szydłowski's friends – Moyshe Broderzon, Jankel Adler und Icchok Brauner – were invited. In the course of the evening, it was decided to give a tangible expression to the intensive activity of the artistic

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[8] Yeshaye-Yekhezkl Trunk, *Poyln. Zikhroynes un bilder*, vol. 6, (New York: Undzer tsayt, 1951), 130.

group formed in Lodz, and in 1919, the first Yiddish modernist magazine, *Yung-idish,* was launched.

Lodz had been an industrial town on the periphery of Tsarist Russia. After World War I, it became Poland's second largest city. At the time it was a *yidishe shtot* – Jews accounted for 34.5% of the city's total population.[9] The history of Jewish as well as non-Jewish Lodz up until that time was brief: it was only in 1820 that the town gained political and economic importance due to its status as a "factory town."[10] From the very beginning, the city was characterized by multiculturalism, inhabited as it was not only by Poles but also by Germans and Jews, whose numbers increased during the 19th century. World War I led to the downfall of old-style factory owners and the quick rise of the new rich.[11] Economic and industrial growth was accompanied by cultural development: from the late 19th century on, numerous sculptors and artists, such as Samuel Hirszenberg, Henryk (Henoch) Glicenstein and Henri Epstein, resided in Lodz.[12] Lodz literary life centered around Yitskhok Katsenelzon, who founded the *Yidisher literatn un zhurnalistn fareyn* [The Association of Yiddish Writers and Journalists] in 1918.[13] Katsenelzon, who was also the founder of the Hebrew-language education

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[9] Georges Weill, "Lodz," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Fred Skolnik, (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 155–160; 155.

[10] On the history of Lodz, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795–1918*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), passim; specifically for the history of its Jewish community, see Robert Moses Shapiro, "Łódź," *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, (August 26, 2010) http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/%C5%81odz. Accessed on January 20, 2020. For a literary account of Lodz' economic rise, see the novel by I. J. Singer*, Di brider ashkenazi* [The Brothers Ashkenazi].

[11] Trunk, *Poyln*, 47. See the description in Joseph Roth's *Hotel Savoy*, taking place in Lodz after World War I: "[…] du kommst mit einem Hemd im Hotel Savoy an und fährst weg als ein Gebieter über zwanzig Koffer." ["[…] you arrive at the hotel Savoy with a single shirt and depart as the owner of twenty trunks."]: Joseph Roth, *Hotel Savoy,* (Munich: dtv, 2003), 97, translation mine. On the localization of the novel, see Joanna Jabłkowska, "Ein Grab der armen Leute: Hotel Savoy – Parabel für das Ende des alten Europa oder Łódź-Roman?" in *Joseph Roth. Zur Modernität des melancholischen Blicks*, eds. Wiebke Amthor and Hans Richard Brittnacher, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 103–116.

[12] Leo Kenig, "Di tkufe fun Yung-Yidish un Moyshe Broderzon," *Di goldene keyt* 26 (1956): 92–102; 102.

[13] Gilles Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon. Un écrivain yiddish d'avant-garde*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1999), 35.

network in Lodz, belonged to the cultural traditionalists.[14] The rise of the Lodz avant-garde movement began after the Yiddish poet Moyshe Broderzon, who had fled to Moscow during World War I,[15] and Jankel Adler, who had studied in Wuppertal and Düsseldorf, met there.[16] Their friendship developed into an intensive cooperation that reflected a typically modernist phenomenon: a close interaction between writers and artists that gave rise to the phenomenon of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[17] The idea of a "Zusammenfassung aller künstlerischen Kräfte zur Erlangung des Gesamtkunstwerkes" [centralization of all artistic forces to achieve the total artwork][18] had been on the agenda of various artists – from Schwitters ("Merzgesamtkunstwerk" [Merz total artwork]) to Ball ("Synthese der modernen Kunst" [synthesis of modern art]), Gropius ("Einheitskunstwerk" [unity artwork]), Kandinsky, Picabia, Malevich, Mondrian, Lissitzky and Tatlin.[19] The *Yung-idish* subtitle – "lider in vort un tseykhenung" [poems in words and drawings], may also have been inspired by the principle of "wechselseitige

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[14] In 1919, simultaneously with *Yung-idish*, the writers Yitskhok Katsenelzon and Hirsh-Leyb Zhitnitski edited another Lodz miscellany, *Heftn far literatur un kunst* [Notebooks for literature and art]. The design – text printed in two columns, no images – indicates the traditional or even conservative affiliation of the magazine, which is also expressed explicitly in the foreword's statement that the editors aimed to bring about not a revolution but rather a restoration of the literary world after the destructive chaos of World War I (Di redaktsye, "Heftn," *Heftn far literatur un kunst,* 1919, not paginated). Most strikingly, their opposing views on art never hindered their cooperation: Broderzon contributed a poem to *Heftn*, whereas Zhitnitski and Katsenelzon published in *Yung-idish*.

[15] In Moscow, he visited the literary salon of Daniel Tsharni, which grew into the Moscow Association of Yiddish Writers, see Daniel Tsharni, *A yortsendlik aza,* (New York: Tsiko-bikher-farlag, 1943), 227–228; Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon,* 49. Broderzon became acquainted with the Futurists (Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon,* 41) and was presumably familiar with publications by the various subspecies of pre-revolutionary Russian Futurism (Ego-Futurism, Cubo-Futurism, and more) from the first publication *A Trap for Judges* (Sadok sudej, 1910) on. In 1917, he co-operated with El Lissitzky who designed his book *Sikhes khulin*. Broderzon's appearance in Lodz – "a mix of the proletarian revolution and Pushkin" (Trunk, *Poyln,* 115) – was also testimony to his focus on Russian culture.

[16] Trunk, *Poyln,* 115.

[17] See Bury, *Breaking the Rules,* 51.

[18] Kurt Schwitters, "An alle Bühnen der Welt," in *Anna Blume. Dichtungen,* (Hannover: Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1919), 31–35; 31.

[19] For an interpretation of the particularities of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and Bauhaus, see Anke Finger, *Das Gesamtkunstwerk der Moderne,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 61–71.

Erhellung der Künste"[20] [mutual illumination of the arts] put forth by Oskar Walzel in 1917. Yiddish artists recognized the necessity of having their own platform to lead the "bloody struggle against the established authorities."[21] A young and fast growing city, Lodz provided a better setting for this struggle than the three cities of the Yiddish 'classics' – Odessa (Abramovitsh), Warsaw (Peretz) or Kiev (Sholem-Aleykhem).[22] Maks Szydłowski, a friend of both Broderzon and Adler,[23] financed the publication, and the first issue of *Yung-idish,* proclaiming the cultural rivalry between Lodz and Warsaw, was published in 1919.[24] Lodz was now one of the centers of the Yiddish avant-garde.

Besides Broderzon and Adler, *Yung-idish* included the artists Iosif Čajkov, Marek Szwarc,[25] and Icchok Brauner.[26] The attribute *yung* in the name of the group and the magazine was reminiscent of such groups as *La jeune Belgique, Jung-Wien, Młoda Polska* and *Das junge Rheinland,*[27] underscoring the Lodz group's affiliation with pan-European developments in art. At the same time, it expressed

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[20] *Expressionismus. Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1910–1920,* eds. Thomas Anz and Michael Stark, (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1982), 543.

[21] Trunk, *Poyln,* 116.

[22] ‏"געטאָן האָט מען עס אויפן קאָכעדיקן לאָדזשער באָדן און געטאָן אין דער פערזן־קונסט. דאָרט איז כלומרשט‎‏ לײַכטער אלצדינג צו שטעלן אויפן קאָפּ"‎ [It was done on boiling Lodz soil and it was done in verse. There it was allegedly easier to turn everything upside down], (Trunk, *Poyln,* 99).

[23] Trunk, *Poyln,* 127.

[24] ‏"וואַרשע מיט איר גאַנצער אַמאָליקער גאווה האָט אָנגעהױבן אױסצוקוקן קעגן לאָדזש װי אַ מלופּם־קינד"‎([*sic*]). [Warsaw, with all its pride of yore, began to look up to Lodz as a little child.], (Trunk, *Poyln,* 97).

[25] Szwarc stayed in Paris between 1910 und 1914; there he met, among others, Marc Chagall, Amadeo Modigliani and Chaim Soutine. The Lodz artists gathered in Szwarc's house (Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon,* 61–63).

[26] On the history of the group, its participants and stylistic affiliation, see Erzy Malinowski, "The Yung Yiddish (Young Yiddish) Group and Jewish Modern Art in Poland 1918–1923," *Polin* 6 (1991): 223–230; Joanna Lisek, "Yung Yidish," in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur,* ed. Dan Diner, (Stuttgart: Springer-Verlag GmbH Deutschland, 2011–2017). Brill Reference Online. Accessed on January 20, 2020.

[27] *Das junge Rheinland* was founded in February 1919, issue 1 of *Yung-idish* is dated Purim (March) 1919. Jankel Adler was in Wuppertal through 1919 and most likely witnessed the emergence of the German group. According to some sources, the founding of Yung-Idish and/or the publication was initiated by Adler, see Annemarie Heibel, "Jankel Adlers Beziehungen zur Avantgarde-Gruppe Jung Jiddisch und die Reflexe jüdischer Thematik in seinen Bildern," in *Jankel Adler und die Avantgarde. Chagall, Dix, Klee, Picasso,* eds. Antje Birthälmer and Gerhard Finckh, (Wuppertal: Von der Heydt-Museum, 2018), 61–69; 62.

their interest in secular Yiddish culture by linking them to the New York *l'art-pour-l'art* group *Di yunge* (The Young, 1907–1910).[28] The magazine was issued on Jewish holidays – Purim (March) and Pesach (April), which underlined the connection with both Jewish tradition and modern Yiddish culture: in the 1890s, Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz similarly published one of the first Yiddish magazines, *Yontev-bletlekh* [Holiday Pages], on Jewish holidays. He did it out of necessity, because Yiddish periodicals were prohibited in Tsarist Russia and the holiday issues allowed him to pass them off as non-periodical publications. For *Yung-Idish*, however, the traditional calendar signified the periodical's substantial link to Jewish culture.

The *Yung-idish* Manifestoes

The first issue of *Yung-idish* opens with an untitled, anonymous short text[29] that reads like a program of the new magazine and presents the Yung-Idish group as fighters for modern art. The second issue opens with a longer text following up on the first proclamation: in the first issue, the artists sought to establish themselves in a positive way, whereas in the following issue their group was defined *ex negativo*. The two texts function as a manifesto: the first establishes the group and states its aims; the second expresses its protest against current artistic conventions.[30]

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[28] The title can also be read as the answer of the moderns to the question posed by Peretz in 1910. In the essay *Vos felt undzer literatur* [What our literature lacks] (1910), he asked: "ווער ביסטו, יונג־ יידישער שרייבער" [Who are you, young Yiddish/Jewish writer?]. Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz, "Vos felt undzer literatur?", *Ale Verk*, vol. 7, (New York: Tsiko-bikher-farlag, 1947), 270–279; 270.

[29] The authorship is not certain; the text was most likely written by Broderzon – an opinion also supported by Melekh Ravitsh (Ravitsh, "Dikhter-yugnt," 184). The assumption applies to the second text, as well.

[30] Establishment and protest are essential categories in the literary genre of the manifesto. For the concepts of *manifest d'imposition* and *manifest d'opposition* see Benedikt Hjartarson, *Visionen des Neuen: Eine diskurshistorische Analyse des frühen avantgardistischen Manifests*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH Heidelberg, 2013), 56–58. See Bourdieu identifying the right of the new literary and artistic groups to exist with their right to be different: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field,* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 234; the new position-takings (texts, manifestoes, actions) of the artists derive their value "from the negative relation which unites it to the co-existing position-takings"

Yung-idish is a typical little magazine in that it combines elements borrowed from a variety of art styles, literary devices, and linguistic and artistic means derived from different artistic traditions, but the magazine as a whole eludes classification.[31] The founding of Yung-Idish as an autonomous group, in keeping with the rules of the avant-garde involved two steps, protest and establishment, articulated through the literary category of a collective speaker.[32] This first Yiddish little magazine set the benchmark for those to come in later years. An essential element of these magazines was cultural transfer. In the process of cultural translation, traditions, ideas, and visions from different times and places intersected. The locus of their encounter was the human being, the artist; the friendship among several Jewish artists and writers in Lodz led to the founding of Yung-Idish; the stylistically heterogenous avant-garde magazine became the vehicle of expression for their ideas on art.

The artists' diverse biographies and artistic backgrounds made any consistent stylistic categorization of *Yung-idish* impossible. The number of contributors grew steadily: from the first issue, which, with one exception, was made up of poems by Moyshe Broderzon, to the last, which included work by Moyshe Nadir, then already living in the USA.[33] The magazine evolved beyond geographic and stylistic borders and included pieces by the symbolist Dovid Zitman and the

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(*Ibid.*, 233).

[31] This was indicated by Melekh Ravitsh in his review in another modernist magazine, *Renesans,* published by Leo Kenig in London: דאָס איז דוקא דאָס סימפּאַטישע אין די ״יונג־אידיש״ העפֿטען, [...]״ וואָס כאָטש זיי גילטען אלס עקספּרעסיאָניסטישע האָבען זיי דאָך טיר און טויער אָפֿען־געלאָזט פֿאַר אלע מינים פּאָעזיע.״ [... this is what is so likeable in the *Yung-idish* booklets – although they are considered Expressionistic, they leave the door open for poetry of all kinds]. Ravitsh felt positive about this kind of pluralism: he did not reject Expressionism per se, though he did reject the Expressionists' dismissal of everything that did not fit the Expressionist mold (Ravitsh, "Dikhter-yugnt," 184).

[32] For the collective speaker in manifestoes, see Przemysław Czapliński, *Poetyka manifestu literackiego (1918–1939),* (Warsaw: Instytut badań literackich, 1997), 31–33.

[33] Alongside Broderzon's poems, the first issue published one poem by Yitskhok Katsenelzon; among the contributors to issues 2 and 3 were Elimeylekh Shmulevitsh, Hirsh-Leyb Zhitnitski, Hershele, Yekhezkl-Moyshe Neyman; issues 4–6 contained essays and poems by Kurt Heynicke (in translation), Moyshe Nadir (living in the USA at the time), Daniel, Khayim-Leyb Fuks, Uri Tsvi Grinberg, Dovid Zitman, Yisroel Shtern, Melekh Ravitsh, Yisroel Shturem, Khayim Krul.

"folksy"[34] poet Hershele, as well as the Expressionists Uri Tsvi Grinberg und Melekh Ravitsh.[35] It was in *Yung-idish* that the special sort of collaboration without stylistic constraints or strict group affiliation, typical of little magazines, evolved. The key to the polycentric network was the chronicle on the last pages of each issue. These chronicles, which covered cultural events such as exhibitions, receptions, and recent publications, reflect the growth of Yiddish modernist culture. The last issue of *Yung-idish*, for instance, expressed appreciation for the efforts of Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland to create a "spiritual brotherhood of nations."[36] The publishers also announced a joint exhibition with the Polish groups *Bunt* und *Zdrój*.[37] Finally, the editor welcomed poets committed "to the true beauty of Yiddish poetry;" this included Melekh Ravitsh and Uri Tsvi Grinberg, who were active in Poland, as well as Ukrainian and American Yiddish poets, who were embraced "from afar." These references shed light on the

[34] Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation. The Jewish Folklorists of Poland,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 52.

[35] A year later, Grinberg and Ravitsh began issuing rivaling magazines of their own, *Albatros* and *Di vog*, respectively.

[36] This short notice referred to the founding of the Clarté group (*Pour l'Internationale de l'esprit*) by Henri Barbusse in May 1919. The Clarté movement had been initiated by Romain Rolland in 1918, Nicole Racine, "The Clarte Movement in France, 1919–21," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2/2 (1967): 195–208.

[37] The Bunt (Rebellion) was a Polish Expressionist group founded in 1918. The group collaborated with the bi-weekly *Zdrój* [Spring] (1917–1922): a special issue titled *Zeszyt buntu* [The Bunt issue] came out in April 1918. *Zdrój* strived to influence public life through aesthetic activism (Czapliński, *Poetyka*, 49–51) and organized public readings, matinées, and exhibitions; the magazine published articles translated from other little magazines such as *Die Aktion* or *Der Sturm* as well as illustrations by artists belonging to other groups, among others by members of Yung-Idish; Lidia Głuchowska, "Poznań and Łódź. National Modernism and the International Avant-Garde. Zdrój (1917–1922); Yung-Yidish (1919); and Tel-Awiw (1919–1921)," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, eds. Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker and Christian Weikop, vol. 3, Europe 1880–1940, Part II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1208–1233. The programs of *Zdrój* and *Yung-idish* share some features in common, thus suggesting mutual collaboration: e.g., striving for the truth (Art as "the expression of the highest truth in human souls" ("wyra[z] Najwyższej w duszach ludzkich spoczywającej Prawdy") (Jan Stur, "Czego chcemy," *Zdrój* 1 [1920]) or protest against brutal reality – "[the] only way to heal the world sinking in the orgies of the materialistic worldview [are] bloody wars and bloody revolutions" ("jedyn[a] możliwoś[ć] uzdrowienia świata, nurzającego się w orgiach materjalistycznego światopoglądu: — w krwawych wojnach i w krwawych rewolucjach", *Ibid.*).

landscape of modernist Yiddish culture, with its distinguishing features of polycentrism and the yearning to belong to world culture.[38]

The multilateral connections shared by Yung-Idish artists with various modernist movements became apparent in both the design and the content of the magazine. The provocative gesture of printing on packaging paper and the dynamic interplay of text and image suggest familiarity with Russian Futurism.[39] At the same time, some statements made in *Yung-idish* manifestoes contradicted some of the most

[38] *World culture* refers here to the phenomenon of an intercultural "entanglement, intermixing and commonness," in Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality – The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture. City, Nation, World*, eds. Mike Heatherstone and Scott Lash, (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213; 205. Based on the cooperation and communication of cultural agents across state and linguistic borders. Closely linked to this notion is the transnational concept of *Weltliteratur* [world literature] which was developed by Wolfgang von Goethe and refers initially to a network of cultural actors. The word *Weltkultur* [world culture], however, occurs in Goethe's oeuvre but a few times and does not possess a transnational dimension; it rather means "high culture, canonized masterpieces," see his article "Neuere Deutsche Poesie"[Recent German Poetry], *Über Kunst und Alterthum*, 1827, Heft 1: 279–280. In the 1920s, German and Yiddish writers used the term *world culture* to suggest both a canon and a transcultural network – often applying these meanings indiscriminately. According to Walter Goetz, a German scholar of cultural history who studied the relation between national and world culture, world culture was "[the sum of] the selected national values, a collection of gemstones from the whole world" (Walter Goetz, "Nationale Kultur und Weltkultur," *Die neueren Sprachen. Zeitschrift für den Unterricht im Englischen, Französischen, Italienischen und Spanischen*, 34/1 (January-February 1926): 1–16; 12) – in other words, a canon which had emerged through a process of transcultural cooperation, in an "international sphere of exchange, of learning from and complementing each other" (*Ibid.*). In the context of the Yiddish discourse, the activists of the education and cultural organization *Kultur-Lige* strove for transnational cooperation as a means to enter the "big family of world culture," in "Vos iz di kultur-lige?", *Byuleten "Kultur-lige"* 2 (June-July 1920) col. 15–20; 15. In practice, this meant translating canonical literary works into Yiddish. In a similar vein, the journalist A. Almi called on Yiddish writers to adopt international scientific and cultural achievements into Yiddish culture, in order to allow it to join other cultures on the "world road;" see A. Almi, "Fun dalet-ames-kultur tsu velt-kultur," *Literarishe bleter*, (February 18, 1927), 5–6; 6.
[39] The first Russian Futurist publication, *A Trap for Judges* (1910), for instance, used differently patterned wallpaper for the text and the cover. On the visual elements in Russian Futurism see Gerald Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900–1930*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). One of the members of Yung-Idish was the Lodz poet Dovid Zitman (1898, Cielądz – 1923, Breslau), who published a Futurist poem collection with lithographs by Ida Brauner in 1921, see Dovid Zitman, *Af vaytkaytn krayznde fal ikh* (Lodz: Achrid, 1921): the hand-written text, the interaction of the text and the illustrations are strongly reminiscent of Russian Futurist artists' books. For case studies of the fusion of the visual and the textual in Russian Futurism, see Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment. Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

basic tenets of the Futurists, such as "total repudiation of all extant beliefs, authorities, and traditions,"[40] which was characteristic of Italian and Russian futurism alike.[41] By contrast, the poets of Yung-Idish were not going to break with tradition; instead, they welcomed everything worthy and capable of contributing to their art, pledging to embrace "all new strivings and *attempts* (emphasis in the original) to light and to embellish the inherited treasures of our unique and eternal nation with all of our enthusiasm and young heartiness" אַלע

נייע שטרעבונגען און **פרובן** צו באַשײַנען און פאַרשענערן די ירושה־אוצרות פֿון אונזער אייגנאַרטיק אייביק פֿאָלק, וועלן מיר מיט אונזער גאַנצער התלהבות און יונגער האַרציקקייט אויפֿנעמען.[42]

The poets were struggling against the contemporary ism-epidemic. They refused to identify with any one art movement and presented their art as comprehensive:

[מיר] זענען [...] דורך און דורך רעאַליסטן אין אונזער מיסטיש גלויבן, אין אונזער סימבאַליזם, אין אונזערע ווענדונגען צום אימפּרעסיאָניזם, עקספּרעסיאָניזם, קוביזם, אדער, [...] פֿוטוריזם. We are thoroughly realistic in our mystical belief, in our Symbolism, in our orientation toward Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism or [...] Futurism.[43]

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[40] Victor Erlich, "The Place of Russian Futurism within the Russian Poetic Avantgarde. A Reconsideration (1983)," in *Literarische Avantgarden*, ed. Manfred Hardt, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 306–328; 318. In her detailed study of Russian avant-garde painting, Gurianova shows that the exploration of tradition played an important role for painters such as Mikhail Larionov or Natalia Gončarova. Nina Gurianova, *The Aesthetics of Anarchy. Art and Ideology in the Early Russian Avant-Garde*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[41] The similarity between the Italian Futurists' call for the destruction of museums and the Russian futurists' demand "to throw Puškin overboard from the ship of modernity" are discussed in Erlich, "The Place of Russian Futurism;" Anna Lawton, "Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestoes (1976)," in *Literarische Avantgarden*, ed. Manfred Hardt, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 285–305; 290.

[42] *Yung-idish* 2–3, back cover. (Russian) Futurism had an impact on Yiddish poets in post-revolutionary Russia, too. Similarly, Yiddish Futurism was not a copy of the Russian, but a distillation of its essence modified to fit the peculiarities of the Jewish-Yiddish cultural, social, and political experience. For further details in the case of Perets Markish's poetry, see Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism. Decentering Literary Dynamics,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 202–208; Sabine Koller, "Das Ich in der Revolte. Vladimir Majakovskij und Perets Markish," in *Osteuropäisch-jüdische Literaturen im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert. Identität und Poetik*, ed. Klavdia Smola, (Munich, Berlin, Washington DC: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2013), 38–54.

[43] Manifesto, *Yung-idish* 2–3 (1919). The ambition to create an all-embracing art was shared by a

The members of the Yung-Idish group, like many of their contemporaries, had become disenchanted with the kaleidoscopic shifts among short-lived art styles. By openly embracing all art movements as such, they were rebelling against the very establishment of isms – which, ironically, forced them to name all the art movements they were struggling against and to explicitly state their attitude toward them. This paradox is reminiscent of the Dada leader Tristan Tzara, who protested against manifestoes with yet another manifesto.[44] The rebellion found its ultimate expression in the rallying call: אויך פֿוטוריזם – צו אל די אייביקע גוטע יאָר! – [To Hell with Futurism, Too!].[45]

Text translation as cultural translation

The Yiddish translation of an essay by German Expressionist Kurt Heynicke[46] published in the last issue of *Yung-idish* offers an illuminating example of cultural

number of contemporary art programs and manifestoes; Broderzon may have been acquainted with the 1915 manifesto *Rayonists and Futurists* [Lučisty i buduščniki]: "Все стили признаем годными для выражения нашего творчества, прежде и сейчас существующие, как то: кубизм, футуризм, орфизм и их синтез лучизм, для которого, как жизнь, все прошлое искусство является объектом для наблюдения." [We acknowledge all styles as suitable for the expression of our art, styles existing both yesterday and today – for example, Cubism, Futurism, Orphism, and their synthesis, Rayonism, for which the art of the past, like life, is an object of observation]. Timofej Bogomazov, Natalija Gončarova, Kirill Zdanevič, Ivan Larionov, Mikhail Larionov, Mikhail Le Dantu and Vjačeslav Levkievskij, "Lučisty i Buduščniki. Manifest," *Oslinyj Khvost i Mišen'* (Moscow: Ts. A. Mjunster, 1913), 5–15; 12–13; English translation in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde. Theory and Criticism 1902–1934*, ed. John E. Bowlt, (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 90.

[44] "Ich schreibe ein Manifest und ich will nichts, trotzdem sage ich einige Sachen und ich bin aus Prinzip gegen Manifeste, wie ich auch gegen Prinzipien bin (…)" ["I am writing a manifesto and I don't want anything; still, I say some things and I am against manifestoes in principle, just as I am against principles (…)"], Tristan Tzara, "Manifest Dada 1918," in *Manifeste und Proklamationen der europäischen Avantgarde (1909–1938)*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Wolfgang Asholt (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2005), 149–155; 150. On subversion in avant-garde manifestoes, see Fähnders, "Projekt Avantgarde," 80–84.

[45] Manifesto, *Yung-idish* 2–3 (1919).

[46] Kurt Heynicke (1891–1985), German Expressionist poet, writer and essayist. His essays were published in *Der Freihafen, Das neue Rheinland, Das Kunstblatt* and other magazines. Heynicke also criticized artistic isms; see, e.g., *Herrschaft des Geistes* from 1919. Magdalena Maruck, *Kurt Heynicke (1891–1985). Ein Dichter aus Schlesien Zwischen Revolte und Opportunismus. Eine rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie*, (Dresden: Neisse, 2015), 406.

translation in the sense of adaptation, with the original text serving as but a source of inspiration. Already the Yiddish title suggests the technique adopted by the anonymous translator: Heynicke's original title *Seele zur Kunst* [Soul to Art][47] is rendered as די נשמה פֿון דער קונסט [The Soul of Art] in Yiddish. This free translation alludes to a general shift of emphasis: whereas Heynicke's original title referred to the devotion of the artists and their souls to art, the Yiddish translation shifts the focus to the soul of art meaning that art is granted autonomy and seen as a reality in its own right. Such a shift, even if the result of a translation mistake, is in perfect keeping with the avant-garde concept of the autonomy of art. The translation was a logical continuation of the theses formulated in the manifestoes in issues 1 and 2–3, where art was presented as a kind of independent universe, created by demiurge artists.[48]

If the translated text expressed artists' views, the translation process behind the text exemplified the cultural transfer underlying the magazine as a whole. Yiddish literati found inspiration in Heynicke's essay because his ideas corresponded to their own worldview; they also felt free to alter translation, including the paragraphs' division, in order to adapt it to elements of Yiddish culture. This adaptation manifested itself in the strong link to Jewish tradition established by the translator.[49]

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[47] First published in German in *Das Kunstblatt*, vol. 1 (1917): 348.

[48] This interpretation centered on the narrative of the creation of the world is supported by another change in the text: The translator changes the plural "lords" ("But nature bows before its lords […]") to the singular, obviously influenced by Jewish monotheism and the idea of only one Lord. Furthermore, the word "Lord" is emphasized in the Yiddish translation but not in the German source text.

[49] The German original and its Yiddish translation are juxtaposed to show the correspondence of the paragraphs; the English translation of the German original follows.

Seele zur Kunst	די נשמה פֿון דער קונסט
Die Zeit, die im Expressionismus eine Krankheit ihres Körpers sah, ist tot. Die Kunst der Seele lebt, denn die Seele ist schaffende Mutter der neuen Kunst. Die Bewegung des Alls fängt der Geist auf und gestaltet sie sichtbar durch den Ausdruck der Kraft, die Rhythmus ist, wie das strömende All.	די צייט, וואָס האָט אין דעם עקספּרעסיאָניזם געזען אַ קראַנקהייט פֿון איר גוף – איז טויט. די קונסט פֿון נשמה לעבט. מחמת די נשמה איז די שאַפֿנדיקע מוטער פֿון דער נייער קונסט. די באַוועגונג פֿון אַלעסדינג נעמט זיך אויף דער גייסט, און געשטאַלטיקט עס ממשותׁדיק דורך דעם אויסדרוק פֿון דער קראַפֿט, וואָס איז, אייגנטליך, דער ריטמוס פֿון דעם שטרוימענדיקן **אַלץ.**
Die neue Kunst ist erwacht. Sie ist die junge Stufe der neuen Menschheit. Die neue Menschheit – vorerst noch *Kreis* in der Menschheit – lernt, mit der *Seele* zu *fühlen*. Bisher *sah* sie mit dem *Auge*. Bisher ging der Mensch über die Sinne zur Seele und wunderte sich, wenn er die Seele nicht fand. Denn die Sinne sind dunkel und leuchten nicht. Die neuen Menschen haben die Seele gefunden, sie fühlen die Kunst mit der Seele. Sie stellen die unaussprechliche Bewegung dar, indem sie sich in die Bewegung stellen und sich selbst bewegen. Sie stellen sich mitten in das bewußt gewordene Gefühl. Das sehende Auge ist nur Gleichnis des schauenden Gefühls.	די נייע קונסט איז דערוואַכט, זי איז די יונגע מדרגה פֿון דער נייער מענטשהייט. די נייע מענטשהייט – לעת עתה נאָך אַ קרייז אין דער מענטשהייט – לערנט מיט דער נשמה צו פֿילן. ביז איצטער האָט זי מיט דעם אויג געזען. ביז איצטער איז דער מענטש געגאַנגען פֿון די **חושים** צו דער **נשמה,** און האָט זיך געוואוּנדערט, ווען ער פֿלעגט די נשמה נישט געפֿינען. ווייל די חושים זענען פֿאַרטונקלט און לויכטן נישט. די נייע מענטשן האָבּן די נשמה געפֿונען. זיי פֿילן די קונסט מיט דער נשמה. זיי שאַפֿן אונז די נישטׁאַרויסגעזאָגטע באַוועגונג דערמיט, וואָס זיי שטעלן זיך אַליין אין דער באַוועגונג, און באַוועגן זיך גופֿא.
	זיי שטעלן זיך אין דערמיטן פֿון דאָס באַוואוסטׁ געוואָרענע געפֿיל. דאָס זעהענדיקע אויג איז נאָר דער וועג פֿון דעם בליקנדיקן געפֿיל.

Einst lehnte der Künstler an den Dingen, heute lehnt er die Dinge ab, er verachtet die Dinge. Er gestaltet sich – sich, Teil der Welt, – und seine Gestalt steht mitten im Kunstwerk. Die neue Kunst führt uns zu uns. Sie ist der Weg zur Seele.	אַנומאָלט האָט דער קינסטלער זיך סומך געווען אויף דעם חומר – אַצינדערט לעגט ער דאָס חומריות אָפּ, ער טראָגט אַ פֿאַראַכטונג צו דעם מין גשמיות. ער געשטאַלטיקט זיך – זיך, אַלס טייל פֿון דער וועלט – און זיין געשטאַלט שטייט אין דערמיטן פֿון דעם קונסטווערק. די נייע קונסט פירט אונז צו אונז. זי איז דער וועג צו דער נשמה.
Der Bürger fürchtet sich vor der Seele, die seine Lächerlichkeit tötet. Er fürchtet sich vor einer Kunst, welche Seele fordert, um zu geben. Deshalb schreit seine Stimme nach der Natur. Aber die Natur beugt sich vor ihren Herren und lächelt über die Nachahmer ruhender Ereignisse, über die Nachahmer, welche die Bewegung noch nicht gefunden haben. Nicht die Natur gebar die Bewegung, sondern die Bewegung schuf die Natur. Es ist schwer, die Seele zu finden. Denn sie ist Ewigkeit. Aber mitten unter uns steht die Kunst. Wir brauchen uns nur in die Ewigkeit zu stellen.	דאָס בעל־הבּת'ישע געפֿיל האָט מורא פֿאַר דער נשמה, וואָס מאַכט טויט איר לעכערלעכקייט. עס האָט פחד פאַר אזאַ קונסט, וואָס פאָדערט נשמה'דיקייט אָפּצוגעבן. דעריבּער רופֿט ער מיט קולי־קולות צו דער נאטור, צום דרך הטבע. אָבּער די נאַטור פֿאַרנייגט זיך צו איר **האר**, און שמייכלט פֿון די נאָכמאַכער פֿון דעם רוהענדיקן פֿאָרפֿאַל. זי שפֿאַט אויס די נאָכמאַכער, וועלכע האָבּן נאָך די באַוועגונג נישט אַרויסגעפֿונען. נישט די נאַטור האָט די באַוועגונג געבּוירן, נאָר די באַוועגונג האָט די נאַטור געשאַפֿן.
	שווער איז די נשמה צו געפֿינען. מחמת די נשמה איז דער עולם ועד – די אייבּיקקייט. אָבּער אינמיטן און **מיט** אונז שטייט די קונסט. מיר באַדאַרפֿן נאָר אין דער אייבּיקקייט **זיך** צו געפֿינען.

[Soul to Art

The time that had seen Expressionism as a sickness of its body is dead. The art of the soul lives, because the soul is the creating mother of the new art. The spirit absorbs cosmic movement and forms it visibly by expressing the power, which is rhythm, – like the flowing cosmos.

The new art has awakened. It is the young level of the new humanity. The new humanity – for the time being, only a *circle* within humanity – is learning to *sense* with the *soul*. Previously, it used to *look* with the *eye*. Previously, humanity used to reach for the soul by means of the senses and was surprised when it did not find the soul. For the senses are dark and do not shine. The new humans have found the soul; they feel art with the soul. They present the ineffable movement by placing themselves inside the movement and by being in motion themselves. They place themselves in the middle of the now known feeling. The seeing eye is but a parable of the viewing feeling.

The artist once used to lean on things; now he declines things, he despises things. He forms himself – himself, part of the world – and his creation is in the midst of the artwork. The new art is leading us to ourselves. It is the way to the soul.

The burgher fears the soul, which kills his ridiculousness. He fears the art that the soul demands in order to give. Therefor is his voice crying out for nature. But nature bows before its lords and smiles about the imitators of the reposing events, about the imitators who have not yet found movement. It was not nature that bore movement, but movement that created nature. It is difficult to find the soul. For it is eternity. But among us there is art. We need only set ourselves in eternity.]

This translation exemplifies the processes of appropriation and transformation of the foreign into one's own. While generally faithful, the translation contains some obvious mistakes; it also loosens the syntax, thus depriving the text of its original

dynamics. However, not all of these lexical, morphological, or syntactic transformations amount to mistakes attributable to poor understanding of the text. Many of them are intended to extend the source text by giving it an additional dimension which would turn the translated (and thus secondary) essay into an authentic contribution to Yiddish modernism. This added dimension was traditional Jewish culture.

The translator's initial orientation towards free translation is apparent in the new text structure. The last sentences of the second and the last paragraph, respectively, became separate paragraphs in the Yiddish version. One can only speculate about the reasons: perhaps the translator considered these sentences crucial; alternately, he may have been trying to imitate the style of German manifestoes, with their short, apodictic sentences and paragraphs;[50] or attempting to loosen the dense syntax. Several added words lowered the tempo of Heynicke's expressionist German manifesto by changing the intonation and the syntax.[51] In one passage, a paragraph is interrupted, only to begin again with a repetition making the Yiddish text longer than the source text:

אָבער די נאַטור פֿארנייגט זיך צו איר **האר**, און שמייכלט פֿון די נאָכמאַכער פֿון דעם רוהענדיקן פֿאָרפֿאַל. זי שפֿאָט אויס די נאָכמאַכער, וועלכע האָבן נאָך די באַוועגונג נישט ארויסגעפֿונען.

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[50] The first sentences of *Expressionistische Dichtung* by Lothar Schreyer: "Der Expressionismus ist die geistige Bewegung einer Zeit, die das innere Erlebnis über das äußere Leben stellt. // Der Expressionismus in der Kunst schafft die Gestalt, in der der Mensch sein inneres Erlebnis kündet. // Die Gegenwart errichtet ein Reich des Geistes. // Expressionisten sind die Künstler und Dichter der Gegenwart." [Expressionism is the spiritual movement of a time that prefers inner experience over external life. // Expressionism in art creates the form for the human being to pronounce his inner experience. // The present erects a realm kingdom of the spirit. // Expressionists are the artists and poets of the present]. Lothar Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung," *Sturm-Bühne. Jahrbuch des Theaters der Expressionisten* 5 (September 1918): 19–20.

[51] The adverb "actually" was inserted in the clause "…durch den Ausdruck der Kraft, die Rhythmus ist" [דורך דעם אויסדרוק פון דער קראפט, וואָס איז, אייגענטליך, דער ריטמוס...][through the expression of force which is *actually* rhythm]; instead of an apposition ("sich, Teil der Welt" [oneself, part of the world]) a comparison was used (זיך, אלס טייל פון דער וועלט) [oneself, *as* part of the world].

But nature bows before the *Lord* and smiles about the imitators of the reposing occurrence. It mocks the imitators who have not yet found movement.[52]

The translator dispensed with essential elements of the original: Heynicke had written emphatically of the *Furcht* [fear, fright] the *Bürger* [bourgeois] had of the new art;[53] the translator, however, decided to vary the lexemes by using מורא [*moyre*, great fear, awe] and פחד [*pakhed*, fear], thus decreasing the tension created in the original text by means of the repetition. A similar downgrade in expressivity is evident in the closing passage, where Heynicke calls on his readers to "uns in die Ewigkeit zu stellen" [set ourselves in eternity], whereas the Yiddish encouraged his readers to merely "find" themselves in eternity.

Some of these transformations may have resulted from the translator's insufficient linguistic competence (although it is unclear whether the calques in the translation should be attributed to his poor knowledge of German or, rather, to the influence of the morphology and syntax of the source text). The cosmic images, central to Expressionism, are lost in the translation: the word "All" (the universe) in the first paragraph is twice erroneously rendered as "all, everything." Another transformation produced a meaning in direct contradiction with Heynicke's thesis: in the sentence "Das sehende Auge ist nur Gleichnis des schauenden Gefühls" [The seeing eye is but a parable of the viewing feeling], the word *Gleichnis* [parable, simile] was substituted with *veg* [way, pat]: דאָס זעהענדיקע אויג איז נאָר דער וועג פון דעם בליקנדיקן געפיל [The seeing eye is but a way of the looking feeling]. Heynicke had demanded immediacy: according to him, it was not with the eye, but with one's soul, that one perceived the world.

Far from all the changes are arbitrary or false. At first glance, "דאָס בעל־הבת׳ישע געפיל" [the bourgeois feeling] appears to be an inadequate translation of *Bürger*, but in this context it is a more precise translation than בירגער [*birger*, burgher]

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[52] In the source text: "But nature bows before its lords and smiles about the imitators who have not yet found movement."

[53] "Der Bürger *fürchtet sich* vor der Seele [...] Er *fürchtet sich* vor einer Kunst [...]" ("The bourgeois fears the soul [...] He fears an art [...]," my emphasis).

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thanks to its connotation of self-contentment, oversaturation, and preoccupation with material values.

Another element, not present in the source text, which emerges gradually in the Yiddish translation is that of the Jewish tradition. This endows the secondary (translated) text with special significance for modernist Yiddish culture. By using many words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin, the translator introduces Jewish connotations into the universalistic-expressionist source text. These words are not indispensable; in some passages, they are inserted in addition to neutral synonyms of German origin. "Deshalb schreit seine Stimme nach der Natur" [Therefore is his voice crying out for nature] contains a double reference to the Jewish tradition: *schreien* [to cry out] is translated as רופֿן מיט קולי־קולות meaning "cry out loudly (in the loudest voice)," a popular idiom traced back to the Talmud,[54] and "nature" is translated twice – as the Germanic נאַטור and the idiom of Hebrew origin דרך הטבֿע [way of nature, the natural way]. Similarly, the word *Ewigkeit* [eternity] appears twice in the short apodictic sentence "Denn sie [die Seele] ist Ewigkeit" [For it [the soul] is eternity]. The translator stresses the meaning through pleonasm:די איביקקייט – מחמת די נשמה איז דער עולם ועד.[55] (For the soul is eternity – eternity).[56] In yet another passage, the word "Dinge" (things) is rendered as גשמיות, echoing an important concept in Hasidism – *hitpashtut ha-gashmiyyut,* "stripping of corporeality," the liberation from the material in order to make room for the spiritual.[57]

Read from this perspective, which reveals the transformations of the translation process, the translated and thus supposedly secondary text becomes another *Yung-idish* manifesto. The translation establishes the amalgamation of one's own with

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[54] Tractate Berakhot 15b.

[55] *Oylem voed* [Hebrew *olam va-ed*] refers to the expressions *le-olam va'ed* [forever], *min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam* [from eternity to eternity], linking the texts to the tradition of Jewish liturgy.

[56] Here, too, the tempo is loosened with the addition of the synonym and repetition of the word "soul" instead of a personal pronoun as in the source text.

[57] "[...] the 'stripping off of corporeality' [...] serves as a high ideal which can be achieved in prayer or meditation. The here and now does indeed present a valuable opportunity for meeting between God and man, but such meeting can occur only where man tears open another dimension in the here and now—an act which makes the 'concrete' disappear." Gerschom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism,* (New York: Schocken, 1971, e-book edition).

the foreign as the main technique of the Yiddish artists active in Lodz – a town which, though lacking a long history or tradition in Jewish collective memory, nevertheless became the center of a singular constellation of Jewish literati and artists initiating Yiddish modernism in the chaotic years after World War I.

Albatros

How did Warsaw, the "center of all centers"[58] of the Yiddish literary world, react to the rapid rise of provincial Lodz to the hub of the cultural avant-garde? Opinions differ depending on whether one adopts an internal or external perspective. The Lodz writer Yekhezkl Trunk spoke of the backwardness of Warsaw compared to Lodz: ‏"וואַרשע האָט אָנגעהויבן אויסצוזען לגבי לאָדזש ווי אַ‎ ‏פֿאַרצייטישע אָפּגעקומענע באַבע"‎ [Compared to Lodz, Warsaw began to look like a prehistoric withered grandma].[59]

According to Trunk, Lodz overtook Warsaw on the cultural front after World War I. However, voices from Warsaw stressed the Warsaw Yiddish literary tradition, which ensured the city's position in Yiddish culture and literature during the 1920s and beyond. Yet Warsaw was anything but an old literary center: it began to attract young writers between 1890 and 1905 – the period in which Yitskhok-Leybush Perets arrived and established his salon.[60] Perets's death in 1915 ushered in an interregnum in literary Warsaw.[61] Warsaw's avant-garde thus developed not only as a result of external (economic and demographic) factors (as in Lodz), but also of the internal impulse for change: there was a general longing for a centripetal organizing force, and several contenders claimed to be Peretz's

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[58] Chone Shmeruk, "Warsaw as a Yiddish Literary Centre," in *From Shtetl to Socialism. Studies from Polin*, ed. Antony Polonsky, (London, Washington: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1993), 120–133; 129. Shmeruk pinpoints the time when Warsaw became a Yiddish literary center as from the 1890s to 1905, *Ibid.*

[59] Trunk, *Poyln*, 132.

[60] Shmeruk, "Warsaw," 129.

[61] Prior to 1915, Warsaw had at least four literary salons – those associated with Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz, Hillel Zeitlin, Yehoyshue Perle, and Noyekh Prilucki (Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation*, 5).

literary heirs. A number of rival salons operated at once, such as those led by Hillel Zeitlin, Itshe-Meyer Vaysenberg [62] and Hersh-Dovid Nomberg. [63] This last became the president of the *Fareyn fun yidishe literatn un zhurnalistn* in Warsaw, ruling Warsaw's literary world till his death in 1927, though he never achieved Peretz's status. The avant-garde poets wanted to break with the conventions of these salons. [64] 1922 saw the launch of three modernist magazines in Warsaw, marking a rebellion in Yiddish literature: *Albatros* [65] (edited by Uri Tsvi Grinberg), *Khalyastre* (edited by Perets Markish) and *Di vog* (edited by Melekh Ravitsh). [66]

The title *Albatros* alluded to tradition and modernity at the same time; it reflected a cross-cultural process similar to what had taken place in *Yung-idish*. Firstly, it could be traced back to the literary tradition associated with the 1861 poem by Charles Baudelaire, 'Albatross,' in which the poet is compared with the large seabird, strong while in its own element, helpless or even ridiculous on the ground. Grinberg borrowed the elitist poetic attitude but did not position himself as a Symbolist. His leanings toward Expressionism became obvious with the publication of the namesake poem by Ester Shumyatsher:

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[62] Avraham Novershtern, "Vaysenberg, Itshe Meyer", in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Vaysenberg_Itshe_Meyer. Accessed on January 20, 2020.

[63] Melekh Ravitsh, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn*, Vol. 3, (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1975), 315.

[64] For Zeitlin's criticism of the new group, see Tseytlin 1922. Nakhmen Mayzl writes about Nomberg's critical reception of the avant-garde: Nakhmen Mayzel, *Geven a mol a lebn. Dos yidishe kultur-lebn in poyln tsvishn beyde velt-milkhomes*, (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1951), 269; Id., *Noente un eygene: fun Yankev Dinezon biz Hirsh Glik,* (New York: Ikuf-Farlag, 1957), 126. For an example of Nomberg's criticism of modern art is his article against Dadaism, see Hersh-Dovid Nomberg, "Vegn 'dadaizm'," *Der moment*, March 4, 1921.

[65] On history and stylistic affiliation see Lipsker, "The Albatrosses of Young Yiddish Poetry. An Idea and Its Visual Realization in Uri Zvi Greenberg's Albatros", trans. Ruth Bar-Ilan, *Prooftexts* 15/1 (1995): 89–108; Schalom Lindenbaum, *Shirat Uri Tsvi Grinberg (Ha-Ivrit we-ha-yidit). Kavey mit'ar,* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1984).

[66] Lipsker, "The Albatrosses," 89; Seth Wolitz, "Khalyastre," in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Khalyastre Accessed on January 20, 2020).

נע־וונד איז דיַין גוֹרל

קרייצנדיק ווינטן

נאָך שיפֿן פֿון שטאָל.

צירקלענדיק,

נישטערט דיַין הונגער

ערדישע אָפּפֿאַלן.

אַלבאַטראָס!

Wandering is your destiny: // crossing winds, // following steel ships. // circling, // your hunger is lurking // for earthly waste. // Albatross![67]

The first issue of *Albatros* opened with two manifestoes marking the entry of the "albatrosses of young Yiddish poetry" into Yiddish and world literature by means of self-proclamation and protest. The authors of *Proklamirung* (Proclamation) und *Manifest tsu di kegner fun der nayer dikhtung* (Manifesto to the opponents of the new poetry)[68] protested both against the obsolete in art and the numerous contemporaneous isms.[69] They demanded an art that would give voice to the sufferings of modern man, expressing both the proclamation and the protest through references to discarded ideals and contemporary rivals. These references established Grinberg's magazine as a modern publication and made *Albatros* a European phenomenon.

The protest brought *Albatros* poets together with other art movement activists. Expressionism appears to have been the chief influence in their development. *Albatros* subscribed to a number of Expressionist concepts which became fundamental to both their manifestoes and their fiction, including *Weltschmerz* or *Wahrheit*. *Globus-vey* [global pain],[70] *alvelt-umet* [world sadness],[71] *ache, pain* – all of them being variations and probably intended as translations of *Weltschmerz* – are significant leitmotifs in Grinberg's manifestoes and poetry.

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[67] On the title *Albatros,* see Lipsker, "The Albatrosses," 90–93.

[68] "Proklamirung," *Albatros, zhurnal far dem nayem dikhter- un kinstler- oysdruk* 1 (Warsaw, September 1922): 3–4; "Manifest tsu di kegner fun der nayer dikhtung", *Ibid.*: 4–5.

[69] Lipsker designated the epoch between rejection of tradition and the establishment of the new art as "the reality of cultural interregnum" (*Ibid.*, 93).

[70] "Proklamirung."

[71] "Manifest tsu di kegner."

Numerous compound nouns such as *vey-kep, vey-vald* (p. 15), *vey-fleysh, vey-shtet* (p. 16), *veytikn-heym* (p. 20) are crucial for the poem *In malkhes fun tseylem*[72] which reflects on the experience of the Jewish poet in Christian Europe. The most frequently encountered temporal setting in these poems is the Expressionist *shkie* [dusk, twilight]; Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* [The Decline of the West, first volume published in 1918] [73] and the Expressionist anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung* ([Twilight of Humanity] 1919) are two possible references. The motifs of war and destruction permeating the manifestoes are also essential Expressionist elements, as confirmed by the column *Dichtungen vom Schlachtfeld* [Poems from the Battlefield] printed in *Die Aktion* from 1914 on.[74]

Albatros' affiliation with Expressionism is most obvious in the rhetorical devices, which, in contrast to occasional motifs and topics, are characteristic of the publication as a whole. Syntactical structures such as simple sentences, nominalism, or parataxis are typical of Expressionist writing style.[75] *Albatros* manifestoes are rich in examples illustrating Expressionist poetry 'rules' as formulated by Lothar Schreyer in *Sturm-Bühne* in 1918–19:[76]

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[72] Published in *Albatros* 2–3: 15–24.

[73] Spengler's culture typology (apollonian, magian, faustian) was known to Yiddish literati as testified by Maks Erik's critique *A letter to Uri Tsvi Grinberg*, in *Albatros* 3–4 (1923): 5–6, based on the concepts of faustian and magian culture and quoting some passages. Grinberg's apocalyptic poem *Velt barg-arop* [World falling down] also alludes to *Untergang des Abendlandes*. Parts of the poem were published in *Albatros* 1 (1922): 12–14 and in *Khalyastre* 1 (1922): 13–20.

[74] On war and destruction in Expressionism, see Angelika Zawodny, "[...] *Erbau ich täglich euch den allerjüngsten Tag." Spuren der Apokalypse in expressionistischer Lyrik*, (Cologne: Universität zu Köln, 1999), 248–255.

[75] On Expressionist style and rhetorical devices, see *Ibid.*, 121–150.

[76] Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung;" Id., "Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung," *Sturm-Bühne. Jahrhbuch des Theaters der Expressionisten* 6 (May 1919): 1–3.

1. Shortening of the sentence by omitting the copula (nominal sentence):[77]

גײַסטיקע שפּײַז: אייגן פֿלײַש; אָדערן; נערוון. געטראַנק אין די אייגענע קנאָכן־בעכערס: פּולסירנדיק בלוט. און שוואַרץ־שבת־ברויט – אונדזער לחם־הפּנים: לײַד.

Spiritual nourishment: [one's] own flesh; veins; nerves. Drink in cups of [one's] own bones. Pulsing blood. And black Sabbath bread– our shew bread: suffering.[78]

Nominal sentences reduce the content to a few crucial details by naming phenomena without describing the relations between them. Further on, the adoption of a postulating rather than a descriptive or narrative tone provides the presentation with particular self-confidence.

2. Rhythmic repetition structuring the text:[79]

אין דער נײַער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען דאָ אַ סך אומקרויטן, סם־גראָזן.
אין דער נײַער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען דאָ באַנאַליטעטן, אבסורדן, נישט־אײיגנס, אויפֿגעכאַפּטס [...]
אין דער נײַער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען פֿאַראַן גראַפֿאָמאַנען־נאָכשלעפּערס [...]

In the new Yiddish poetry, there are a lot of weeds, poisonous herbs.
In the new Yiddish poetry, there are banalities, absurdities, things that are not our own, but were picked up [...]
In the new Yiddish poetry, there are a lot of epigonic *graphomaniacs* [...][80]

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[77] "Einfache Satzverkürzungen sind das Auslassen der Präpositionen, der Kopula und die transitive Verwendung intransitiver Verben." (Simple sentence shortenings include omitting prepositions and copulas and using intransitive verbs as transitive), cf. Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung," 20.

[78] "Proklamirung."

[79] "Wichtige Mittel der Dezentration sind die Wortfiguren. Solche Wortfiguren sind die unmittelbare Wiederholung, die Wiederholung in Zwischenräumen, die Parallelismen der Wortsätze." [Rhetorical devices are important means of decentration. Such devices are an immediate repetition, a repetition in gaps, parallel sentence structures.], Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung," 1.

[80] "Manifest tsu di kegner."

Repetition places the text on the boundary between prose and poetry. It is a particularly important device in Expressionism, which discovered the source of life in rhythm or rhythmical movement. In this way, the rhetorical devices used in the manifesto fulfill the program that the manifesto proclaims.

3. Chiasmus:[81]

איר האָט מסתמא געלייגט וואַטע אין די אוירען און די אויגן געהאַלטן פֿאַרמאַכט [...]

You must have put cotton wool into your ears and your eyes you keep shut [...][82]

The reversal heightens the terseness of the sentence; in this case, this effect is further strengthened by the rhythm.

Albatros makes use of a key genre feature of the manifesto: the collective speaker. Not only did Grinberg speak in the name of the anonymous group,[83] but he also created the image of the individual who represents the whole of humanity:

די יחידים, וועלכע זענען אין שטורעם און דראַנג גייַסטיק אויסגעוואַקסן און אידעיִש

צוגעוואַקסן צום אוניווערסאַלן: מענטש־דו־ביסט־פֿאַראַן־מיליאָנענדיק[84] – –

those few who had grown up spiritually in the Sturm-und-Drang and conceptually adhered to the universal: human-you-are-million-wise – –

The image of the human being as an individual connected to millions of others is an absolutized view of the collective principle voiced by the manifesto: rather than thinking of themselves as members of a limited artistic group, the poets considered

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[81] "Die Umkehrung der Wortstellung wirkt die Einheit umgekehrter Begriffe." [The reversed word order brings about the unity of reversed concepts.], Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung," 1.

[82] "Proklamirung."

[83] Cf. the refrain "נישט מיר זענען שולדיק" [not we are guilty].

[84] *Ibid.* Cf. further: "דאָ פּראָקלאַמירט זיך דער מיליאָנען־קעפּ־ און הערצערדיקער אינדיוווידואַליזם" [million-headed and -hearted individualism is proclaiming itself there] ("Proklamirung");

"ס׳האָט דער צעלעפּצענטער קאָלאָס: **מענטש**, אַ מיליאָנען־קעפּעדיקער, אויפֿגעברילט (לויט **גראָש**: ווי אַ מאַשין. טעכניקצייַט!)"

[The wounded colossus: human, million-headed – roared (According to Grosz: like a machine. The epoch of technology!)] ("Manifest tsu di kegner").

the whole of humanity to be their allies. In creating this image, Grinberg may have been inspired by Walt Whitman, who is known to have been worshipped by the Yiddish Expressionists.[85] Whitman's poem *One's-Self I Sing* begins with these lines:

One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

These lines articulate a tension between the "separate" human being and poetry as something universal, "En-Masse." Grinberg, however, was primarily interested not in the all-encompassing nature of poetry, but rather in presenting humanity as a single entity, an organism. Expressionist circles in Germany coined similar images: "Viele, viele Menschen; sind: Ein Mensch" [Many, many people; are: one person], as published in *Die Aktion* 1917.[86] The image can be traced back to Expressionist metaphors and apocalyptic promises of the coming of the "new man" after the catastrophic destruction of the world.[87] In the years following World War I, numerous publications presented the unity of humankind in opposition to nations waging war against each other.[88] Expressionist art was therefore the art of the new humanity. It was at this moment that Grinberg came up with his fantastic million-headed human. The *we* in his manifestoes had a twofold significance: on the one hand, it was the expressionist image of the new man closely linked to the whole of humanity; on the other, the plural pronoun was the collective narrator, a feature typical of the manifesto genre. The resonance of the two meanings together granted Grinberg's manifestoes a unique expressivity by allowing the individual poet (Grinberg) to use the plural form (the collective narrator) in order to speak for the whole of humanity.

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[85] Melekh Ravitsh expressed his admiration in his *Theses* published in Albatros: Melekh Ravitsh, "Di naye, di nakete dikhtung. zibn tezisn," *Albatros* 1 (1922): 15–16. See also Lipsker, "The Albatrosses," 106, note 4.

[86] Heinrich Stadelmann-Ringen, "Musik der Materie," *Die Aktion* 7/13 (March 30, 1917), 172.

[87] The Expressionists' interest in the "masses" was stimulated by the first studies on mass psychology (see, e.g., *Psychologie der Masse* by Gustave Le Bon, 1895), as well as by the new mass arts such as the cinema. Both are closely linked to modern migration and urbanization.

[88] The images and topics associated with this are summed up (mostly pejoratively) in the concept of "O-Mensch-Pathos." Thomas Anz, *Literatur des Expressionismus*, (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2010), 67.

The contents of the manifestoes, the articles and poems as well as the composition of the magazine make it clear that the Yiddish poets were not simply dreaming of belonging to the modernist network, but saw themselves as already part of this community. This claim was spelled out, for instance, in an obituary for the Russian Futurist Velimir Chlebnikov published in the first issue of *Albatros,*[89] or a notice by Else Laske-Schüler, which appeared in issues 3–4.[90] Not unlike the editors of *Yung-idish,* Grinberg engaged European literati to write for his publication. Passages on language by Franz Werfel in issue 2 are an instructive example of such cooperation.[91] The text was an obvious adaptation rather than a faithful translation: the passages had been compiled by the translator; the article as a whole never existed in German in this form.[92]

Contributions by or news about literati belonging to the 'great' cultures such as the German or the Russian established Yiddish letters in the context of contemporary European modernism. Simultaneously, a unique Yiddish literary network developed: a special chronicle announced events such as public readings and the arrivals and departures of well-known personalities.[93] Last but not least, the editor advertised for other modernist Yiddish publications, such as the *Khalyastre* magazine.[94] Like the Yung-Idish poets, Grinberg fused various components – aesthetic concepts of German Expressionism (*Schauder* [shiver]), Christianity (*Evangelium* [Gospel], *Kreuzweg* [way of the Cross]), the Hebrew Bible (*tohuvabohu*), and Buddhism (*nirvana*) – to create a modernist work.[95] The neologism *umruer* [a restless person] was a concise verbalization of the

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[89] "Baym shlus," *Albatros* 1 (1922), 19.

[90] "Ich widme das Wappen meiner // Stadt Theben dem Albatros // Prinz Jussuf" (I devote the arms of my // city Theben to albatros // Prince Jussuf), Else Lasker-Schüler, "A tsushrift fun elze lasker-shiler," *Albatros* 3–4 (1923): 29.

[91] *Albatros* 2 (1922): 16.

[92] The first column contained Werfel's response to the critique of his poetics – a debate conducted in *Die Aktion*. The article cited in *Albatros* appeared in issue 11–12, March 17, 1917, col. 152–154. The aphorisms printed in the second column quoted various essays by Werfel.

[93] Such as Perets Hirshbeyn and Ester Shumyatsher. The date of their departure was given in Grinberg's Expressionist manner as "aching November" ("veytuendiker november 1923") (*Albatros* 2 [1922]: 19).

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] Cf. Jordan Finkin, "Constellating Hebrew and Yiddish Avant-Gardes: The Example of Markish and Shlonsky," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8/1 (2009): 1–22; 1f.

processes of cultural borrowing and adaptation. The concept of *Unruhe* appeared in German sources in *Die Aktion*[96] and in Jankel Adler's writings,[97] but it never played as prominent a role in German Expressionism as in Yiddish modernism.[98] Recognizing the artistic potential of the concept, Yiddish literati borrowed and transformed it, endowing it with a significance it never achieved in the surrounding dominant cultures.

Conclusion

Yiddish literati were conscious of the processes of cultural translation, which, as the historian Elye Tsherikover observed, were essential for Jewish art in general:

מען זאָגט: אין לאַנד פון בלינדע איז אן איין־אויגיקער אַ קיניג, און מען דאַרף ניט מגזם זיין דעם קינסטלערישן ווערט פון יידישן פאָלקס־פרימיטיוו, וואָס איז ניט אָריגינעל און האָט נאָכגעמאַכט די ארומיקע פעלקער. אזוי זאָגן די, וואָס האָבן ניט קיין חוש פאר דיאַלעקטן אין קונסט.

אמת, די ייִדישע פאָלקס־קינסטלער האָבן אָפֿט סטיל און טעכניק גענאָשט פון דער ניט־ ייִדישער וועלט. זיי האָבן אָבער גענומען ניט נאָר וואָס עס לאָזט זיך, ניירערט אויך וואָס

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[96] Franz Jung, "Eine Ankündigung. Die Vertrustung des Geistes," *Die Aktion* 5 (October 1915): 526.

[97] In 1933, Adler was interviewed by the Warsaw Yiddish weekly *Literarishe bleter*: די שטרעבּונג" "פֿון דער מאָדערנער מאָלעריי איז: מאַכן אומרױק דעם צושױער" ["The aim of modern art: to make the spectator restless [...], see Shmuel-Leyb Shnayderman, "Fun yidishn monparnas (a shmues mit Yankl Adler)," *Literarishe bleter*, September 20, 1933, 10. The artists aimed to attract public attention by breaking the rules and making art accessible to the general public – in this sense, the concept *ostranenie* [estrangement] developed in Russian Formalism might be a counterpart of *umru*, since "[...] priëmom iskusstva javljaetsja priem «ostranenija» veščej i priëm zatrudnennoj formy, uveličivajuščej trudnost' i dolgotu vosprijatija [...]" ("the device of art is the device of 'estranging' things and the device of complicating the form, which increases the difficulty and the duration of reception"), Viktor Šklovskij, *O teorii prozy*, (Moscow: Federacija, 1929), 23.

[98] On this concept in Markish's poetry, see Karolina Szymaniak, "The Language of Dispersion and Confusion: Peretz Markish's Manifestoes from the Khalyastre Period," in *A Captive of the Dawn. The Life and Work of Peretz Markish (1895–1952)*, eds. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraikh, (London: Legenda, 2011), 66–87; 75. Perets Hirshbeyn was still writing about *umruikayt* in 1928: אן עדות אױף דער אומרױקײט, וואָס כאַפט ארום די אָפגעריסענע און דערװײיטערטע [..] איך בין [..]" "פאָלקסשטיקער)([...] I witness the restlessness grasping parts of the nation, which are torn apart and far-off [...]),Perets Hirshbeyn, "Vegn un sheydvegn," *Di yidishe velt* 1 (April 1928): 71–80; 71.

עס פּאַסט זיך פֿאַרן ייִדישן גייַסט און אינעוווייניקסטן געשמאַק. האָבן דאָס גענומענע
איבערגעדיכטעט אין אַן אייגענעם סטיל, אַרייַנגעטראָגן פֿאָלקס־שטריכן און פֿאָלקס־
פֿאַרבן, און אַזוי האָט זיך באַקומען די „ייִדישע ליניע".

> People say: in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is a king, so one
> should not exaggerate the artistic value of Jewish folk art, which is not
> original and imitates the other nations. Only those having no
> understanding of the dialects of art say so.
> Indeed, Jewish folk artists often borrowed the style and the technique of
> the non-Jewish world. However, they did not take everything there was to
> be taken, but only the things corresponding to the Jewish spirit and inner
> taste. They recreated what they borrowed in a new way and in their own
> style, incorporated the folk features and atmosphere, and this is how the
> "Jewish line" evolved.[99]

Tsherikover emphasized the dependence of interpretation on perspective. As an
insider, he knew that for Jews living in close contact with neighboring nations,
cultural contact was a daily experience. The derogatory opinions cited in this
passage derive from an external perspective, presumably voiced by nationalist
believers in a "pure" national art. Writing his article in 1937, when nationalism was
at its peak, Tsherikover perceived the urgency of protecting the fusion principle in
art against criticism of the purportedly non-original, epigonic nature of Jewish art.
In this passage he points up the difference between adoption and adaption,
borrowing and translating – a difference which has recently come to the forefront
as a result of the *translational turn* in cultural studies. Tsherikover proclaimed
hybridization[100] – "recreat[ing] what they borrowed in a new way and in their
own style" – to be the "Jewish line" in art.

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[99] Elye Tsherikover, "Di folks-kunst un ir yoyresh," *Yisokhr Ber Ribak. Zayn lebn un shafn,* (Paris:
Komitet tsu fareybikn dem ondenk fun Yisokhr-Ber Ribak, 1937), 52–58; 56.
[100] On the concept of (dynamic) hybridization or translation as opposed to the (static) concept of
the hybrid, see Doris Bachmann-Medick, "From Hybridity to Translation. Reflections on
Travelling Concepts," in *The Trans/National Study of Culture. A Translational Perspective,* eds.
Doris Bachmann-Medick, Horst Carl, Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin, Boston: De
Gruyter, 2016), 119–136.

This borrowing and recreating defines Yiddish modernist manifestoes, each of them with its elements of Futurism, Expressionism, and Symbolism, combining the old and the new art movements with Jewish tradition (encompassing religion, folklore, and language), thus making this seemingly chaotic blend authentic. Fusion appears to be the guiding principle for Jewish modernist writers in Yiddish. Due to the diasporic mode of existence of the Jews in Europe,[101] these cultural agents were exposed to different cultures, literatures, and art styles; their translingual [102] and transnational projects were shaped by their respective biographical and artistic backgrounds. Thus, Moyshe Broderzon, acquainted with Russian Futurist experiments in poetry, became a virtuoso of Yiddish rhyme, whereas Uri Tsvi Grinberg was guided by the Faustian bent in German Expressionism. By hybridizing features of various art styles in their manifestoes, the editors of *Yung-idish* and *Albatros* managed to create a heterogeneous yet coherent vision of Yiddish modernism, which became far more than European modernism in Yiddish translation. Dreaming of joining the ranks of the avant-garde, Yiddish modernist activists did not renege on their particularity; instead, they continued to search for ways to integrate their Jewish culture into world culture.[103] It was their willingness to adopt, adapt and translate, which emerged in the course of their centuries-long exposure to transcultural processes as members of a minority on the periphery of dominant cultures – that turned Yiddish modernists into moderns *par excellence.*[104]

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[101] "[...] diaspora [is] a synchronic cultural situation applicable to people who participate in a doubled cultural (and frequently linguistic) location, in which they share a culture with the place in which they dwell but also with another group of people who live elsewhere, in which they have a local and a trans-local cultural identity and expression at the same time." Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland. The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora,* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 19.

[102] On translingualism, see Naomi Brenner, *Lingering Bilingualism. Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literatures in Contact,* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016), 14–20. I suggest expanding the concept beyond Jewish bilingualism. Yiddish writers and poets were multilingual (besides Yiddish and Hebrew, they were proficient in German, Polish, Russian, and more); many of them had grown up in assimilated families and had their literary debuts in non-Jewish languages. Thus, the processes of translation and transgression took place not only between Hebrew and Yiddish, but among all the languages the Yiddish literati were in contact with.

[103] Allison Schachter, *Diasporic Modernisms. Hebrew and Yiddish Literature in the Twentieth Century,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88, 184.

[104] For a historical perspective, see Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century,* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Daria Vakhrushova

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Daria Vakhrushova is a PhD student at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. She studied translation and translation theory at Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistics University, Russia, and received her MA degree in Yiddish culture, language, and literature in Düsseldorf in 2016. Her MA thesis was devoted to Yiddish translation discourse in Poland and the USA in the early twentieth century. Her PhD project is on Yiddish literary and cultural projects in the Soviet Union. Her main areas of interest are Yiddish literary criticism and translation theory and criticism.

An American in Shtetl:
Seeing Yiddish Europe Through the Eyes of Molly Picon

by *Debra Caplan*

Abstract

In 1920, following their wedding and a devastating miscarriage, Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich traveled to Europe, where they spent the next several years performing before Yiddish-speaking audiences across the continent. At the time, Molly Picon was not yet a Yiddish theater star. She was a young, relatively unknown young performer who was trying to move from English-language vaudeville into Yiddish theater, encouraged by her new husband, a Yiddish theater impresario. Their biggest obstacle? Molly's lack of fluency in Yiddish. "I was a Yiddish illiterate," she later wrote in her autobiography. "The Yiddish I spoke was completely bastardized."
The goal of Kalich and Picon's European trip was for Picon to acquire a more sophisticated, authentic, "correct" Yiddish so that she would have a better chance of getting cast on Second Avenue when they returned to the United States. The pair began in Paris, then traveled throughout the cities, towns, and villages of Poland, and ultimately, across Austria, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania. Molly Picon was an American actress, but it was in Yiddish Europe that she first became a star.
This essay will consider Picon and Kalich's travels and performances across Yiddish-speaking Europe in the early 1920's through a close examination of Picon and Kalich's letters, reviews of Picon's performances in both Europe and the United States, and other contemporaneous accounts of the tour. Implicitly, the stated goal Picon and Kalich's tour positioned Europe as the keeper of Yiddish linguistic, theatrical, and cultural authenticity – even as New York had already succeeded Warsaw and London as the global capital of the Yiddish stage. How did a young Picon, a nascent Yiddish performer who had never left the United States before, understand the cultural landscape of a Yiddish Europe in which she spent her most formative years and became a global star? To what extent can we understand her subsequent career as an American Yiddish performer as influenced by the Yiddish Europe she encountered on this tour?

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In 1920, in the aftermath of a devastating stillbirth, an aspiring actress hoping to get her big break in New York's Second Avenue Yiddish theaters set sail for Europe. She left Boston a former child vaudeville star whose English-language career had petered out; a Yiddish theater hopeful who could not get a decent booking anywhere in New York. Three years later, she returned to New York a household name and Yiddish theater's most promising young star.

The actress – Molly Picon (1898–1992) – and her manager-and-playwright husband – Jacob Kalich – would spend the next several decades as the darlings of the American Yiddish theater. During the 1930s and '40s, Molly Picon was arguably the most famous Yiddish actress in New York City. Molly's transformation from unknown Yiddish actress to Second Avenue fame did not take place in New York or in Boston, where she and her husband lived, or even in the United States at all. Her meteoric rise to American stardom happened on tour, in Europe.

Though born and raised in a Yiddish-speaking household, Picon went to Europe in order to develop a more "authentic" Yiddish. She saw herself as "a Yiddish illiterate" who spoke a "completely bastardized" form of the language.[1] Picon and Kalich both envisioned Europe, particularly Eastern Europe where Kalich had been born and raised, as the central site of Jewish cultural and Yiddish linguistic authenticity, in contrast to America, Picon's birthplace. The primary goal of Picon and Kalich's European travels was for Molly to acquire a more "proper" Yiddish so that she would have a better chance of getting cast in New York's major Yiddish theater houses, which tended to feature European-born stars.[2] The couple began in Paris, then traveled throughout the cities, towns, and villages of Poland, and ultimately, across Austria, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania. Throughout her career, including during this first European tour, Molly Picon was always regarded as an American actress. Upon her return to New York in 1924,

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[1] Molly Picon with Jean Grillo, *Molly! An Autobiography*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 35.
[2] See, for example, David Mazower, "London – New York, or The Great British Yiddish Theatre Brain Drain," *Digital Yiddish Theatre Project* (November 2016). Accessed June 9, 2019. https://yiddishstage.org/london-new-york-or-the-great-british-yiddish-theatre-brain-drain

she was billed as "America's Foremost Jewish Actress"; by the 1940s, she was being billed as "America's greatest comedienne."[3] But Picon's career did not begin in Philadelphia, where she was born, or in Boston, where she and Kalich started their partnership, or in New York, where she tried and failed to get cast. It was on tour in Europe that she first became a star. Picon and Kalich's first European tour positioned the continent as the keeper of Yiddish linguistic, theatrical, and cultural authenticity – even though by the 1920s, New York City had already succeeded Warsaw and London as the undisputed global capital of the Yiddish stage.[4]

In this article, I will examine how Picon (who had never left the United States prior to this European tour) and Kalich (an American immigrant from Eastern Europe who had participated in Yiddish theater on both continents) experienced their encounter with Europe, the site of their most formative years as artists and the place where Molly Picon became an American star. Though Molly Picon was arguably the most iconic, famous, and influential Yiddish actress of the twentieth century, her career and its impact have been profoundly understudied. Other than Picon's autobiography and a few articles and book chapters (primarily on Picon's gender-bending roles), there is scant scholarship on Picon, and virtually no scholarship that seeks to explain her meteoric rise as an unconventional star.[5] I argue that Picon's career as an iconic American Jewish performer – the types of roles she became known for, her signature performance style, and her relationships with audiences and critics – was both enabled and profoundly shaped by her 1920s encounters with European theater makers, producers, and audiences.

Molly Picon was born in Philadelphia in 1898. She began performing at the age of five in response to a dare from a drunk on a trolley car, and soon began making a

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[3] Advertisement for *Yankele* in *The Paterson Evening News*, May 36 [?], 1924, 10; "Special Notices," *The Evening Sun*, July 14, 1945, 8.

[4] Edna Nahshon, "From the Bowery to Broadway," in *New York's Yiddish Theatre. From the Bowery to Broadway*, ed. Edna Nahshon, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 26.

[5] For Picon's autobiography, *Molly!*, see note 1 above. Warren Hoffman has a chapter on Picon's cross-dressing in his *The Passing Game. Queering Jewish American Culture,* (Stanford University Press, 2008); Eve Sicular has a chapter on Picon a drag artist in Yiddish film in *When Joseph Met Molly. A Reader on Yiddish Film,* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 1999); and Michele Aaron has similarly written on queerness in Picon's hit film *Yidl Mitn Fidl* in "The Queer Jew and Cinema: From Yidl to Yentl and Back and Beyond," *Jewish Culture and History* 3/1 (2000): 23–44.

name for herself on Philadelphia's vaudeville stages as "Baby Margaret." Alongside these English-language performances, Picon also occasionally performed minor roles in Philadelphia's Yiddish theaters, where her mother worked as a costume seamstress. However, it was in English-language vaudeville that Molly sought to build her career. At fifteen, she left high school to travel around the United States performing in a vaudeville act called The Four Seasons, where she played "Winter."[6] The Four Seasons mostly toured small-time vaudeville circuits – including the Gus Sun Circuit (midsize cities and small towns in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio) and the Ackerman & Harris Circuit (Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, California, and British Columbia), also known as the "Death Trail" because it took acts a long time to travel between theaters – while they hoped for their big break and better bookings.[7] Performing alongside The Four Seasons were a trained seal act, an acrobatic troupe, and a rooster with a stovepipe hat that acted like a drunkard.[8]

Nearly broke from the tour, The Four Seasons arrived in Boston in the winter of 1918 only to find that every theater and store in the city was closed because of the Spanish flu pandemic. Every theater, that is, except for the Grand Opera House – a second-rate house surrounded by brothels that the authorities had forgotten to close down. The building hosted wrestling matches and fights during the week and Yiddish theater on Saturdays.[9] Stranded in Boston with no cash and no prospects for further vaudeville work, Picon ventured to the Grand Opera House, hoping to find a Yiddish actor colleague from her Philadelphia days who would lend her enough money to pay her train fare home. Instead, she met Jacob Kalich, the manager, director, and producer of the Yiddish theater company at the Grand Opera, who would become her husband, manager, and greatest champion. Kalich auditioned Picon, cast her in his Yiddish theater company, and convinced her that she could be a big success on the Yiddish stage. In love with Kalich and meeting

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[6] Picon, *Molly!,* 21.

[7] "Gus Sun Circuit" (883), "Ackerman & Harris Circuit" (4–5), and "Molly Picon" (467) in *Vaudeville Old and New. An Encyclopedia of Variety Performances in America,* eds. Frank Cullen, Florence Hackman and Donald McNeilly, (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[8] Picon, *Molly!,* 23.

[9] *Ibid.,* 23.

with some success as a Yiddish performer in Boston, Picon began to dream of becoming a Yiddish theater star.

Molly Picon was not a typical Yiddish theater actress by any measure. To begin with, she was exceptionally petite: at the age of twenty, she was only 4'11" and weighed less than 95 pounds. She was also far more experienced in English-language vaudeville than on the Yiddish stage, and according to Kalich, her American-born Yiddish fluency and accent left much to be desired.

But Kalich saw something in her, nonetheless– a talent and versatility that he thought could make her a success, despite her unconventional appearance. The standard pathway to stardom in the American Yiddish theater was clear: get booked and become popular on New York's Second Avenue, the Yiddish stage's equivalent of Broadway. But when Kalich tried to get Picon Second Avenue gigs, not a single producer was interested. According to Picon, "the New York managers wouldn't listen to him because, first of all, I wasn't big enough, I was a little girl. And the stars in those days were all buxom women."[10] Kalich tried to argue that a 95-pound star would be a novelty, but it was no use.[11] No producer on Second Avenue would book her.

Kalich came up with another idea. If Second Avenue producers refused to cast Molly in typical Yiddish theater leading lady roles, what if he wrote a play with a different type of part for her? Together, he and Molly developed *Yankele*: a musical comedy about a rebellious thirteen-year-old boy growing up in an Orthodox religious environment, with Molly playing the title role of the yeshiva boy. As would become typical in their early productions, Kalich developed the story and wrote the dialogue while Molly wrote the lyrics and music for most of the songs. To New York's Yiddish theater producers, *Yankele* was every bit as radical a suggestion as Kalich's insistence that a childlike 95-pound woman could carry a leading role. Yiddish theater did not regularly feature plays about child protagonists, nor did they routinely cast female stars in male roles. Kalich's pitch

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[10] Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich, interviewed by Harry Flender, November 10 and 17, December 10, 1971, American Jewish Committee Oral History Collection, New York Public Library.
[11] Picon, *Molly!*, 27.

for *Yankele* starring Molly Picon was thus doubly disruptive to Yiddish theater norms – first by making a young boy character the star of the show, and second, by broadening the types of roles a Yiddish leading lady could play. Second Avenue theater producers were skeptical. "You want her to become a star with the role of a child, a thirteen-year-old boy," Kalich recalled theater producers asking him. "Who will come to see a whole play led by a child?"[12]

Molly Picon didn't fit into any standard "type" for an American Yiddish actress – so she and Kalich created their own template. Directors didn't want to cast her in traditional Yiddish theater roles for women – or at all? She and Kalich would write new types of characters and plays just for her. American Yiddish theater producers weren't interested in booking her in New York? She and Kalich would leave the country to establish Picon's reputation elsewhere first.

Jacob Kalich and Molly Picon were married in the back of a Philadelphia grocery store on June 29, 1919, with Molly wearing a dress that her mother had made out of an old theater curtain. After years of trying, Kalich still had no offers for his wife from the theater producers on Second Avenue. The couple began to discuss traveling to Europe to build her reputation abroad in order to circumvent Picon's complete lack of performance opportunities in New York.

A complication soon arose: Molly was pregnant; she and Kalich were overjoyed. They decided to stay in Boston for a time, where Kalich ran a theater that Picon could perform in and where Molly's mother could babysit while they pursued their careers. Everything changed in an instant, however, when Molly went into labor prematurely, seven months pregnant, and delivered a stillborn baby girl.[13]

Molly was devastated. When Jacob came in to see her after she woke up from the ether and understood what had happened, one of the first things he said was, "I'm turning the theater over to a new management, and I'm taking my little star to

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[12] Yankev Kalich, "Tsu *Yankele*'s zilberner bar mitzve: derinerungen," in *Teater heftn spetsieler Moli Pikon numer*, ed. Zalmen Zylbercweig, published by the Yidisher aktiorn yunion in Amerike, 9. Collection on Yiddish Theater, Museum of the City of New York.

[13] Picon, *Molly!*, 31–32.

Europe, where she will become a big star."[14] A few months later, when Molly's doctors told her that she could not ever have children in the future, she became even more depressed. Slowly, she recovered by throwing herself into preparations for the trip to Europe. "Yonkel's decision to take me to Europe was the incentive I needed to get well quickly," she later recalled.[15] For Picon and Kalich, the decision to perform in Europe was not only about Molly's career. It was a way out of a devastating chapter in their personal lives.

The stakes – for both their professional and personal lives – could hardly have been higher. Kalich was giving up his management of the theater in Boston, and with it, all of his hard-earned career stability. Their shared hope for a successful tour of Europe that would make her a star had brought Picon out of a deep depression over a traumatic pregnancy, stillbirth, and crushing news about infertility. Failure was not an option.

Born and raised in the United States, Molly Picon had never been abroad before. Her husband, on the other hand, had immigrated to America from Jewish Eastern Europe, and it was there that he believed his wife's reputation could be transformed from an odd actress who did not fit into Second Avenue leading lady roles to an international Yiddish star.

Kalich could not alter his wife's physical appearance, but he believed that there was another significant obstacle standing in her way to stardom: her Yiddish. Kalich considered his wife's Yiddish too American, and thus not authentic enough. Though Picon had been raised in a Yiddish-speaking family, they both considered her Yiddish to be "completely bastardized" because she grew up in an American Jewish environment.[16] Their plan for the trip, as Molly described it, was "for me to learn correct Yiddish with its soft, guttural European accent."[17] They both saw the tour as a way for Molly Picon to acquire the European-inflected

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[14] *Ibid.*, 32.

[15] *Ibid.*, 34.

[16] *Ibid.*, 35.

[17] *Ibid.*

Yiddish that her husband already had a mastery of, the Yiddish that they both saw as the source of his gravitas and legitimacy in American Yiddish theater circles.

Years later, Kalich would compare the decision to take Molly to Europe to "improve" her Yiddish to sending a young opera singer on a European tour to develop operatic prowess. "Like opera singers, American-born Yiddish actors must earn their spurs in Europe, get a reputation there," read the copy in a 1930s souvenir program for the Kalich-authored bio-musical comedy *Oy is dos a lebn* (*Oh, What a Life*).[18]

Picon and Kalich's European tour aimed to do more than acquaint Molly with a pre-existing theater culture. Unlike an opera singer going to Europe, Picon was not setting her sights on a theater culture center but rather, trying to get away from one. As Nina Warnke writes, by the 1890s New York City had become the world center of Yiddish theater, "the fountainhead that fed Yiddish theatres worldwide."[19] Born in Eastern Europe, by the turn of the century Yiddish theater had seen its center shift to New York, with Eastern Europe relegated to the status of its "cultural colony."[20] The default path for Yiddish theater artists was first to establish themselves in the United States, then to tour Europe and rake in cash and acclaim. Molly Picon was not the first Yiddish theater performer to discover that Eastern Europe offered a way to further one's career outside the crowded New York talent market (but she was *one* of the first to discover this, after Clara Young had made a similar move about a decade earlier).[21] Unlike Young, however, Picon's European travels also created a pathway for her to defy the pre-existing norms of Yiddish theater culture and change them forever. As the historical birthplace of modern Yiddish theater, but no longer its cultural center of gravity, Europe gave Molly Picon a freedom that she could not have in New York City – the freedom to make a name for herself as a different kind of female performer than had ever been seen on the Yiddish stage.

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[18] *The Life of Molly* [Program], (New York: Program Publishing Company, 1942), Harvard Judaica Division.

[19] Nina Warnke, "Going East. The Impact of American Yiddish Plays and Players on the Yiddish Stage in Czarist Russia, 1890–1914," *American Jewish History* 92/1 (March 2004): 1.

[20] *Ibid.*, 28.

[21] *Ibid.*

In 1921, Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich sailed to Paris. Upon arrival, Jacob Kalich went straight to see the impresario of the Lancry Theater, and told him that he had come from New York with his wife, a young soubrette.[22] Of course, Picon had not yet managed to book a performance in New York, and Kalich's wife had not been accepted in American Yiddish theater circles at all, but the bluster was intentional. Kalich was marketing his wife and her unconventional performance style as something that American Yiddish theater producers and audiences had already embraced. If Kalich stretched the truth by pretending that Picon had already become a success in the much-vaunted Second Avenue theaters, the impresario would have little incentive not to book her in Paris. The impresario agreed, in fact, and booked Picon and the show on the spot.

The Lancry Theater was not an ideal space for Molly Picon's star debut.[23] It was more of an auditorium than a theater, and at the time, it had a fixed set made of iron. On one side, a house was painted; on the other, a garden. Kalich rewrote *Yankele* extensively to work with the less-than-ideal set and stage space, cutting out two entire acts and rewriting the show to set the entire operetta in a house and a garden.[24] As he and Picon traveled, Kalich would frequently restructure and refine their plays to suit new spaces and audiences.

When Kalich introduced Paris Yiddish theater critic Nisn Frank to Molly in anticipation of her first Parisian performance, Frank was shocked. Molly Picon looked nothing like the American Yiddish theater star that Frank had expected.

In a thin American coat was hidden a tiny, refined woman's head. The coat covered so much of the person inside that she was like a lost kitten inside it. Malkele, who would later be famous as Molly Picon, was lost in her coat.[25]

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[22] N. Frank, "Ven *Yankele* iz gekumen keyn Pariz," *Parizer Haynt*, December 24, 1931.

[23] On the Lancry Theater's layout and significance for French Yiddish theater, see Nick Underwood, "Théâtre Lancry. The Center of Yiddish Paris," Digital Yiddish Theatre Project (May 2017). Accessed Jun 10, 2019. https://yiddishstage.org/th%C3%A9%C3%A2tre-lancry-the-center-of-yiddish-paris

[24] Kalich, "Tsu *Yankele*'s", 10.

[25] *Ibid.*

Neither the impresario nor Frank believed that the guest artists would make much of an impression, and the plan was for a brief booking. But opening night of *Yankele* made them change their minds. The audience rose unanimously to its feet in "a thunderous ovation" for the title character, played by Picon. "That night," Frank wrote, "Molly Picon was born in Paris."[26]

Picon in *Yankele* was an instant sensation. It was a show like Yiddish audiences had never seen: a musical comedy starring a woman playing a boy and in a comedic role. Framed as an American success, Picon was embraced by European audiences, despite her unconventional style and role. *Yankele* was a hit, and as press about the show started to reach far beyond France, theater impresarios from across Europe began reaching out to Kalich with offers. Kalich was particularly enthusiastic about an offer for Picon to appear in Lodz, near where he grew up, so they packed their bags and went to Poland.[27]

As Picon and Kalich traveled throughout Europe, they kept their social and professional encounters limited almost exclusively to Yiddish-speaking circles. "We never mingled with people outside the Yiddish theater," Picon would later remember.[28] This marked a significant shift. In America, she had spent most of her career and personal life in English, speaking and performing in Yiddish only occasionally or with a few family members. Back at home in Philadelphia, Molly had spoken some Yiddish with her family, but had spent most of her life speaking English. Prior to meeting Kalich, she had also acted and performed primarily in English.

In Europe, however, Molly Picon arrived – under Kalich's tutelage – eager to improve and authenticate her Yiddish. It was there that she learned to live both her personal and her professional life in the language. Yiddish in Europe also became Molly's connection to new communities and audiences around the world, her home away from home in a series of foreign lands. "Yiddish was our center, our link, and I never felt like a complete stranger in Europe," Picon later recalled,

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[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Picon, *Molly!*, 36–37.
[28] *Ibid.*, 36.

"because I was always in the midst of a familiar language and heritage – the Yiddish world."[29]

Molly saw the tour as more than just an opportunity to build her reputation in Europe. Like Kalich, she too saw her American Yiddish upbringing and language as not authentically Jewish enough, and envisioned Europe as a place of opportunity to access a more genuine Jewish life. For Molly Picon, the European tour was a crucial part of her Jewish education, and it helped her to shape and deepen the Jewish characters she would play on stage for the next six decades. Indeed, many of her most famous characters (like Yankele the naughty yeshiva student, or Yenta the village matchmaker in *Fiddler on the Roof*) would be steeped in the Jewish religious and social contexts that Picon first encountered in Europe.

In letters to her mother and sister, Molly often described the Jews she met in Eastern Europe in great detail. In one such letter to her sister from Austria in 1921, Picon describes visiting a Hasidic Rabbi and his entourage as though it was a visit to a foreign country.

> Something funny occurred last week. We went to see a Rabbi! It's all so peculiar, but very interesting. [...] He was a little fellow, with a tiny white beard and pehes [sic] – piercing black eyes and he wore one of those funny shtreimels, you know those fur trimmed derbies, but his was a pointed one and it gave his face the appearance of having two beards, one on top and one below. The pointed shtreimel is worn only by a certain clan, because the Rabbis are just like kings, each one has his followers and certain distinguishing marks. They marry only into their own families and have all the pride of Royal blue bloods.[30]

Though Picon had grown up in a Jewish community, her family was so assimilated that she had rarely met a rabbi or a Hasidic Jew before traveling to Eastern Europe. In letters to her mother and sister, she frequently described the European Jews she

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[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Letter from Molly Picon to Helen Picon, March 28, 1921, Molly Picon Papers, folder 1061, American Jewish Historical Society.

encountered by comparing them to more familiar Western references. A Hasidic rabbi's hat was a "fur-trimmed derby," a Hasidic lineage like the British monarchy.

After Picon's successes in Western Europe and Poland, she and Kalich turned down offers to perform in Lemberg, Czernowitz, and Bucharest in order to spend Passover with Jacob's mother in the tiny village of Chabówka.[31] In his mother's house, which also served as the town's liquor and tobacco store, Jacob conducted a traditional Passover seder. Nearly everything was foreign to Molly: the tiny Polish town and its peasants, her new mother-in-law's Hasidic dress and customs, and most of all, the seder itself, since she came from a family that was not religiously observant in the slightest. When she didn't understand what was happening, Kalich recalled, Molly would ask him what to do in English. He stood beside her, secretly whispering instructions into her ear like a prompter in a theatrical performance.

> When we began to say the Hagada, I stood next to her and murmured, turn the page – next right – stop – start – turn the page again. Mama was so excited about Molly that at the table she said to her husband, did you see how Molly said the Hagada? Just like a man.[32]

Molly Picon would continue to draw on her encounters with Jews in Eastern Europe for the rest of her career. According to Kalich,

> The types of different women that she finally made into her parts in the Yiddish theatre, like Mamale, Die Meema Baile, Mein Malkele, all evolved as real Jewish characters because of the warmth and love in each one's heart and all somehow relating back to what she had seen in Europe, especially in Chabooka.[33]

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[31] Jacob Kalich, unpublished handwritten memoirs, 83. Seymour Rechtzeit Papers, box 24, folder 12, Harvard Judaica Division.

[32] *Ibid.,* 84.

[33] *Ibid.,* 86.

All that Picon had known of traditional Jewish life prior to visiting Eastern Europe was what she had seen in the Yiddish theater: the exaggerated stereotypes of religious Jews in plays such as Goldfaden's *Di tsvey kuni lemls* (*The Two Kuni-Lemls*), in which "modern" rational Jews are the heroes in sharp contrast to the comedic "backwards" Hasidic fanatics.[34] But in Chabówka and throughout Europe, Molly regularly encountered Hasidic Jews as they were in real life. These encounters stayed with her and influenced her future performances.

After Chabówka, the couple spent a couple of years traveling throughout Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania. When they arrived in Vienna in 1922, the city was in the midst of a prolonged economic downturn, and hunger was rampant among the actors they hired to work in their company. Yet this spelled out no limitation on Picon's success. Kalich would later recall grateful audiences bringing Molly what were then expensive gifts: liquor, hard-boiled eggs and other types of food after shows.[35]

In Vienna, they saw a new film, *The Life of Theodore Herzl*, and developed a plan to bring it to Boston. They invested heavily in the film, even hiring writers and a film director to add a Yiddish segment to the film featuring Molly, but then found out that the movie had already been brought to the United States by another actor. Picon and Kalich then lost most of the money they had earned thus far on their European tour. Their lawyer advised them to return to America immediately to try to market the film themselves faster than their competitor and thereby compensate for some of their losses. But Molly and Jacob decided to remain in Europe instead to continue building Molly's international reputation on what had turned into a highly successful tour. "Besides," Kalich wrote eventually in his unpublished memoirs, "she was still afraid of New York, and she also didn't have the desire to fight her way to stardom there."[36] To Molly, a major financial loss that came with the chance of achieving fame in Europe was preferable by far to fighting to get gigs as an unconventional performer on Second Avenue. Staying in

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[34] *Ibid.*, 85.

[35] *Ibid.*, 92.

[36] *Ibid.*, 95.

Europe was the best – and perhaps the only – way towards achieving her goal of stardom in New York.

From Vienna, they ventured on to Krakow, where Molly's shows were so quickly sold out that residents took to knocking on their hotel room door and begging for extra tickets. A few weeks later in Lemberg, when Picon and Kalich departed, a crowd of more than 1000 people accompanied them to the train station and sang songs from *Yankele* as Molly and Jacob boarded the train for Romania.[37] They were booked in Bucharest for a long season and expected to stay for a while – so long, in fact, that they invited Molly's mother and sister to join them in Bucharest for this period. Everywhere she went in Europe, Molly Picon was no longer the unconventional tiny Yiddish actress who could not get a Second Avenue booking. She had become one of Europe's greatest Yiddish stars.

Molly Picon's American fame began in Europe. Indeed, there are scarcely any mentions of Picon at all in the American press in Yiddish or in English prior to her European tour, aside from a few brief notices and advertisements about her vaudeville appearances. There are no significant mentions of Molly Picon the Yiddish actress in American newspapers until 1923, when the Jewish Telegraphic Agency erroneously reported that Picon and Kalich had died in an automobile accident in Bucharest. The report was picked up by a handful of Jewish newspapers in Yiddish and English across the country, and it served as many readers' introduction to the couple.[38] "The German press in Berlin and Vienna have written a lot about them," stated *Der tog,* somewhat blandly, alongside the accident report.[39] Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich were so completely unknown among American Jewish readers that several of the articles falsely reporting their death contained other significant errors. *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*'s report ("Jewish Actor and Wife Reported Killed") scarcely mentioned Molly Picon at all,

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[37] *Ibid.,* 105.

[38] "Idishe aktrise, Mali Pikon, un ir man getoytet in otomobil unglik in Bukharest," *Forverts,* February 20, 1923, 1.

[39] "Yankev Kalikh un Mali Pikon getoytet fun an oytomobil in Bukaresht," *Der tog,* February 20, 1923, 1.

and focused instead on Jacob Kalich as the actor who had supposedly tragically perished in an accident.

> The American Yiddish actor, Jacob Kalich, and his wife, Mollie [sic] Picon, also an actress, were killed in an automobile accident, according to a letter received here from Bucharest. Kalich has been in Europe two years in the company of his wife. … His performances in Europe met with marked success.[40]

Her name misspelled, Picon is mentioned only as Kalich's wife. He is the successful writer and actor, the performer who charmed audiences across Europe. In actuality, of course, Kalich largely stopped performing when he met Molly and began managing her career, and she was unequivocally the star performer on their European tour. A few newspapers published a correction a month later, which suggested that the rumors about the accident had been invented by rivals in order to damage their reputation. The corrections also referred to Kalich as "the Jewish actor" and Picon as "his actress wife."[41]

By the time Picon and Kalich returned to the United States 18 months later, no American paper could ever again mistake Molly Picon for "also an actress." She was Yiddish theater's most fervently anticipated star.

While Picon and Kalich were largely successful in achieving their twin goals of Europeanizing (and thus legitimizing) Molly's Yiddish and attracting the attention of American journalists, producers, and audience members an ocean away, Picon's first European tour was not entirely smooth. Indeed, Picon and Kalich's decision to leave Europe and return to the United States was prompted by anti-Semitic riots at Molly's performances in Bucharest. One night, three hundred university students bought tickets for a performance of *Tsipke*, and when Picon appeared on stage, they started shouting and throwing cabbages and

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[40] "Jewish Actor and Wife Reported Killed," *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, March 9, 1923, 3.
[41] "Report of Jewish Actors' Death is 'Greatly Exaggerated'," *The Sentinel,* April 6, 1923, 18.

eggs at her. Picon kept singing, but the theater erupted into a riot. As Picon later recalled in her memoirs:

> They threw cabbages and eggs and me, and I kept right on singing my first song and dancing around to avoid being hit by a cabbage. Zelmeister, our Polish impresario, came running onstage and yelling, "Jews, save yourselves – they're out to kill us all!"' The conductor grabbed the music, the prompter grabbed the script, and they ran, while the stage manager brought the curtain down. I was still out there, mad as a hornet, singing and dancing, when the stage manager grabbed me and literally carried me up the stairs into the flies.[42]

The Romanian military police arrived and escorted Picon and Kalich back to their apartment. The incident was followed by death threats. "We warn you categorically that we will take the most drastic measures against you if you continue your theatrical performances," read one anonymous threat, preserved by Molly in a scrapbook from the tour. "Your indescribable arrogance and scandalous impertinence will be punished with a pistol. Continue if you dare, but then say 'goodbye' to life."[43] Death threats at the theater were followed by the appearance of anti-Semitic mobs that ransacked the Jewish quarter. In response, the Romanian government closed the theater to quell the riots.[44] Picon and Kalich appealed for a reopening of the theater, but the authorities refused, and pressured them to leave Romania instead.[45] With nowhere to work and amidst ongoing attacks on the Bucharest Jewish community, the couple decided to leave Romania prematurely and head back to the United States.[46]

Picon and Kalich might well have stayed in Europe indefinitely had they not encountered anti-Semitism in Romania. Ticket sales were strong and they were

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[42] Picon, *Molly!*, 42.

[43] Molly Picon Scrapbook, RG 738: Molly Picon Papers, box 4, folder 30, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

[44] "Militant Christianity," *The American Israelite*, Cincinnati, April 5, 1923, 1.

[45] "Foreign News," *The American Israelite*, April 12, 1923, 5.

[46] See "Moli Pikon muz farlozn Rumenye," *Dos naye lebn,* April 13, 1923, 2 and "Kalich and Picon in Vienna," *The American Israelite*, April 12, 1923, 7.

experiencing a level of success far beyond what they had hoped for. But the riots and the closure of their theater prompted them to take the leap back home to find out if Picon's European stardom was sufficient to give her a chance on Second Avenue.

"Seldom do people await the arrival of an actor or actress with so much impatience as the arrival of Molly Picon was awaited in New York," proclaimed the *Forverts* on Christmas Eve 1923, the morning before Picon's opening night performance in *Yankele*.[47] Picon was "a new star" whose name had become synonymous with fame "lightning fast" in Europe, the paper continued, informing readers of Picon's "tremendous reputation as one of the best Jewish soubrettes."[48]

Picon's stature as an acclaimed Yiddish actress in Europe translated into near-instant American stardom. As Kalich later wrote in his 1930s bio-musical about his wife, "Molly was a famous person on Second Avenue before she had ever appeared there."[49] No longer the unknown and unconventional actress who three years earlier had failed to book a single performance in New York, Picon was now a bonafide Second Avenue star – even before she completed her first stage appearance in the city. When ads for *Yankele* first started appearing in New York Yiddish newspapers, the producer was surprised to see the lines that began to form at the box office. As Molly recalled in her memoirs:

Edelstein couldn't understand why, so he asked some of the people, "Do you know her? Why are you buying tickets?" And they answered, "My uncle from Warsaw wrote me when Molly Picon appeared in *Yonkele* [sic] to go see her." Another customer added, "My cousin from Bucharest wrote me not to miss Molly Picon's *Yonkele*." It seems we had a subscription audience before I even started.[50]

Picon's reputation only continued to grow after performances began. "The arrival of the most gifted soubrette Molly Picon last night in the Kessler Theater marked

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[47] "A nayer shtern bavayzt zikh haynt afn teater himl," *Forverts*, December 24, 1923, 2.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *The Life of Molly* [Program], Harvard Judaica Division.
[50] Picon, *Molly!*, 43–44.

a new chapter in the history of Yiddish operetta," a *Forverts* writer crowed after seeing her perform in *Yankele*.[51]

Reviews of Picon's first performances in New York attest to the strong influence of her European tour on her meteoric rise to American stardom. In *Der tog*, A. Drazshner wrote, "From Boston, Molly Picon first had to wander across a substantial portion of Europe before she arrived as a 'star.'"[52] The seriousness and quality of Picon's artistry, Drazshner continued, were recognizable from the moment when the audience first heard her speaking. "So pure, so folksy, such true Yiddish."[53] The implication is clear: the clearest marker of the quality of Picon's acting was the purity of her Yiddish, "authentically" acquired in Europe.

A full year after Picon's New York debut in *Yankele*, the European tour was still regularly brought up by journalists. In the English-language paper *The Daily News*, a 1924 ad for Picon's newest musical comedy *Tsipke* billed the star as "The Greatest Sensation of Europe and America: MOLLY PICON."[54] More than a decade later, when Picon made her Broadway debut in Sylvia Regan's play *Morning Star,* her biography still made special mention of this trip ("a tour of the sources of Yiddish stage art – the towns and villages of eastern Europe") as a prerequisite for her success on Second Avenue and the moment when she became an authentic Yiddish star.[55]

Born in New York, Molly Picon became an American theater star in Europe, as the press from her tour echoed across the Atlantic. Over the next six decades of her career, Molly would regularly be praised by critics for her rich and "authentic" European-acquired Yiddish. The Yiddish humorist Moyshe Nadir described Molly's post-tour Yiddish as "pure," "a respite for my ears," "overflowing with clarity," "a refined festival Yiddish, not the workaday hot language babble

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[51] "Kesler teater hot oyfgeshturemt Nyu York mit Moli Pikon als Yankele," *Forverts*, December 26, 1923, 9.

[52] A. Drazshner, "Fun eyn teater aroys inem andern arayn," *Der tog*, December 28, 1923, 3.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Ad for Molly Picon in *Tsipke*, *Daily News*, December 4, 1924, 73.

[55] *Morning Star* [Program], 1940, box 33, folder: Morning Star Broadway, Coll. 7927, Abraham Ellstein and Sylvia Regan Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

of….well, of all Yiddish soubrettes except for this one."[56] At the start of her career, Molly Picon was perceived as unfit for the Yiddish stage in both her physical appearance and her Yiddish linguistic ability. After three years in Europe, she was accepted and embraced by the American Yiddish theater establishment as an iconic soubrette and an internationally renowned star of the highest caliber.

What does it mean that Molly Picon, an icon of the New York Yiddish stage, the woman who D.W. Griffith once called "the most interesting actress in America" and whom the *New Yorker* called "a phenomenon of the New York of today," could not be accepted as a Yiddish actress until she found fame in Europe?[57]

The response to Picon's European tour suggests that pathways to stardom in Yiddish theater were not always as localized as in other theater cultures. For most New York actors, the path to American theater stardom ran through their city, or perhaps through out-of-town tryouts in Boston or Baltimore or Detroit. Travel was not a prerequisite for success, nor did it often establish actors in their home environments. But for Yiddish theater stars operating in a transnational, traveling theater culture, the "local" theater scene also included cities around the world. This environment enabled more pathways that enabled actors to disrupt theatrical norms. An actor like Molly Picon could go around the existing theater structures of their city or country while still remaining part of the same theatrical scene.

As one theater critic wrote of the couple's reasons for setting out on this tour:

> Kalich understood that nobody can become a prophet in their own comfortable circle, so he set out with her around the world. He didn't neglect to pack a whole bundle of the Torah of Barnum in their luggage, but Molly herself was the best advertisement. [...] From city to city and

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[56] "Vos shrayb Moyshe Nadir vegn Moli Pikon," *Molly Picon y Jacobo Kalich Tournee America del Sud* (Pamphlet), Buenos Aires, 1932, box 31, folder: Programs and Clippings From Tours and Shows with Molly Picon, 1932–1937, Coll. 7927, Abraham Ellstein and Sylvia Regan Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

[57] "Molly Picon Internationally Famous Comedienne," box 31, folder: Programs and Clippings from Tours and Shows with Molly Picon, 1932–1937, Coll. 7927, Abraham Ellstein and Sylvia Regan Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

from country to country, her name grew more and more resonant, and its echo could be heard all the way in New York.[58]

In America prior to her trip, Molly Picon had been completely shut out of New York's Yiddish theaters. Traveling internationally, however, she and Kalich could create their own opportunities with a bit of sleight-of-hand. In Europe, Kalich marketed Picon as though she had already been embraced as an American star. Upon returning to America, Picon was marketed as a successful European star. In this way, Picon and Kalich masked how they were disrupting Yiddish theatrical norms. On both sides of the Atlantic, audiences, critics, and producers were aware that Molly Picon was a new kind of Yiddish leading lady, but they were intentionally led to believe that the unconventional star had already been accepted elsewhere first. In fact, it was the very *framing* of Picon as an accepted star on her travels that enabled her to alter the expectations for women on the Yiddish stage.

Kalich and Picon were disruptors in Yiddish theater who radically altered the norms of the medium by upending accepted wisdom about the kinds of roles that actresses could play. Their early 1920s trip to Europe was the linchpin that enabled them to enact this theatrical transformation.

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Debra Caplan is Associate Professor of Theatre at Baruch College, City University of New York. Her book, *Yiddish Empire: The Vilna Troupe, Jewish Theater, and the Art of Itinerancy,* won the 2019 George Freedley Memorial Award from the Theatre Library Association. Her work on Yiddish theater has been published in *Theatre Journal, Modern Drama, Theatre Survey, New England Theatre Journal, Aschkenas, American Theatre, Pakn Treger,* and *Comparative Drama.*

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[58] Volf Merkur, "Pikant," box 53, folder 1066, P-38, Molly Picon Papers, American Jewish Historical Society.

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A Quest for Yiddishland:
The 1937 World Yiddish Cultural Congress

by *Gennady Estraikh*

Abstract

In August 1935, a group of intellectuals who gathered in Vilna at a jubilee conference of the Jewish Scientific Institute, YIVO, announced the founding of a movement called the Yiddish Culture Front (YCF), whose aim would be to ensure the preservation of Yiddish culture. The article focuses on the congress convened by the YCF in Paris. The congress, a landmark in the history of Yiddishism, opened on September 17, 1937, before a crowd of some 4,000 attendees. 104 delegates represented organizations and institutions from 23 countries. Radically anti-Soviet groups boycotted the convention, considering it a communist ploy. Ironically, the Kremlin cancelled the participation of a Soviet delegation at the last moment. From the vantage point of the delegates, Paris was the only logical center for its World Yiddish Cultural Association (IKUF or YIKUF) created after the congress. However, the French capital was not destined to become the world capital of Yiddish intellectual life. Influential circles of Yiddish literati, still torn by ideological strife rather than united in any common cultural "Yiddishland," remained concentrated in America, Poland, and the Soviet Union.

From Berlin to Paris

Preludes to the Congress

The Boycott

A Phantasm of Yiddishland

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"Where are you coming from?"
"From Yiddishland."
"Where are you headed?"
"To Yiddishland."
"What kind of journey is this?"
"A journey like any other journey."[1]

From Berlin to Paris

In the years following World War I and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Berlin emerged as the European capital of Eastern European Jewish, including Yiddish-speaking and -writing, intellectual émigré life. The city boasted a dynamic milieu of writers and journalists, linked with periodicals and publishers in the three Yiddish cultural centers: Warsaw, New York, and Moscow. Several Jewish scholarly projects developed in Berlin during this period. It is no coincidence that the concept of a Yiddish academic center crystalized in Berlin in 1925, though ultimately the project was realized as a Vilna-based institute, YIVO.[2] Berlin was home to the European (or main) headquarters of several Jewish relief organizations. One of these, ORT, initially founded in 1880 in St. Petersburg as the Society for the Promotion of Artisanal and Agricultural Work in the Russian Empire, transformed into the World ORT Union in 1921. David Lvovitch and Aron Singalowsky, key figures in the reminted organization, had their ideological roots in the Territorialist movement, which sought a homeland for a Yiddish-speaking state. Yiddish cultural activism was also well represented in other Jewish organizations in Berlin.

All this came to an end following Hitler's coming to power. Paris became the main destination for Jewish writers, journalists, scholars, and civic leaders fleeing

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[1] H. Leivick, "Mit a vize fun Yidishland," *Folksblat*, October 30, 1935, 3.

[2] For a history of YIVO, see Cecile E. Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture. Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Germany in the 1930s. In the French capital, they found a setting for Yiddish cultural activities that differed significantly from the German. Tellingly, Berlin never had a Yiddish daily; its Yiddish weeklies also tended to decline soon after beginning publication. [3] By contrast, the French capital, with its vibrant environment of some 150,000 Jewish immigrants, primarily from Poland and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe, ensured a stable readership for two Yiddish dailies: the *Parizer haynt*, launched in 1926 as a sister publication of the Warsaw daily *Haynt* (Today), and *Naye prese* (New Press), a communist publication, which began to appear in 1934. Several other Yiddish periodicals saw the light of day in Paris, but did not endure long enough to leave a tangible mark.[4]

In 1936, a monthly journal, *Parizer zhurnal: far literatur, kunst un kultur* (Parisian journal: for literature, art, and cultural issues), emerged under the patronage of the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Revolutionnaires (AEAR, Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists), founded by communists and communist sympathizers. Nonetheless, the French capital did not play a significant role in the landscape of Yiddish literature, though several Yiddish writers, including the literary heavyweights Sholem Asch, David Eynhorn and Zalman Shneur, settled for a time in the city. There were also much less known local young writers, patronizingly described as "provincial" by the poet and essayist Daniel Charney, one of the last Yiddish literati to flee Berlin.[5] This local provinciality did not prevent him from including some of them, notably Wolf Wiewiorka and Benjamin Shlevin, in the association of Yiddish journalists, which he launched and chaired in January 1937.[6]

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[3] For more on Yiddish in Berlin, see, e.g., Gennady Estraikh, "Yiddish on the Spree," in *Yiddish in Weimar Berlin. At the Crossroads of Diaspora Politics and Culture*, ed. Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov, (Oxford: Legenda, 2010), 1–27.

[4] "200,000 Jews of France Served by Vigorous Weekly and Daily Periodicals Published in Yiddish, French, German and Russian," *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, July 5, 1931, 3; Daniel Charney, "Der yidisher kultur-yarid in Pariz," *Literarishe bleter*, April 2, 1937, 4; Albert Dérozier, *Mélanges offerts à Albert Dérozier*, (Besançon: Université de Besançon, 1994), 315–16.

[5] Daniel Charney, "Di yidishe bikher produktsye in Pariz," *Literarishe bleter,* April 9, 1937, 5.

[6] "Fun vokh tsu vokh," *Literarishe bleter,* January 22, 1937, 14.

The Kultur-Lige, or Yiddish Culture League, modeling on the original Kiev prototype of 1918–20, was established in Paris in 1922 and later had branches in several French cities. In Kiev, the league operated, at least in part, as a supra-party organization promoting development of secular Yiddish culture, which was proclaimed as the spiritual core of the modern Jewish nation-in-the-making.[7] Initially, the Parisian league also united representatives of various political currents, but very soon became an arena for political intrigues and maneuvers, until the 'red faction' attained, in 1925, full Communist dominance in the organization.[8] A Yiddish drama circle, formed at the Kultur-Lige in Paris in 1928, became the basis for the Yiddish Workers Theater (Parizer yidisher arbeter-teater), or PYAT. According to Nick Underwood, the PYAT "played a fundamental role in the development of political culture within leftist circles in interwar France."[9]

In 1928, a group of Eastern European immigrants aligned with the local Bundist group founded the Bibliothèque Medem (or Medem-Bibliotek in Yiddish). In 1932, the Bundists launched the Arbeter-Ring (Workmen's Circle) as a mutual-aid society as well as the agency responsible for Yiddish-language education. The founders took as their model the socialist-leaning Arbeter-Ring, which had been active in the USA since 1900 and, independently, in London since 1909. Paris was also home to libraries belonging to various Jewish political groups.[10] In 1937, some 600 children attended ten Yiddish supplementary schools in the city,[11] and during 1936–38, *Naye prese* published a column for young readers.[12]

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[7] For more, see Gennady Estraikh, "The Yiddish Kultur-Lige," in *Modernism in Kyiv. Jubilant Experimentation*, eds. Irena Makaryk and Virlana Tkacz, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 197–217.

[8] M. Liro, "Di geshikhte fun der kultur-lige," *10 yor kultur lige*, (Paris: Kultur-Lige, 1932), 3–11.

[9] Nicholas Lee Underwood, "Staging a New Community. Immigrant Yiddish Culture and Diaspora Nationalism in Interwar Paris, 1919–1940," Ph. D Thesis, (University of Colorado at Boulder, 2016), 36.

[10] Giles Rozier and Alan Astro, "The Medem-Bibliotek. The Yiddish Library of Paris," *Shofar* 14/3 (1996): 138–139; Giles Rozier, "The Bibliothèque Medem. Eighty Years Serving Yiddish Culture," *Judaica Librarianship* 15 (2009): 25–34.

[11] "Fun vokh tsu vokh," *Literarishe bleter*, April 30, 1937, 14.

[12] Nick Underwood, "Our Most Beautiful Children. Communist Contests and Poetry for Immigrant Jewish Youth in Popular Front France," *Jewish Social Studies* 23/1 (2017): 64–100.

Yiddishization was a characteristic feature of ORT's Parisian period after the organization decamped to Paris in 1933. An ORT veteran described the years 1933–1940 as the most Yiddishist period in ORT's history. Apart from reflecting the cultural climate of Jewish Paris, this linguistic shift emphasized ORT's transition from an essentially Russian Jewish organization to an international one, whose operations increasingly transcended the borders of the disintegrated Russian Empire, but remained largely focused on the Yiddish-speaking masses. The turn to Yiddish was characteristic even of those ORT activists who had previously preferred Russian.[13]

Yiddish-speaking communists were particularly prominent in French Jewish political and cultural life. This was, to a considerable degree, a reflection of the influence of political immigrants from Poland, where the authorities sought to suppress all forms of pro-Soviet activity and forced many politically active people to leave the country. Numerous political immigrants had come to Paris earlier, after the revolutionary events of 1905–1906 in Russia.[14] The first communist Jewish organizations appeared in Paris in 1922; the following year saw them morph into a Jewish – moreover, a Yiddish-speaking – section (*sous-section juive*) of the French Communist Party. Dissolved in 1937, the section subsequently regrouped around *Naye prese*.[15] The communist newspaper remained the only full-fledged Parisian (rather than a local version of a Warsaw-based) Yiddish daily with a well-organized base of several thousand friends and fundraisers. Its readers included representatives of other leftwing political currents, notably Bundists and members of the leftist Poalei Zion (Marxist Zionist 'Workers of Zion'), who did not have

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[13] Gennady Estraikh, "From Berlin to Paris and Beyond. The 1930s and 1940s," in *Educating for Life. New Chapters in the History of ORT*, eds. Rachel Bracha, Adi Drori-Avraham and Geoffrey Yantian, (London: World ORT, 2010), 110–111.

[14] Yekhezkel Kornhendler, *Yidn in Pariz. materyaln far yidisher geshikhte*, (Paris: n.p., 1981), vol. 2, 186.

[15] Zosa Szajkowski, "Dos yidishe gezelshaftlekhe lebn in Pariz dem yor 1939," in *Yidn in Frankraykh. Shtudyes un materyaln*, ed. Ilia (Elias) Cherikover, (New York: YIVO, 1942), 212–213; Gerben Zaagsma, "The Local and the International. Jewish Communists in Paris between the Wars," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009): 345–363.

their own stable Yiddish press in France.[16] The trans-partisan nature of the readership reflected the cooperation of these political groupings in the leftist Popular Front, formed to fight – including in the cultural domain – against the threat of fascism.

With Berlin a no-go for anything Jewish, in Europe it was becoming increasingly hard to find a better setting than Paris for the World Yiddish Cultural Congress (17–21 September 1937), marked by pro-Soviet sympathies and opportunism. The International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, also referred to as the 1937 World's Fair, provided a symbolic backdrop. Significantly, the exposition included a Modern Jewish Culture pavilion, whose committee was chaired by a former prominent resident of 'Jewish Berlin,' Raphael Abramovitch, a person of stature in the socialist movement and in Yiddish cultural circles.[17]

Preludes to the Congress

In June 1935, Paris hosted the grandiose First International Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture. The Soviet government allocated major expenditures for its involvement in this vastly propagandist event, entrusting the organization of its part in the congress largely to the Soviet literati Ilya Ehrenburg and Mikhail Koltsov (Fridliand). Isaac Babel and Boris Pasternak attended as members of the Soviet delegation. The atmosphere of the time, when many western intellectuals perceived the Soviet Union as the most reliable anti-Nazi force, made a gathering of this nature possible.[18]

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[16] For a comparative study of the two newspapers, see Aline Benain and Audrey Kichelewski, "*Parizer Haynt* et *Naïe Presse*, les itineraries paradoxaux de deux quotidiens parisiens en langue yiddish," *Archives juives* 1/36 (2003): 52–69.

[17] Nick Underwood, "Exposing Yiddish Paris. The Modern Jewish Culture Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46/2 (2016): 160–175; on Abramovitch, see Gennady Estraikh, "Die jiddischsprachige New Yorker Tageszeitung *Forverts* und ihr Korrespondent Raphael Abramovitch," in *Judentum und Arbeiterbewegung. Das Ringen um Emanzipation in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Markus Börner, Anja Jungfer and Jakob Stürmann, (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 115–141.

[18] Tat'iana G. Petrova, "Kongress pisatelei v zashchitu kul'tury," in *Russkoe zarubezh'e. Istoriia i sovremennost'*, (Moscow: INION, 2011), 213–220.

Taking the Writers' Congress as a model, a group of intellectuals in Vilna in August 1935 as part of the YIVO tenth jubilee conference announced the founding of a movement called the Yiddish Culture Front, whose aim would be to ensure the preservation of Yiddish culture. The writers Yeshue Perle and Alter Kacyzne, the editor Nachman Meisel (or Mayzel), the historians Emanuel Ringelblum and Raphael Mahler, and the artist Marc Chagall all signed the new movement's manifesto.[19]

Thus, importantly, while the 1935 Writers' Congress had been launched by the Soviet propaganda apparatus, the idea of conducting a Yiddish congress was originally floated among non-communist (though leftist) intellectuals. The initiators of the new movement aimed to protect Yiddish culture not only from fascism, but also from other forces, most notably assimilation, which was largely accountable for the erosion of Yiddish. They were concerned that even the comparatively young modern cultures, such as the Lithuanian and Latvian, were distracting the younger Jewish generation from Yiddish. Moreover, an increasing number of young literati were writing in languages, which had previously not been in competition with Yiddish.[20]

In fact, many Yiddish activists envisioned YIVO as the trend-setting cultural institution in secular Jewish life. The 1935 conference brought to Vilna scores of delegates and hundreds of guests, many, if not the majority of whom wanted to see YIVO as more than a merely academic center. Vilna had already begun to be considered as a capital of virtual Yiddishland. However, YIVO's administration was reluctant to overstep the academic borders of the institute's activity. Presumably, they were wary of the questionable political tint that might attach to YIVO, thereby endangering the existence of the institute. As a result, the initiators of the Yiddish Culture Front had difficulty so much as obtaining the conference

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[19] Nachman Meisel, *Geven amol a lebn*, (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn, 1951), 372–380.
[20] Nachman Meisel, *Oyf un[d]zer kultur-front. Problemen fun literatur un kultur-shafn* (Warsaw: Literarishe bleter, 1936), 168–169.

organizers' permission to announce the movement's manifesto during one of the sessions.[21]

Convening a congress of the new movement in Poland, where it would be seen as a communist ploy, was out of the question. The Polish Yiddish Culture Front had to disguise its activities as a campaign to celebrate the centenary of Mendele Moykher Sforim, the 'grandfather' of modern Jewish literature. Paris, where pro-Soviet sympathies were not punished, was clearly more suitable as the location for an event of this kind. Numerous publications and speeches drew parallels between the 1908 First Yiddish Language Conference, which had taken place in Czernowitz, then in Austria-Hungary,[22] and the Parisian convention. Among the similarities was the setting: in both cases, the organizers' choice had fallen on a city with a relatively small Yiddish-speaking population, but with minimal legal hurdles. As the St. Petersburg Yiddish daily *Der fraynd* (Friend) wrote sarcastically in 1908, the participants had to "*geyn in goles un shlepn zeyer toyre mit zikh*" – "go into exile and carry their Torah with them."[23]

September 1936 saw an organizational meeting of another group that called the Yiddish Culture Front. This had formed in Paris, chaired by the well-known Russian Jewish sculptor Naum (Naoum or Nohem) Aronson, an intellectual fascinated with the post-1917 developments in his birth country. In September 1935, Aronson returned from a three-month-long trip to the Soviet Union, nurturing plans of working on Soviet themes. Among his projects was a sculpture of Stalin as "the leader of the world."[24] One of the two vice-chairmen of the new Front, Michel (Mikhail) Kiveliovitch, had a reputation as a talented mathematician and a pupil of Henri Poincaré working in celestial mechanics. He

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[21] Jacob Botoshansky, "A demonstratsye in der hoyptshtot fun 'Yidishland'," *Literarishe bleter*, August 23, 1935, 7; Meisel, *Geven amol a lebn*, 377; Christopher Hutton, "What Was Going on at the 1935 YIVO Conference," in *The Politics of Yiddish. Studies in Language, Literature and Society*, ed. Dov-Ber Kerler, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998), 29–40.

[22] See, in particular, *Czernowitz at 100. The First Yiddish Language Conference in Historical Perspective*, eds. Kalman Weiser and Joshua A. Fogel, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010).

[23] Shaul Lev, "Di Tshernovitser konferents fun 1908 un der Parizer kongres fun 1938," *Literarishe bleter*, September 17, 1937, 602.

[24] "Skul'ptor Aronson vyekhal v Parizh," *Izvestiia*, September 23, 1935, 4.

was also known as a 'great friend of Lenin and Trotsky,' an ORT activist, and the founder of the *Artistes juifs* (Jewish Artists) book series published under the aegis of Le Triangle in Paris.[25]

The new organization's other vice-chairman, Ben-Adir (Abraham Rozin), a former leader of the Jewish Territorialists in Russia, was also associated with ORT – as a former editor of its Yiddish periodical *Virtshaft un lebn* (Business and Life, 1928–31).[26] In 1934, he was one of the founders of a Territorialist group in Paris that became involved in the establishment of the Frayland (Freeland) League, a source of crucial new vigor for the movement. David Lvovitch and Aron Singalowsky were also among the founders.[27] In contrast to Aronson and Kiveliovitch, Ben-Adir was a thoroughly seasoned anti-Bolshevik. However, the Soviet Birobidzhan project of setting up a territorial autonomy in the Far East of the country apparently appealed to him.

After 1933, many activists in the West came to the conclusion that the urgent need of finding a safe haven for Jewish refugees from Germany did not leave many choices, especially as even relatively Jewish-friendly countries were ready to admit a bare trickle of immigrants. Tens of thousands of socially and economically deprived Jews from Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and Latvia viewed emigration as the only viable solution to their plight. As a result, increasing numbers of people of various ideological persuasions turned their eyes to the Soviet Far East. In Britain, Lord Dudley Marley, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords and Chairman of the Committee for the Relief of Victims of German Fascism, described Birobidzhan as 'about the safest spot in the world.' In America, former

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[25] Louis Atlas, "Jewish Cultural Phases in the French Capital. An Entertaining Letter from Paris," *The Jewish Exponent*, November 27, 1931, 8; Leon Shapiro, *The History of ORT. A Jewish Movement for Social Change*, (London: World ORT, 2010), 93; Alessandro Gallicchio, "Parigi 1928–1932. La collana 'Artistes Juifs' de Le Triangle tra promozione artistica e appartenenza ebraica," in *Gli intellettuali/scrittori ebrei e il dovere della testimonianza. In ricordo di Giorgio Bassani*, ed. Anna Dolfi, (Florence: Florence University Press, 2017), 43–52.

[26] Shapiro, *The History of ORT*, 145.

[27] "Der Territorialismus im Anmarch," *Jüdische Wochenblat* (Bielsko), October 26, 1934, 1–2; Michael C. Astour, *Geshikhte fun der Frayland-lige*, (Buenos Aires and New York: Frayland-lige, 1967), vol. I, 29–34, 56–79.

Democratic Congressman William W. Cohen chaired a committee of influential figures who had become enthused by the Birobidzhan endeavor.[28]

Soviet representatives promised to allow foreign Jews to settle in the Far Eastern territory designated for Jewish colonization, which in May 1934 began to be referred to as the Jewish Autonomous Region. The administrative capital was in Birobidzhan, a newly built town. The area's rank of 'region' was seen as a temporary status prior to the proclamation an autonomous republic. In 1936, the Soviet propaganda industry produced a talkie, *Seekers of Happiness*, a work of unabashed propaganda, whose central Jewish (but Russian-speaking) characters came from an unspecified foreign country to settle in the Soviet Far East.[29] (In America, the film encountered censorship, but was shown in some places under the title of *A Greater Promise.*)[30] Ultimately, the campaign proved perfectly futile. Despite the Soviet government's promises to allow one thousand foreign Jewish families to settle in the region, fewer than 1,400 individuals from abroad were granted state permission to immigrate into the area.[31]

Beginning in fall 1936, and ever more violently in 1937 and 1938, brutal mass repressions in Birobidzhan, echoed by repressions throughout the country, made the Soviet Union impossible as a destination for any resettlement campaign. In the climate of purges, Soviet party leadership cancelled plans for a Yiddish culture conference in Birobidzhan. This had initially been scheduled to take place in

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[28] Henry Srebrnik, "Diaspora, Ethnicity and Dreams of Nationhood. American Jewish Communists and the Birobidzhan Project," in *Yiddish and the Left*, eds. Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov, (Oxford: Legenda, 2001), 94–95; Alexander Ivanov, "Facing East. The World ORT Union and the Jewish Refugee Problem in Europe, 1933–38," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39/3 (2009): 369–388.

[29] See J. Hoberman, *Bridge of Light. Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 170–174; Miron Chernenko, *Krasnaia zvezda, zheltaia Zvezda*, (Vinnitsa: Globus-Press, 2001), 111–116; Iakov Lur'e, "Cherez ternii Kryma k zvezdam Birobidzhan. Dve pereselencheskie utopii v sovetskom agitkino," in *Kino i kapital. Al'manakh Tsentra issledovanii ekonomicheskoi kul'tury*, eds. Aleksandr A. Pogrebniak and Nina M. Savchenkova, (St. Petersburg: Smolny, 2018), 130–141.

[30] "Biro-Bidjan Film Ends Tomorrow," *Jewish Advocate*, January 15, 1937, 10; Alfred Segel, "Pinya Kopman," *The American Israelite*, May 13, 1937, 1.

[31] Gennadii Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm*, (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001), 119–121.

February, and then in May 1937. The authorities also refused to authorize a delegation of five cultural luminaries – Moyshe Litvakov, editor of the Moscow Yiddish daily *Der emes* (Truth), Solomon Mikhoels, director of the Moscow State Yiddish Theater, and the writers David Bergelson, Itsik Fefer, and Izi Kharik – to take part in the World Yiddish Cultural Congress.[32] Litvakov and Kharik would be executed in late 1937; the remaining three members of the group would be murdered in the final years of Stalin's rule.

Communists had to come up with an explanation for Soviet non-participation. Moyshe Katz, an American communist journalist, emphasized the fact that the congress had not been initiated by the Soviets, which was, he argued, understandable: defending Yiddish culture had no resonance in the Soviet Union, where the state supported Yiddish institutions anyway. At the same time, Katz's comments included a carefully worded reproach against the Soviets' decision to keep away from the Paris congress and from Yiddish cultural life outside their country overall.[33] Katz appears to have been prescient: his article came out in June 1937, whereas the Organizational Bureau of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee made the decision not to allow the Soviet delegation to attend the congress in Paris was on September 7, 1937.[34]

Nonetheless, communists became key figures in setting up the congress. The main hands-on organizer of the congress was Chaim Sloves, a Bialystok-born Yiddish communist litterateur. In 1920, he left Poland together with the retreating Red Army, but later came back and endured four years of imprisonment for his participation in the communist movement as the secretary of the Jewish section of the Polish Komsomol (Young Communist League). In 1926, he emigrated to France and in 1935 defended his doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne. By that time, he had been a member of the French Communist Party for six years, active in its Yiddish sub-section.[35] Sloves belonged to the multitudinous group of Jewish

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[32] Gennady Estraikh, "Yiddish Language *Conference Aborted*," *East European Jewish Affairs* 25/2 (1995): 91–96; Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina*, 134–135.

[33] Moyshe Katz, "Far dem alveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres," *Der hamer*, 10/6 (1937): 41.

[34] Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina*, 134–135.

[35] Annette Aronowicz, "Joy to the Goy and Happiness to the Jew. Communist and Jewish Aspirations in a Postwar *Purimshpil*," in *Inventing the Modern Yiddish Stage. Essays in Drama,*

intellectuals who mourned the remapping of Eastern and Central Europe in the late 1910s and early 1920s and the disintegration, which it entailed, of the Old Country, *di alte heym*, the historical habitat of Yiddish and Yiddish culture. With its international character and its unprecedented support of Yiddish culture, communism, centered in the Old Country, appealed to Sloves and others who held similar views, giving them a hope of realizing their Jewish national and cultural aspirations.

Enthusiastic support for the congress came from ardent Yiddishists, who thought of Yiddish and Yiddish culture as the principal elements in preserving and fostering the modern Jewish nation. In their view, the Jewish nation could survive and thrive only as a continuation of the centuries-long Ashkenazic tradition – the same tradition, which Zionist ideologists tended to discard as the product of a deviant period in Jewish history. By contrast, Yiddishists typically dreamt of a diasporic Yiddishland, with linguistically and culturally interlinked communities spread over the world.

Literature was seen as the main constituent of the nation-defining culture. In the 1920s, a group of literati, some of them from the Kultur-Lige, mounted a sustained and ultimately successful effort to achieve recognition for the Yiddish PEN Club. This became possible when they overcame the limitation spelled out by the International PEN Club's constitution, which originally permitted the admission of only one group from any one country. The international organization eventually admitted the Vilna-headquartered Yiddish club with chapters in Poland and America. (The Soviet Union and communist writers elsewhere refused to join the association of 'bourgeois writers'). Many in the Yiddish literary community saw their connection to the PEN Club as a way to ensure the worldwide unity of Yiddish letters. Meisel, a veteran of Kiev's Kultur-Lige and then editor of the highbrow Warsaw weekly *Literarishe bleter* (Literary Pages), in his memoirs convincingly claimed to have played a key role in the Yiddish PEN Club's establishment and in convening the Paris congress later.[36]

Performance, and Show Business, eds. Joel Berkowitz and Barbara Henry, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), 276.

[36] Meisel, *Geven amol a lebn*, 278–290.

In his account of the International PEN Club's 1936 congress, the Argentinian Yiddish writer Jacob Botoshansky noted that the Hebrew poet Shaul Tchernichovsky represented Palestine, whereas the American author of Yiddish verse H. Leivick came as a poet of 'Yiddishland,'[37] thus emphasizing the parochial character of Hebrew literature in comparison with the Yiddish. Leivick, Botoshansky, Meisel, and many others saw the congress in Paris as a chance to find an organizational framework for the further consolidation of cultural bodies and individuals into a virtual Yiddishland. This was a new form of the idea, germinated in the 1910s, that Yiddish literature and culture should be able to shape a surrogate territory for itself. In the words of Boruch Rivkin, an American Yiddish literary critic:

> For a nation that has no land, an artificially created territory supplants an actual one. Literature has to forge an alliance among people, classes, and events, as if the nation lived within clearly defined borders a life absolutely sovereign in all its societal aspects.[38]

The Boycott

The congress had a different purpose for communist ideologues. To them, Yiddish cultural territory was to serve as a conduit for post-1935 Popular Front policy, backed by the Moscow-headquartered Communist International.[39] Even so, they sought to downplay their own role. For Sloves and most other communist organizers of the congress it was of the utmost importance to gain the support of Chaim Zhitlovsky, a widely recognized non-communist authority among Yiddishists.[40] Significantly, his sympathies turned increasingly towards Moscow.

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[37] Jacob Botoshansky, "Der 14-ter PEN-kongres in Buenos-Ayres," *Literarishe bleter*, October 18, 1936, 3.
[38] Boruch Rivkin, *Grunt-tendentsn fun der yidisher literatur in Amerike*, (New York: IKUF, 1948), 29.
[39] Matthew Hoffman, "The Red Divide. The Conflict between Communists and their Opponents in the American Yiddish Press," *American Jewish History* 96/1 (2010): 26.
[40] Matthew Hoffman, "From Czernowitz to Paris. The International Yiddish Culture Congress of 1937," in *Czernowitz at 100,* eds. Weiser and Fogel, 153.

On March 12, 1930, over two thousand people assembled in Beethoven Hall, Manhattan, to see and listen to two formidable debaters: Raphael Abramovitch, a bitter critic of Bolshevism, and Chaim Zhitlovsky, who found some elements of the Soviet system appealing. Zhitlovsky justified the revolutionary violence (capitalism is a cancer which could be treated only by surgical procedure) and valorized the Soviet approach, whereas Abramovitch rejected this stand as misinformed and utopian.[41] Abramovitch was a political journalist for the New York rightwing socialist daily *Forverts* (Forward), whose editorial described Zhitlovsky's involvement in the Parisian congress as "sour cream to 'whiten' the communist borscht" of the congress. It emphasized that communists would always remain communist, with or without the Popular Front. However, "scratch a communist and you will find a terrorist beneath the surface."[42]

The communist taint of the congress led to a boycott by such important bodies as the *Forverts*, the highest-circulating Yiddish newspaper, and its sister organization Arbeter-Ring, YIVO, and the Central Yiddish School Organization of Poland. The reasons for keeping a distance from the Paris forum were not the same for all. For organizations based in Poland, participation in the communist-tinted congress could lead to considerable legal difficulties. The *Forverts*, by contrast, boycotted the event primarily because it saw it as a channel for Soviet and other communist influence. On August 13, 1937, the newspaper published a statement signed by 26 writers and journalists, many of them contributors to the *Forverts*. Thus, the poet and essayist Jacob Glatstein, who wrote for the conservative daily *Morgn-Zhurnal* (Morning Journal), affixed his signature next to the *Forverts* writers'. All criticized the plan to convene the congress and listed various communist wrongdoings, including the glorification of Arab violence in Palestine.[43]

At the same time, the *Forverts* boycott reflected the paper's general opposition to Yiddishism. The editor, Abraham Cahan, a towering – admired by some and

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[41] Harry Lang, "Di debate vegn Rusland tsvishn R. Abramovitsh un dr. Zhitlovski," *Forverts*, March 18, 1930, 3; Raphael Abramovitch, "Der umgliklekher yor in der geshikhte fun di hayntike doyres," *Forverts*, March 27, 1949, section 2, 3.

[42] "Vegn dem kultur-kongres," *Forverts*, August 20, 1937, 4.

[43] "Derklerung vegn dem kultur-kongres," *Forverts*, August 13, 1937, 2, 5.

hated by others – figure in American Jewish life, never tried to conceal his distaste for Yiddishists. The newspaper's satirist Yakov Adler, writing under the pseudonyms B. Kovner and Khoyzkls Eynikl, would make fun of Yiddishism and Yiddishists both. [44] In 1920, Cahan characterized the movement promoting Yiddish schools in the United States as a form of raw nationalism, or chauvinism.[45] In late 1922, an editorial comment informed readers that the newspaper opposed Yiddishists on almost every count, including their endeavors to purify the lexicon and make it more sophisticated.[46] A decade later, Cahan characterized Yiddish schooling as ideological "madness" purveyed by a clique of well-organized activists and teachers.[47]

The Paris congress was also boycotted by people who had little or nothing to do with the *Forverts*. For instance, the literary critic Shmuel Niger, a perennial detractor of Cahan's cultural policy, initially supported the idea of an international gathering, but then changed his attitude and decided to bypass the congress, deeming it pointless.[48] Aron Glants-Leyeles, a Yiddish poet and essayist, also withdrew his initial support of the congress, explaining that he did not want to participate in an event that would provide grist for the mill of Stalinism. In particular, he did not want to be part of an American delegation that included communists, most notably Moyshe Olgin, editor of the New York Yiddish daily *Morgn-Frayhayt* (Morning Freedom), which tirelessly eulogized Stalin, despite accounts of the historically unprecedented scale of repressions unleashed in the Soviet Union.[49]

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[44] See, e.g., Khoyzkls Eynikl, "Der 'yidishist'," *Forverts*, June 6, 1920, 5; B. Kovner, "Mame-loshn," *Forverts*, July 13, 1920, 3; Id., "Ikh un der 'yidishist'," *Forverts*, April 9, 1922, 5.

[45] Abraham Cahan, "Natsionalizm un shovinizm," *Forverts*, July 10, 1920, 8.

[46] "Notitsn fun der 'Forverts' redaktsye: naye kreftn," *Forverts*, December 6, 1922, 4.

[47] Abraham Cahan, "Der fundament un di gebayde," *Forverts*, April 18, 1931, 4–5; Gennady Estraikh, *Transatlantic Russian Jewishness. Ideological Voyages of the Yiddish Daily* Forverts *in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020), 93–118.

[48] Shmuel Niger, "A yidishe kultur-kongres – far vemen?," *Yidish. Peryodishe shrift fun mitl-mayrev rayon* 6, (November, 1936): 6.

[49] Aron [Glants-]Leyeles, "Farvos ikh vel nisht geyn tsu der amerikaner konferents far a yidishn kultur-kongres," *In zikh*, June 1937, 175–180.

Glants-Leyeles's withdrawal was likely a significant factor in the attempt which the poet H. Leivick and the prose writer Joseph Opatoshu made to postpone the congress. The Glantses, Leivicks, and Opatoshus were very close friends, "more so than family."[50] On August 4, 1937, Leivick and Opatoshu sent an alarming letter to Sloves. Staunch supporters of the congress, they did not, however, belong to the communist movement. Leivick, a fellow traveler rather than a card-carrying party member, left the movement in 1929, but did not become a sharp critic of the Soviet regime, whereas Opatoshu remained a sympathetic observer of Soviet cultural life.[51] Seriously concerned about the spread of the boycott plan, both American men of letters suggested that organizers delay the congress for six months; it might otherwise become a meeting of a single ideological *vinkl* (corner), or clique. The writers did not consider it necessary to have the congress coincide with the World's Fair, which, they argued, had nothing to do with the congress focus or objectives.[52]

Sloves found the letter thoroughly disturbing. Leivick and Opatoshu were literary heavyweights and their participation in the congress was paramount to the organizers. Leivick's play *The Golem* was part of the repertoire of the Tel Aviv Habima theater, invited to perform at the Paris World's Fair. [53] In 1926, Opatoshu's novella "The Romance of a Horse Thief," translated by Zev (Lupus) Blumenfeld, appeared, serialized, in *L'Humanité*, a French communist daily.[54] His 16-volume *Gezamlte verk* (Collected Works) were printed by the prestigious

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[50] Dan Opatoshu, "In New York *Velder*. Yosef/Joseph Opatoshu – Constructing a Multinational, 20th Century, (very) Modern Yiddish Identity," in *Joseph Opatoshu. A Yiddish Writer between Europe and America*, eds. Sabine Koller, Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutiko, (Oxford: Legenda, 2013), 24.

[51] For more, see Gennady Estraikh, "Soviet Dreams of a Cultural Exile," in *Joseph Opatoshu,* eds. Koller, Estraikh and Krutikov, 43–44.

[52] Leivick and Opatoshu Letter on Culture Congress, 1937-08-04. Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University. International Workers Order (IWO) Records, 1915–2002 (KCL05276), box 53, folder 5 (https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19043860).

[53] "Habimah to Play at Paris Exposition," *The Sentinel,* July 15, 1937, 13.

[54] "Paris Paper 'L'Humanite' Publishes Yiddish Novel," *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, October 20, 1926, 1.

publishing house of B. Kletskin in Vilna. In addition, Leivick's and Opatoshu's journalism and lectures made the two writers' opinions widely known.

In his reply, dated August 18, Sloves called both writers "spiritual guides" and agreed that many would shun the congress. However, he contended, no one could vouch that a six-month delay would improve the situation. Sloves stressed that the congress itself, not the timing, was at stake. In addition, it was simply too late to call a sudden halt to the process which had been set in motion to enable the congress to take place. As for holding the congress in conjunction with the World's Fair, Sloves explained that this was instrumental for delegates coming from 'semi-fascist' countries. They would be more easily able to obtain passports if their travel could be ostensibly connected to the exposition. Sloves squarely disagreed that the congress would appeal to only one 'corner' of the intellectual community. Rather, he argued, only one corner (he clearly meant anti-Soviet socialists) would not be represented, whereas in Poland the leftist Poalei Zion, the Folkspartey (Jewish People's Party), and the Territorialists had made known their support. Significantly, the congress was meant to reach out for unity on cultural programs rather than to find solutions to political issues.[55]

It would appear that Leivick and Opatoshu found Sloves's arguments persuasive. In addition, other American congress enthusiasts disagreed with the suggestion to postpone the event.[56] Within a few weeks, both writers embarked a ship for Paris, sailing 'from Yiddishland to Yiddishland.' The American delegation was the second-largest in attendance, surpassed only by the French.

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[55] Response to Leivick and Opatoshu Letter on Culture Congress, 1937-08-18. Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University. International Workers Order (IWO) Records, 1915–2002 (KCL05276), box 53, folder 5 (https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19043861). For the participation of the Left Poalei Zion, see Samuel D. Kassow, "The Left Poalei Zion in Inter-War Poland," in *Yiddish and the Left*, eds. Estraikh and Krutikov, 117–118.

[56] Sima Beeri, "Language in Its Place. Yiddish as Seen through the Historical Prism of *Literarishe Bleter* 1924–1939," PhD Thesis, (London: University College, 2013), 239–240.

A Phantasm of Yiddishland

The congress opened on Friday, September 17, at Wagram Hall before a crowd of some 4,000 attendees. 104 delegates, representing 677 organizations and institutions, came from 23 countries: Austria (2 delegates), Argentina (jointly with Uruguay – 1), Belgium (6), Brazil (1), Britain (3), Canada (2), Cuba (1), Czechoslovakia (2), Denmark (1), Estonia (6), France (29, including 8 members of the organizational committee), Holland (1), Italy (1), Latvia (4), Lithuania (8), Mexico (1), Palestine (1), Poland (5), Switzerland (1), Romania (8), South Africa (1), United States (11), and Uruguay. Workers and artisans were the most numerous (34) among the delegates, followed by writers (17), political and social activists (11), journalists and publicists (10), teachers (8), artists (8), lawyers (3), and office workers (2). A small number represented other occupations: a publisher, an engineer, a physician, a dentist, a theater director, a chorus conductor, and a student.[57]

Chaim Zhitlowsky could not make the transatlantic journey because of the state of his health, but he was widely seen as the congress's spiritual leader, a living link with the legendary 1908 Czernowitz conference. His paper, read by the American poet Zishe Weinper, was meant to set the tone of the forum. However, the real tone-setter was Leivick. Joseph Chernikhov, the leader of Vilna's Territorialists, wrote a fortnight after the congress's opening: "Since [I. L.] Peretz's departure from this life … Yiddish literature had been left without an ethically central figure, without a pathfinder. In Wagram Hall, where we all had assembled, … Leivick put on this crown,"[58] the crown of "conscience of Yiddish literature."[59]

In his speech, the 49-year-old poet – a revolutionary hero hardened in Siberia's tsarist jails and rapturously welcomed in the Soviet Union in 1925 – pointed to a symbolically empty chair: "It'll remain empty, reserved for a Soviet

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[57] Nachman Meisel, "Oyfn alveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres in Paris," *Literarishe bleter*, October 1, 1937, 7.

[58] Joseph Chernikhov, "Kultur un kiem," *Haynt*, October 1, 1937, 9–10.

[59] L. M., "Parizer shtimungen," *Folks-blat*, October 15, 1937, 5.

representative."[60] Like many in the audience and among the delegates, Leivick felt offended by the "emptiness." David Ignatoff, an American novelist, referred to the absence of Soviet representatives as a "dramatic moment of the congress."[61] The Parisian writer and journalist Wolf Wiewiorka interpreted it as a sign of Soviet distrust.[62] The aching issue of *leydike benklekh* (empty chairs) would be dredged up in Yiddish activist circles as late as the 1960s and beyond.[63]

In his keynote address, delivered on Saturday, Leivick declared his "love for the Soviet Union," but stressed that this positive attitude would not stop him from criticizing Moscow's misdeeds,[64] explaining that some of the turns in Soviet cultural politics simply stunned him. For instance, he found it both illogical and indicative that Sholem Aleichem rather than Peretz had been canonized in the Soviet Union as the most important Yiddish writer. Leivick considered Peretz's writings more revolutionary that Sholem Aleichem's, but Soviet literary pundits had apparently decided that Peretz was too complex and "too Jewish."[65]

For all that, 'unity' was a keyword throughout the gathering, even though, hugely disappointingly, Léon Blum's socialist government, supported by communists, had fallen shortly before the congress opened, in June 1937.[66] Even so, Sloves underlined that "We have assembled here … under the sign of unity," unity in the struggle of Yiddish culture against all enemies.[67] Many of the delegates were apparently ready to recognize the leading role of the communists. In Ignatoff's words:

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[60] *Ershter alveltlekher yidisher kultur-kongres,* (Paris and New York: IKUF, 1937), 49. For Leivick's Soviet trip, see Gennady Estraikh, *Evreiskaia literaturnaia zhizn' Moskvy, 1917–1991,* (St. Petersburg: European University Publishing Press, 2015), 103–105.

[61] *Ibid.,* 155.

[62] *Ibid.,* 266.

[63] Aron Vergelis, *Rayzes,* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1976), 48.

[64] *Ershter alveltlekher yidisher kultur-kongres,* 90.

[65] *Ibid.,* 99–100; cf. Gennady Estraikh, "Soviet Sholem Aleichem," in *Translating Sholem Aleichem. History, Politics and Art,* eds. by Gennady Estraikh et al., (Oxford, Legenda: 2013), 62–82.

[66] Jonathan Boyarin, *Polish Jews in Paris. The Ethnography of Memory,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 48.

[67] *Ershter alveltlekher yidisher kultur-kongres,* 15.

... nowadays, Yiddish and Yiddish culture remain an active political factor only thanks to communist groupings. This has to do with more than the newspapers, journals and books published by them. Other groupings and parties also have such publications. What is important is that they recognize the political potential and significance of Yiddish and Yiddish culture.[68]

Yiddishland was another keyword. Zhitlowsky wrote:

The Czernowitz conference [in August 1908] aimed to create such a worldwide 'spiritual-national home,' which would provide an environment for the cultural life of all classes and strata of the Jewish people scattered all over the world; a spiritual-national territory – now called 'Yiddishland' – whose atmosphere would be the wholesome air of the people's language and where each breath and each pronounced word would sustain the [Yiddish-speaking] people as a nation.[69]

Daniel Charney felt that the time had come to establish a "central address for the so-called Yiddishland."[70] Opatoshu theorized that Ashkenaz, the areas of Europe for many centuries populated by Yiddish-speaking Jews, had now become an ideological rather than a geographic notion, resurfacing as Yiddishland in contemporary cultural life.[71] Opatoshu supported Leivick's ideas of cooperation with Hebrew writers and of avoiding excessive ideologization insofar as nationalism could lead to chauvinism, while socialist leanings could give authentic writing a false edge.[72]

The idea of Yiddishland was not acceptable from the point of view of communist ideologists. The absence of a Soviet delegation in Paris makes this clear. Top party

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[68] *Ibid.,* 152.
[69] *Ibid.,* 78.
[70] *Ibid.,* 33.
[71] *Ibid.,* 26.
[72] M. Krimski, "Der ziveg hebreish-yidish," *Der moment,* October 3, 1937, 6.

functionaries had agreed with some experts' conclusion that Soviet representatives did not belong at a gathering whose key ideologist, Chaim Zhitlowsky, advanced the idea of Yiddishland, a symbolic spiritual homeland, which would unite all Yiddish-speaking Jews, independent of class and state borders, and help them to protect themselves both from assimilation and from Zionism.[73] While western communist delegates tactically did not criticize Zhitlovsky or openly reject the idea of Yiddishland, Olgin stressed that one could draw a parallel between culture and fatherland only if both notions were free of "metaphysical content." In reality, he argued, both culture and fatherland would be cherished and be worthy of sacrificing for only if they truly belonged to the people.[74]

From the vantage point of the delegates, Paris was the only logical center for Yiddishland and its World Yiddish Cultural Association (IKUF or YIKUF) created after the congress. However, the French capital was not destined to become the capital of Yiddish intellectual life. Like Berlin before it, it would prove a temporary – until the outbreak of World War II – tryst site for representatives of the real centers of Yiddishland. Influential Yiddish writers' and theoreticians' groups, still torn by ideological strife rather than united in any Yiddishland, remained concentrated in America, Poland, and the Soviet Union.

Leivick and Opatoshu were to be proven right: the Paris congress left a significant mark on only one *vinkl,* or corner, of Jewish cultural life, namely, on the loosely linked branches of IKUF, which became vibrantly active in the USA, Argentina, and Uruguay, but remained insulated due to their transparent or suspected pro-Sovietism. Ironically, this was love unrequited. The fate of the IKUF organization formed in 1944 in Romania and dissolved in the Soviet satellite state in 1953 is a representative instance of the overall pattern.[75] The New York-based IKUF, the most vigorous of the Paris congress's offspring, continued to be ostracized in other 'corners' of Yiddish intellectual-cum-political community. As late as August 1976, at the Jerusalem conference on Yiddish attended by some 200 delegates from 14

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[73] Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina,* 134–135.

[74] Moyshe Olgin, "Far a fareyniktn yidishn kultur-front," *Der hamer* 12 (1937): 29–30.

[75] Corina Petrescu, "A Jewish State Theater in the People's Republic of Romania? Notes on a Transitional Becoming (1944–1953)," *New Europe College Yearbook* 6 (2005): 283–319.

countries, IKUF and its affiliated organizations, by then 'constructively critical' of Soviet policies, were excluded. In a dramatic development, Itche Goldberg, who had replaced Nachman Meisel as editor of the journal *Yidishe kultur* (Yiddish Culture), a leading American Yiddish literary periodical of the time, spent the duration of the conference at a Tel Aviv hotel awaiting an invitation which never came. Old political sins had not been forgiven.[76]

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Gennady Estraikh is a professor at the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University. In 1988–1991, he worked as Managing Editor of the Moscow Yiddish journal *Sovetish Heymland*, and later settled in England, studying for a doctoral degree at the University of Oxford and then working at Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies and, in London, at School of Oriental and African Studies. His most recent book is *Transatlantic Russian Jewishness: Ideological Voyages of the Yiddish Daily Forverts in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (2020).

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[76] Jacob Sonntag, "Jerusalem Conference on Yiddish," *Jewish Quarterly* 24/3 (1976): 18.

"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

———————————————

Rebecca Wolpe

Introduction

Although the revolutions of 1848 achieved few practical long-term results,[1] 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."[2] Jews throughout the Habsburg Empire participated in the revolutionary fervor,[3] although this was largely limited to Jewish students and the intelligentsia or enlightened Jews (*maskilim*).[4] Likewise, the revolutions afforded the Empire's Jews various opportunities and advantages: some joined the newly-

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[1] 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*, 2nd ed., (London: Routledge, 1991); Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[2] 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].

[3] 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.

[4] 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 1948 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,[5] Jews were able to serve as public officials,[6] the special Jewish taxes in Galicia were abolished,[7] and finally the 1849 constitution emancipated the Jews living in all the lands of the Habsburg Empire.[8]

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.[9] 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,[10] Jews in Lemberg (Lwów, modern-day Lviv) Galicia,

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[5] 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.

[6] See for example Wangermann, "1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire," 72; Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 165.

[7] 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.

[8] 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.

[9] 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)

[10] 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...[11]

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.[12] These included the Vienna-based *Österreichische Central-Organ für Glaubensfreiheit, Cultur, Geschichte und Literatur der Juden. Unter Mitwirkung mehrer Gelehrten und Volksfreunde redigirt vun 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).[13] 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."[14]

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

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[11] 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.

[12] 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.

[13] Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, 71.

[14] Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848,* 22.

[15] Regarding Mohr see Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History. The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, (Oxford, Portdland: 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.[16] Although scholars have examined the Jewish involvement in the revolutions of 1848 and the effects of these events from a number of perspectives,[17] most studies refer to Mohr's *Tsaytung* only incidentally and as yet no full examination of it has been conducted.[18] 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.

[16] December 29, 1848 (I: 35, p. 264).

[17] 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.

[18] 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.[19] 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,[20] 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."[21]

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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[19] 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.*

[20] "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.

[21] 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.[22] 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.[23] 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[24] and in the early nineteenth century the Galician towns of Brody, Tarnopol and Lemberg

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

[23] 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.

[24] 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.[25] 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.[26]

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. [27] John-Paul Himka describes these societies as "antagonistic," noting that their economic interests often collided.[28] The Jews' close association with the Polish nobles, whose estates they leased or managed, often resulted in tensions between Jews and the Ruthenian peasants,[29] 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.[30]

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[25] *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.

[26] 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).

[27] Himka, "Dimensions of a Triangle."

[28] *Ibid*, 27 ff.

[29] 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."

[30] 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.[31] 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.[32]

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*.[33]

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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[31] Chomiak, *The Spring of a Nation*, 53.

[32] 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).

[33] 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),[34] 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*,[35] concludes with a strongly optimistic message:

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[34] 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-bikhl*; *Konstitutsiyon. Dos kayzrlikhe 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 (*Kanfos 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.

[35] 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.[36]

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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[36] 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)[37]

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.[38] 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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[37] 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.

[38] 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.[39] 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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[39] 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 Ułaszkowce, 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),[40] and the increased prominence of Jews in public life, in politics and in the newly formed units of the National Guard often aroused animosity.[41] 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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[40] 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.

[41] 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. [42] 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).[43] On 23 April 1848, young men attacked the Jewish street in Pressburg (modern day Bratislava)[44] 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."[45] (*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3).

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[42] Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848,* 52-53.

[43] *Ibid.,* 48. See also Wangermann, "1848 and Jewish Emancipation in the Habsburg Empire," 73 on the violent backlash in Hungary.

[44] See Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848,* 49-52.

[45] All Biblical quotes are from *Tanakh,* (JPS: 1917).

In issue 3b (May 22, 1848, p. 24 [original mistakenly numbered 22])[46] 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,[47] 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.[48]

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[46] 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.

[47] 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.

[48] 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). [49] 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. [50] Mohr's advice encompasses a number of different avenues of change.

1. Finding Alternative sources of income
As Jacob Katz comments,

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[49] Toury also describes these events, see *Ibid.*, 55.
[50] *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.[51]

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[52] (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 *ḥerem*, ban, that was imposed in Zhuravno (Żurawno) on speculators

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[51] 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.

[52] 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. [53] 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*:[54]

> 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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[53] 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 *ḥerem* 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."

[54] *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 forgigangin 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."[55] 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,[56] 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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[55] *Ibid.*, 15-16. He also adds that Jewish women should not make Christians envious by flaunting their jewelry.
[56] [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...[57]

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 wroth 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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[57] *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:11, 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.[58]

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?"[59] 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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[58] On opposition to emancipation of the Jews see Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 102 ff.

[59] 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?"[60]

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.[61]

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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[60] 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.

[61] *Kos yeshuos*, 15.

Christians were responsible for it." Likewise, Mohr reports rumors in Vienna accusing the Jews of advocating republican ideas:[62] "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..."[63] 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 wroth 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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[62] On the anti-Jewish sentiment in Vienna and Austria see Toury, *Turmoil and Confusion in the Revolution of 1848*, 42-44.

[63] 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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Rebecca Wolpe has an MA and PhD in Yiddish literature from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Today she is a research fellow in the group "From Kraków to Lemberg," based at Tel Aviv University, which is supported by Jewish Galicia and Bukovina (JGB), a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation, preservation and educational dissemination of the history and rich cultural heritage of the Jewish communities of Galicia and Bukovina.

Rebecca Wolpe

How to quote this article:

The Buffer Zone: Ottoman *Maskilim* and their Austro-Hungarian Counterparts – A Case Study*

by *Tamir Karkason*

Abstract

This paper explores the relations between Ottoman maskilim *(Jewish enlighteners) and their Austro-Hungarian counterparts during the second half of the nineteenth century. I shall illustrate this issue by means of a case study of the relationship between an Ottoman* maskil, *Judah Nehama of Salonica, and his Austro-Hungarian counterpart, Chaim David Lippe, who was born in Galicia but lived in Vienna.*

Based on the conceptualizations proposed by scholars such as Matthias Lehmann and Yaron Tsur, the paper analyzes the emergence, during the second half of the nineteenth century, of a "pan-Jewish" maskilic space. *This space facilitated the strengthening of the "integrative pole" over the "reluctant pole" in the relations between Jews from "East" and "West," thereby also weakening the "internal Orientalism" that was prevalent in the Jewish world of the time. Thus the paper highlights the contribution of the* Haskalah *movement to consolidating the affinities between Jews from across the Diaspora during this period.*

The Ottoman *Haskalah*

The Salonican *Haskalah* and Judah Nehama

Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin

Nehama and His Viennese Booksellers

Chaim David Lippe: A Galician-Viennese *Wissenschaft* Scholar

Commercial and Personal Relationship

Lippe and the Distribution of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*

Concluding Discussion: Pan-Jewish *Haskalah* between "East" and "West"

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The Ottoman *Haskalah*

Starting with the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876) and continuing into the Hamidian (1876-1908) eras, a circle of around hundred *maskilim* (Jewish enlighteners) was active in the Ottoman Empire. These *maskilim* operated in the urban Jewish centers in the Southern Balkans (mainly Salonica and Edirne) and Western Anatolia (Istanbul and Izmir), as well as in the province of Jerusalem. The Ottoman *maskilim* wrote primarily in two languages: Hebrew, the lingua franca of the *Haskalah* movement, and Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), the Ottoman-Sephardi vernacular. Some also wrote in other languages, particularly French and Ottoman Turkish. Three *maskilim* were particularly prominent: Barukh Mitrani (1847-1919), who wandered around Europe and Asia; Abraham Danon (1857-1925), who was active in Edirne, Istanbul, and Paris; and Judah Nehama of Salonica (1825-1899), the subject of the present paper.[1]

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[1] Esther Benbassa, Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry. A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community: 14th-20th Centuries*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 106-109; Julia Phillips Cohen, Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Sephardic Scholarly Worlds: Toward a Novel Geography of Modern Jewish History," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100/3 (2010): 349-384; Tamir Karkason, *The Ottoman-Jewish Haskalah (Enlightenment), 1839-1908: A Transformation in the Jewish Communities of Western Anatolia, the Southern Balkans and Jerusalem* (PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2018) [Hebrew]. In this article, I seek to explore in greater depth an issue that I discussed briefly in my doctoral thesis. The introduction to this article is based on the general findings of my study, which are presented here in a preliminary manner. I have completed a book manuscript in Hebrew based on my doctoral thesis and am also working on an expanded English edition.

The *Haskalah* movement, which emerged in Berlin in the second half of the eighteenth century, owes its fundamental ideas to Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786). According to the definition of Shmuel Feiner, the *Maskilim* joined together

> in a unique Jewish enterprise of modernity and considered themselves to be responsible for an unprecedented historic shift […] – the rehabilitation of traditional society in light of the values of enlightenment, distribution of broad general knowledge of the world of nature and human being, [and] the education of the young generations for their integration in life as productive citizens enjoying access to European society and culture […].[2]

The Berlin *Haskalah*, which reached its peak during the last three decades of the eighteenth century, spread first all across German-speaking areas, including Austria. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the centers of *Haskalah* moved to Galicia (in the Southeastern periphery of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the Russian Empire, and Italy.[3]

In the early nineteenth century, shortly after the *maskilic* centers shifted to Eastern Europe, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement (literally "Science of Judaism"; hereinafter – "the *Wissenschaft*") appeared in Germany. The movement saw itself as founding modern research, based on the systemic use of "scientific" critical tools, into Judaism and the Jews. The *Wissenschaft* led to a significant expansion in the scope of research in these fields. The movement sought to understand texts in the context of their time and place and insisted on its right to "free exploration"; as such, it "posed a fundamental challenge to the assumptions, interests, and methods of traditional Jewish learning."[4]

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[2] Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment in the 19th Century*, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2010), 29-30 [Hebrew].

[3] Shmuel Feiner, "Towards a Historical Definition of the *Haskalah*," in *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, eds. Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin, (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 184-219.

[4] Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, (Hanover: Published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England, 1994), 177-183; 183.

This movement soon migrated into the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires (particularly the capital Vienna and Galicia), where its exponents wrote mainly in Hebrew. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, at least, the borders between exponents of the *Wissenschaft* and moderate *maskilim* in Eastern Europe were somewhat vague. Accordingly, for the sake of simplicity, I will also use the term [5] *maskilim* to refer to European exponents of the *Wissenschaft* who maintained contacts with Ottoman *maskilim*.

Actual documentation of the Ottoman *Haskalah* and its products only exists from 1850,[6] but we can determine that the movement began at least a decade earlier, around the beginning of the *Tanzimat* period[7] – an era of legal and administrative reforms that commenced in 1839 and lasted until the proclamation of the First Constitutional Era in the empire in 1876. This period was characterized by various attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire and to secure its territorial integrity and prosperity both against internal nationalist movements and external imperial encroachment. The use of new transportation and communication means gradually expanded during this period, strengthening connections with Western Europe and facilitating the rapid spread of ideas, knowledge, and lifestyles.[8] Such developments had a crucial influence on Jewish education; a major catalyst of change in this respect was the opening in 1865 of the first school of the Parisian

[5] Chanan Gafni, *"The Mishna's Plain Sense." A Study of Modern Talmudic Scholarship*, (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2011) [Hebrew].

[6] See the first letters of Judah Nehama from that year: Judah ben Jacob Nehama, *Mikhtevei dodim mi-yayin: Eize mikhtavim shonim asher hehlafti bein ohavay ve-doday* [Letters More Delightful than Wine], vol. 1, (Salonica: n.p., 1893), 2-6 [Hebrew].

[7] Evidence exists showing that *Haskalah* literature was being consumed in Salonica and Edirne in the 1840s. This decade also saw the establishment in Izmir of the first Ladino-language newspaper. In the post-Ottoman Balkans, a Jewish national thinker born in the Ottoman Empire, R. Judah Alkalai (1798-1878) was active. Regarding the early harbingers of the Ottoman *Haskalah*, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 102-105.

[8] M. Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-108; Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans. Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*, (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9-18.

philanthropic organization *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in the Ottoman Empire; dozens more would soon follow.[9]

The Ottoman *Haskalah* reached its peak under the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909).[10] During that period, a growing number of citizens of the empire, including many non-Muslims, began to identify themselves as "Ottomans."[11] By the late 1890s, the scope of activity of the Ottoman *Haskalah* decreased, paralleling various developments in the *maskilic* "Republic of Letters" in Eastern and Central Europe.[12] Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most *maskilim* born in the 1820s and 1830s had passed away, while others, born between the 1830s and 1850s, were unwell and increasingly withdrew from public life. After the Young Turk revolution of July 1908, the "Ottoman *Haskalah*" ceased to exist and was replaced by other movements, such as Ottomanism and Zionism.[13]

The Ottoman *maskilim* constituted a significant sub-group within the Ottoman Jewish intelligentsia (the group of cultural agents).[14] This intelligentsia included two other sub-groups: the "Westernizers," who promoted "Westernization" as a lifestyle in the spirit of the *Alliance*;[15] and the senior rabbinical elite of the period, which controlled the Chief Rabbinate in Istanbul and its provincial branches, and whose members published over two hundred rabbinical books over the course of

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[9] Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[10] Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, "Sephardic Scholarly Worlds," 352-359; Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 105-112.

[11] Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*.

[12] Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 298-335.

[13] Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, "Sephardic Scholarly Worlds," 359-367; Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 112-115.

[14] Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, "Sephardic Scholarly Worlds."

[15] Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern. The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), esp. 55-76, 123-149.

the nineteenth century.[16]   Both these circles had their main centers in Istanbul and Izmir, and to a lesser extent in Salonica.[17]

A demographic profile of *maskilim* in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire shows three common attributes: (1) financial security, which often took the form of membership of the upper-middle class, a status that guaranteed the individuals the leisure time needed to acquire a basic *maskilic* education and to participate in *maskilic* activities; (2) a Jewish religious education, ensuring literacy in the principles of the Jewish faith and in the Hebrew language; (3) and, as a clear derivative of the above, the use of two languages: Hebrew and Ladino.

In the Ottoman Empire, several hundred Jews at least met all these conditions. My study on the Ottoman *maskilim* focused on individuals who met all three basic criteria, as well as at least one of three additional factors: (1) contact with other *maskilim* in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, including correspondence, mutual references in the press, and personal meetings; (2) publication of articles in *maskilic* journalistic and literary platforms; (3) and participation in *maskilic* activities, such as associations and educational institutions. I was eventually able to locate around one hundred *maskilim* who meet all these parameters, although it is almost certain that additional names will be located in the future.[18]

The *Haskalah* acquired a distinct character in the Ottoman Empire, where neither the Hasidic movement nor Reform Judaism gained a foothold. The Ottoman *maskilim* developed their ideological and social character against the background of their identity as one of several non-Muslim communities within the Muslim empire – an empire that underwent profound changes in almost every respect over

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[16]   Leah Borenstein-Makovetsky, "Rabbinic Scholarship. The Development of Halakhah in Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, 1750-1900," *Jewish Law Association Studies* 9 (1997): 9-18; Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[17] The *maskilic* sub-group was not completely separate in ideological terms, and certainly not in social terms, from the other sub-groups that comprised the Ottoman Jewish intelligentsia. See Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 44-53.

[18] *Ibid.*, 66-79. For short biographies of the Ottoman *maskilim*, see *Ibid.*, 274-288.

the course of the nineteenth century. In this empire, as Dina Danon recently proposed:

> The Ottoman interpretation of the *Sharia* law, coupled with the profound ethnic and religious diversity characterizing the Empire itself, cultivated a social fabric that was not only tolerant of difference but predicated upon it [...]. For the long arc of Ottoman history, the legitimacy of Jewish difference was simple not in question.[19]

The Ottoman *maskilim* aspired to strengthen the bond between the Jews and the Ottoman state and to enhance their identification with it,[20] an approach that intensified during the Hamidian era.[21] They were acutely aware of the developments among the other non-Muslim communities, particularly the Greek-Orthodox and Armenians, and in some cases even engaged in contacts with these groups: from Bulgarian printers in Salonica in the 1860s[22] to Greek enlighteners in the early 1890s.[23]

Thus the *maskilim* served as agents of modernization in their communities, alongside others. They sought to advance Jewish education by founding modern schools in the various communities and/or by introducing innovative pedagogical methods.[24] This was combined with a strict insistence on study of the Bible and the Babylonian Talmud, on the teaching and inculcation of Hebrew, and, in many instances, on the study of Ottoman Turkish, the language of the state, along with useful foreign languages, particularly French.[25] The *maskilim* also advocated

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[19] Dina Danon, *The Jews of Ottoman Izmir: A Modern History*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 6. See also *Ibid.*, 22-23.

[20] See, for instance, Barukh Mitrani, "Masa turkiya ha-eiropit" [The Burden of Ottoman Turkey], *Ha-magid*, April 17, 1867, 124 [Hebrew]; Abraham Rosanes [Ha-abir], "Masaot ha-abir" [The Knight's Travels], *Ha-magid*, July 1, 1868, 204; Ben Zion [Barukh Mitrani], "Prazot yerushalayim" [Jerusalem's Phrases], *Havatzelet*, December 7, 1883, 46 [Hebrew].

[21] Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*, 19-102.

[22] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1-118, 165.

[23] Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, "Sephardic Scholarly Worlds," 374-375. I intend to include a chapter on this subject in my English book.

[24] Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 64-65, 106-108, 129, 142-148.

[25] *Ibid.*, 69-73.

action to enhance productivity, including vocational education and the adoption of modern scientific and technological innovations.[26]

In both ideological and social terms, the Ottoman *Haskalah* can be compared to the moderate and religious *Haskalah* that was prevalent during the nineteenth century – particularly in Galicia under Habsburg rule, but also in the Russian Empire, Italy, North Africa, and elsewhere. The moderate *maskilim* were profoundly attached to Jewish tradition, and in most cases they observed the Jewish commandments (*mitzvot*).[27] The leitmotif in their thought was a search for what was referred to at the time as "the Golden Mean" [*derekh ha-emtzayi*] between the members of the rabbinical class who were unwilling to countenance secular studies or learning of foreign languages and Hebrew grammar, on the one hand, and those who had undergone processes of secularization, eschewed the Hebrew language, and generally placed European culture above Jewish culture, on the other.[28]

The Salonican *Haskalah* and Judah Nehama

Approximately seventy percent of the identified Ottoman *maskilim* lived in the Ottoman Balkans; the port city of Salonica was the second-largest center of *maskilic* activities, after Edirne.[29] Salonica was the capital of the Ottoman province of Macedonia and served as an important economic and commercial center. In the 1890s, the Jewish population of the city was at least 50,000, accounting for around sixty percent of the total population. This phenomenon of a "Jewish city" had no parallel in Ottoman Jewry, and only a few similar instances can be quoted throughout the history of the Diaspora. In 1912, as the Balkan Wars loomed, Salonica had a Jewish population of at least 80,000, and Jews still

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[26] *Ibid.*, 211, 226, 298, 305.

[27] Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 150-230; Yosef Chetrit, "Hebrew National Modernity against French Modernity. The Hebrew *Haskalah* in North Africa at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Mikedem u-miyam* 3 (1990): 11-76 [Hebrew].

[28] See Tamir Karkason, "Between Two Poles: Barukh Mitrani, *Haskalah* and Nationalism," *Zutot*, (in press).

[29] Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 81-99.

constituted a majority in the city (this situation would change gradually over subsequent decades as the Jewish population fell, and was then devastated in the Holocaust). Alongside the Jews, Ottoman Salonica was also home to large Greek-Orthodox and Turkish-Muslim communities, as well as thousands of Sabbateans (*dönme*), Bulgarians, and foreign nationals.[30]

The unique demographic reality in Salonica in the final years of the Ottoman era, as a city with a Jewish majority that continued to close down on Sabbath at least until the early 1910s, enabled the Jews of the city to develop an intense Jewish consciousness and encouraged a proto-national form of Jewish solidarity.[31] There was no tendency toward separatism from the Ottoman Empire among the Jews of Salonica; rather, the reality in the city facilitated a perception of Sephardi communitarianism under the broad wings of the empire. Indeed, it was the tolerant Ottoman framework itself that permitted the well-established community in the city to enjoy a sense of being secure in its own home,[32] leading to the emergence of an unofficial "Jewish republic" under Muslim rule. Thus on Friday afternoon, "as the *muezzin* calls Muslim worshippers to prayer from the minaret, and ask the sun sets, the city readies itself for the Sabbath."[33]

Judah Ben Jacob Nehama was born in Salonica to a prosperous and respected family. His father Jacob served as an agent for English companies in the city.[34] Among other activities, the Nehama family transported merchandise (the precise nature of the products remains unknown) through the Austrian shipping

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[30] Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950,* (New York: A. Knopf, 2005), esp. 173-310; Orly C. Meron, *Jewish Entrepreneurship in Salonica, 1912-1940. An Ethnic Economy in Transition,* (Brighton - Portland - Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2011).

[31] For a picturesque description recorded by a German-Jewish traveler in 1911, see *Travel in Saloniki. A Translation of Chazkel Zvi Kloezel's Book "In Saloniki"*, ed. Judith Dishon, (Jerusalem: The Haberman Institute, 2017), 124-133 [Hebrew].

[32] Compare: Danon, *Izmir*, 6-7.

[33] Dishon, *Travel in Saloniki*, 126.

[34] The biographical details here are based on the article by David Benvenisti, together with findings from my studies. See David Benvenisti, "R. yehuda ya'akov nehama mevaser tkufat ha-haskalah be-saloniki" [R. Judah Ben Jacob Nehama, The Forerunner of the Epoch of the *Haskalah* in Salonica], in *Hagut ivrit be-artzot ha-Islam* [Hebrew Thought in Islamic Countries], ed. Menahem Zohori, (Jerusalem: Brit Ivrit Olamit, 1981), 144-164 [Hebrew].

company Lloyd, which engaged in trade throughout the Mediterranean Basin from its headquarters in Trieste, and represented the interests of the Hapsburg dynasty in the region.[35]

Nehama studied at the *Talmud Torah ha-Gadol* in the city, and was placed in the *Me'aynim* class, intended for students who were expected to work as teachers and rabbis in the future. Before 1850, he married Mazal Tov, the daughter of Jacob Modeano, an educated and wealthy member of the community of *francos* (the descendents of *Anusim* from the Western Sephardi Diaspora). While his father was alive, Nehama was employed by him, serving in a part-time capacity in the family business while at the same time trading in books and acting as a publisher. After his father's death in 1857, Nehama was put in charge of the family's commercial affairs, while continuing his previous activities. As we shall see below, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Nehama maintained extensive correspondences with fellow Jewish *maskilim*, *Wissenschaft* scholars, Christian clerics, and merchants, within the Ottoman Empire as well as beyond its borders, particularly in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
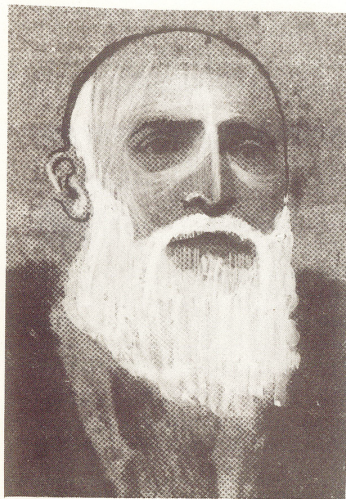

Fig. 1: A Portrait of Judah Nehama.
(with thanks to Salonika and Greece Jewry Heritage
Center, Petah Tikva)

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[35] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1-73. On the Lloyd company, see Yoav Arbel, "An Austrian Lloyd Seal from Jaffa," *Strata* 32 (2014): 109-118; 112-113; Mazower, *Salonica*, 211.

Nehama was very active in Jewish communal life in Salonica, serving during various periods as a member of the lay leadership of the community. He was also a member of various mutual help societies, particular the *Bikur Holim* society (which arranged visits for the sick). In the mid-1860s, he founded and directed the modern school *Kolejio de padre de familia* (College of the Father of the Family), about which very little is known. In 1862 or 1864, Nehama was one of the founders of the *Alliance* committee in Salonica. He engaged in lively correspondence with the senior officials in the organization ahead of the opening of its first school in the city, though this only opened a decade later. From the late 1880s, Nehama's health began to deteriorate and he gradually lost his vision. He retired from his commercial affairs and handed over responsibility to his sons. In 1889 and 1890, he traveled to Central Europe to seek medical advice, taking the opportunity to meet some of his European correspondents in Vienna and Budapest.

Nehama authored and published some 15 works in diverse fields: geography, history, and biography; sermons and speeches; religious treatises; and textbooks. Notable examples include *El Lunar* ([The Moonlight] Salonica 1864-1865), a scientific-literary journal in Ladino;[36] and *Istorya Universal* (or *Istorya Universala* [A Universal History]) a Ladino non-fiction book on history and geography, adapted from an English original.[37]

Nehama was the most important of the 15 *maskilim* born in Salonica before 1860.[38] His peers in the circle of *maskilim* in the city included, among others, Sa'adi

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[36] On *El Lunar*, see Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture. Press, Belles Letters, and Theatre in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 79-81; Karkason, *Haskalah*, 62, 210-211, 219, 298, 303, 304.

[37] [Judah Nehama], *Istorya universal* [A Universal History], (Salonico: [Darzilovitis], 5621 [1861]); [idem], *Istorya universala* [!], (Salonico: n.p., ca. 1878); Id., *Istorya universala*, (Salonico: n.p., 6542 [1882]). All in Ladino. For the original book, see Peter Parley, *Tales about Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1827-1830). I intend to devote a separate study to this work and its adaptation by Nehama, who may have received the English original from his friend Peter Crosby (1828-1904), a Scottish missionary who lived in Salonica from 1857 until his death.

[38] Regarding later *maskilim* who were active in Salonica, see Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 189-238.

Bezalel Halevy (1819-1903), the founding editor of the popular Ladino newspaper *La Epoka* ([The Epoch] Salonica 1875-1911); David Pifano (1851-1924), who later served as the chief rabbi of Sofia (1899-1921) and thereafter of all Bulgarian Jewry; and David Abraham de Boton. In a written comment from 1890, the Ladino journalist David Fresco (1853-1933) of Istanbul mentioned that all three "read almost all the modern literature in Hebrew."[39] Nehama passed away on January 30, 1899.[40]

Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin

From ancient times, letters served as a means of communication between Jews from different regions. When the correspondents did not share a mother tongue, Jews usually wrote in Hebrew, as the lingua franca of the Jewish world. The *Haskalah* movement was comprised of dispersed individuals, and from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, an extensive Republic of Letters emerged, written primarily in Hebrew. Letters became a central platform of expression in *maskilic* culture, and "it was the *maskilic* communication network that created the new public sphere of the community of *maskilim*."[41] In the nineteenth century, letters written by some of the *maskilim* and *Wissenschaft* scholars were published, such as correspondence by Samuel David Luzzatto (Shadal, 1800-1865) and Judah Leib Gordon (Yalag, 1830-1892).[42]

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[39] [David Fresco], "Notas de viaje" [Travel Notes], *El Tiempo*, August 21, 1890, 499 [Ladino]. Sa'adi Halevy left a comprehensive autobiography in two different versions. See *Jewish Voice from Ottoman Salonica. The Ladino Memoir of Sa'adi Besalel a-Levi*, eds. Aron Rodrigue and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, translated by Isaac Jerusalmi, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011; Dov Cohen, "The Memoirs of Sa'adi HaLevy-Eskenazi of Salonika (1819-1903)," *Pe'amim* 159-160 (2019): 47-90 [Hebrew].

[40] On Nehama's funeral, see David Fresco, "Nekrolojia. El rabenu yehudah nehama de salonika" [An Obituary. Rabbi Judah Nehama of Salonica], *El Tiempo*, February 2, 1899, 392-393 [Ladino].

[41] Tova Cohen, Shmuel Feiner, *Voice of a Hebrew Maiden. Women's Writings in the 19th Century Haskalah Movement*, (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2006), 48 [Hebrew].

[42] For an introduction to the *maskilic* letter, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 162-163, and the references there.

Like some of his predecessors, Nehama also chose to preserve and print some of his letters. Many of these correspondences, dated between 1850 and 1895, were included in his two-volume printed collection of letters, entitled *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*. The book's Hebrew title translates literally as "Letters More Delightful than Wine,"[43] but also contains a hidden pun, as *Yayin* [wine] is a Hebrew acronym for the author's initials. The first volume was published in Salonica on Nehama's own initiative in 1893.[44] The second, only partially edited, was published four decades after his death, in 1939, by Barukh David Bezes, a prominent printer in Salonica at the time, and Hananel Haim Hassid (d. 1939), a Hebrew teacher and later principal at the *Talmud Torah ha-Gadol* in the city.[45]

In publishing his letters in 1893, after decades of extensive intellectual activity, Nehama apparently hoped to display his *maskilic* enterprise to his counterparts – mostly European Jews. Publishing the edited letters might have helped him accrue great symbolic capital[46] as an Ottoman Jew strongly connected to the European *Haskalah*. We may assume that his visit to Vienna during the summer of 1889, where he held personal meetings with Austro-Hungarian *maskilim*, also had an influence on his decision to publish his letters.[47]

No later than the beginning of 1890, Nehama began collecting letters from several of his correspondents, those whose content he remembered but of which he had since disposed.[48] The main trigger for the publication was an unexpected disaster: the fire that struck Salonica on September 4, 1890,[49] which destroyed much of

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[43] For this translation, see Feiner, "Towards a Historical Definition," 213 n102.

[44] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, vol. 1.

[45] Judah ben Jacob Nehama, *Mikhtevei dodim mi-yayin: Hibbur kolel haqirot al inyanim shonim*, vol. 2 (Salonica: Bezes, n.d. [1939]). The year of volume's appearance is according to: Joseph Nehama, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, (Thessalonique: Communauté israélite de Thessalonique, 1978), vols. VI-VII, 689. On the publication of the second volume, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 170-173.

[46] Pierre Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," in Id., *Outline of Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 171-183.

[47] On this visit, see Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:16, 147.

[48] See, for instance, *Ibid.*, 1:29.

[49] On the fire of 1890, see Rena Molho, "Jewish Working-Class Neighborhoods Established in Salonica Following the 1890 and 1917 Fires," in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond. The Jews*

Nehama's rich library, including numerous original manuscripts and printed works from Ottoman Jewry and elsewhere, as well as hundreds of religious and *maskilic* works from around the Jewish world. The fire also destroyed bound collections of Hebrew-language newspapers.[50]

The flames also consumed additional historiographic and religious texts written by Nehama himself and most of the collection of his letters. The disaster motivated Nehama to print his remaining letters: in his introduction to the first volume, he described the great sadness that filled him at the thought of his lost letters: "Oh! When I lie down and recall those pleasant moments I enjoyed, upon receiving my excellent letters [...], in my heart I am disturbed. And I grieve for this loss, which could never be returned. I asked myself, therefore, why me?"[51] According to this testimony, the sudden catastrophe led Nehama to gather his surviving letters and print them: "Realizing this in bitter sadness, my heart spoke to me [...]. Let me rise and bring to the printing press those saved from the fire [...] so that they may remain for days to come [...]. I made up my mind and I did so."[52]

The publication of the first volume of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* occurred during the early years of the *Haskalah* movement and its Ottoman branch. However, it also coincided with a period that Aron Rodrigue, referring to parallel enterprises in contemporary Salonican Jewish community, has described as "a time when the new economic and social power of this community was at its height, and its newly acquired place in the sun had to be defended." Such enterprises, Rodrigue suggested, were "a sign both to confidence and of anxiety about what the future would bring."[53] In Nehama's mind, this anxiety for the future was probably coupled with his own personal anxiety for the possible destruction of the invaluable material salvaged from the fire, and the grief over what had already been lost.

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in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808-1945, vol. 2, ed. Mina Rozen, (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2002), 173-185, 193-194.

[50] The inventory of this rich library can be reconstituted by analyzing all the titles mentioned in both volumes of Nehama's writings, an avenue I plan to explore in the future.

[51] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1: III.

[52] *Ibid.,* IV.

[53] Aron Rodrigue, "Salonica in Jewish Historiography," *Jewish History,* 28 (2014): 447.

Almost half of Nehama's exchanges of correspondence were with peers living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire: 140 letters out of 315. Almost ninety percent of the letters from Austria-Hungary were sent from Vienna, Galicia, and the Italian provinces, regions that formed the heartland of the *Haskalah* and the *Wissenschaft* in the empire, and were home to a large Jewish population that had not yet undergone intensive secularization and was gradually exposed to the ideas of the *Haskalah*.[54]

The Jews of Austria-Hungary thus constituted Nehama's principle reference group. This important finding, which has gone unnoticed in previous scholarship, strongly testifies to the direct and intensive links between the Ottoman *Haskalah* and the Austro-Hungarian *maskilic* circles.[55]

Nehama and His Viennese Booksellers

Most of the letters sent to Nehama from the Austro-Hungarian Empire came from its capital Vienna: 18% of the letters in Nehama's collection. Vienna was one of the most prominent cultural and literary centers in Europe during the nineteenth century. In 1890, after a major expansion of the city, Vienna had a population of approximately one and a half million, around one-tenth of whom were Jews. Most of the Jews of Vienna were immigrants from throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire who came to the city in search of a better future for their children.[56] A detailed discussion of Vienna in this period is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worth mentioning the book by Carl E. Schorske, which offers an extensive analysis of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, highlighting its role as the city that saw the emergence of urban modernism, the *Judenstil* (Youth Style) art school of Gustav

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[54] Moshe Pelli, "From *Ha-Me'asef* (1783-1811) to *Bikurei ha'Itim* (1820-1831)," *Qesher* 34 (2006): 61-77; 62-64 [Hebrew].

[55] For a detailed and comparative discussion of this aspect, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 154-204, and particularly the works I am currently preparing.

[56] Anton G. Rabinbach, "The Migration of Galician Jews to Vienna, 1857-1880," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1975): 44-54; 48.

Klimt (1862-1918), and psychoanalysis as founded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).[57] A flourishing and tempestuous city, Vienna was also one of the main centers of the *Wissenschaft*, a status that was formalized in 1893 with the founding of the Rabbinical Seminary, which operated until the *Anschluss* of 1938.[58]

Vienna's relative proximity to the Ottoman Empire (some 1,500 kilometers from Istanbul, and less than 1,200 kilometers from Salonica) made the city an influential cultural and trade center for Ottoman Jews, including in the fields of print and literature. By the early eighteenth century, at the latest, Vienna was home to an established Sephardi community, some of whose members held Ottoman citizenship.[59] Ladino was the mother tongue of some of the Sephardi Jews of Vienna, and from the 1860s newspapers were printed in the city in this language.[60] The members of the Sephardi community were often known as "Turkish Jews"[61] and maintained extensive ties with the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire.[62] Rather surprisingly, almost all Nehama's Viennese correspondents were Ashkenazi Jews, and there are relatively few mentions of members of the Sephardi community in his letters.[63]

Dozens of letters preserved in *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* shed light on Vienna's crucial role in the distribution of *maskilic* literature to Salonica, mostly through Nehama's connections with various members of the Viennese book trade

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[57] Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1979). For a more recent anthology, see *Vienna 1900: Blooming on the Edge of an Abyss*, eds. Sharon Gordon and Rina Peled, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2019) [Hebrew].

[58] Peter Landesmann, "Die Geschichte der Ausbildung von Rabbinern in Wien bis zur Gründung der Israelitisch-Theologischen Lehranstalt (ITLA)," in *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900-1938. Akkulturation, Antisemitismus, Zionismus*, eds. Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger, (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 143-153.

[59] On the Sephardi Community of Vienna, see Martin Stechauner, *The Sephardic Jews of Vienna: A Jewish Minority Crossing Borders*, PhD Thesis, (University of Vienna, 2019).

[60] *Ibid.*, 49-54.

[61] *Ibid.*, 199, 259-260.

[62] Yaron Ben-Naeh and Yochai Ben-Gdaliah, "The Support of the Bursa Community by the Community in Vienna in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Pe'amim* 139-140 (2014): 309-326 [Hebrew].

[63] For some exceptions involving technical activities rather than intellectual relations, see Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:22, 66, 149, 179; 2:24, 27, 107, 130, 156.

network. In the early 1850s, Nehama began working with the Viennese bookseller Yisrael Knöpflmacher (1794-1857). The latter served as an agent for the important non-Jewish Viennese printer Anton Edler von Schmid (1765-1855), who since the first decade of the nineteenth century had also catered to a substantial Jewish audience.[64] Knöpflmacher used to acquire Hebrew non-fiction books for Nehama, dispatching them to him a few at a time. He also acted as mediator between Nehama and *Wissenschaft* scholars who were able to procure *maskilic* books for him, such as S.D. Luzzatto.[65] By the mid-1880s, Nehama also worked with various other Jewish booksellers in Vienna, among them Solomon Netter,[66] Jacob Kam,[67] Jacob Picker,[68] and the Winter brothers.[69] Evidently, the connections between Nehama and these booksellers were incidental and irregular, and he does not appear to have formed a close business relationship, let alone a personal one, with any of them.

Chaim David Lippe: A Galician-Viennese *Wissenschaft* Scholar

In stark contrast to Nehama's limited and intermittent contact with other colleagues in Vienna, his relationship with the Austro-Hungarian Jewish bookseller and bibliographer Chaim David Lippe (1823-1900) was warm and close, and including both personal and commercial dimensions.

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[64] Moshe Pelli, *Haskalah and Beyond. The Reception of the Hebrew Enlightenment and the Emergence of Haskalah Judaism*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 63-65; Id., "Ha-mevi le-beit ha-dfus ha-nochri Anton Schmid. Madpis sifrei kodesh ve-sifrei haskalah," in *The Library of the Haskalah. The Creation of a Modern Republic of Letters in Jewish Society in the German-Speaking Sphere*, eds. Shmuel Feiner, Zohar Shavit, Natalie Naimark-Goldberg and Tal Kogman, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2015), 130-151 [Hebrew].

[65] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:16, 24, 27, 30, 35, 38, 39-40, 69, 72, 85, 146. Business disputes between Nehama and Knöpflmacher had already occurred in 1852 (*Ibid.*, 40), but the two were in contact until the Knöpflmacher passed away.

[66] *Ibid.*, 146.

[67] *Ibid.*, 149.

[68] *Ibid.*, 2:27-9.

[69] *Ibid.*, 23.

Lippe was born in the Galician city of Stanisławów (today Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine), and at the age of 26 moved to Tschernowitz, the capital of Bukovina, an Austro-Hungarian province (now also in Ukraine), where he served as teacher and cantor. He later moved to Epries (today Prešov, Slovakia), where he authored a booklet on social tensions in the communities of Hungary and the surrounding regions.[70] In 1873, he settled in the capital Vienna, where he made his career as a bookseller, devoting himself to his bibliographic occupation.[71]

From 1874 onward, Lippe published a series of comprehensive bibliographical studies of Hebrew literature, focusing in particular on works from the *Haskalah* and *Wissenschaft*. Of particular note are his bilingual German-Hebrew bibliographies entitled *Bibliographisches Lexicon / Asaf ha-mazkir*, published in Vienna between 1879 and 1899.[72] These works are still used by scholars in Jewish studies, as evidenced by the fact that one of the volumes was reprinted in 2003.[73] On the title page of final biography in the series, *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash* (Vienna 1899), Lippe explained that the work was "a complete list [...] of all the books, essays, and journals published" over the preceding two decades, "both those written in the pure Holy Tongue and those written in the living languages [the vernaculars], in the tongue of each people." He added that his list "included the names of [...] rabbis, preachers (*darshanim*) [...], sages (*hachamim*), authors and publishers [...]."[74]

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[70] Chaim David Lippe, *Sechs Briefe zur Beleuchtung der religiösen Wirren in Ober-Ungarn, von einem Beamten der israelitischen Kultus-Gemeinde zu Epries*, (Kaschau: C. Werfer, 1866).

[71] Gershom Bader, *Medina ve-hakhamea. Toldot kol ha-hakhamim veha-sofrim she-arisatam amdah be-galizia* [A Country and its Sages], (New York: n.p., 1934), 131-132.

[72] Chaim David Lippe, *Ha-meassef. Bibliographische Monatsschrift zur Orientierung für den jüdischen Buchhandel*, (Wien: Ch. D. Lippe, 1874); Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir [...]: Ch. D. Lippe's Bibliographisches Lexicon der gesammten jüdischen Literatur der Gegenwart und Adress-Anzeiger*, (Wien: Verlag des Herausgebers, 1879-1889); Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash [...]: Ch. D. Lippe's bibliographisches Lexicon der gesammten jüdischen und theologisch-rabbinischen Literatur der Gegenwart*, (Wien: Ch. D. Lippe, 1899).

[73] Id., *Bibliographisches Lexicon der gesammten jüdischen Literatur der Gegenwart und Adress-Anzeiger*, (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 2003).

[74] Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash*, title page.

The correspondence between Nehama and Lippe, which I shall analyze below, shows that by the early 1880s Lippe already maintained a broad and well-developed network of connections with *maskilim* and *Wissenschaft* scholars from Central and Eastern Europe. Lippe's contacts in his capacity as a bookseller clearly provided the basis for his bibliographic activities. Thus, for example, Lippe was in contact with the editorial boards of various Hebrew-language newspapers and recruited many of his colleagues as subscribers for these publications, including Nehama.[75] In 1890, when the later sought to clarify "what happened to him [the editor of *Ha-magid*], do you know?" it was Lippe that he addressed his question.[76] Meanwhile, in his bibliographical work, Lippe documented the same journals.[77]

Lippe's attitude to the Jewish national movement is unknown, but it is worth noting that his younger brother was Dr. Karpel Lippe (1830-1915), a physician and one of the leaders of the *Hovevei Zion* movement in Romania from the 1880s. He also served as president of the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.[78]

Commercial and Personal Relationship

We do not know how the contact between Nehama and Lippe was initiated. It is highly likely that Nehama only heard about Lippe after the latter moved to Vienna in 1873, since it was in this city that his career as a bookseller blossomed, while the capital was also a key focus of Nehama's activities in the book trade. Nehama's correspondence with Lippe began no later than 1882, as is clear from a letter sent by the editor of the Hebrew journal *Ha-Magid*, David Gordon (1831-1886), to Nehama, in December 1882.[79] The relationship between the two is documented

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[75] See, for instance: Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:31, 186.

[76] *Ibid.*, 32.

[77] For the list of Hebrew journals documented by Lippe, see Lippe, *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash*, 457-460. Regarding journals in other languages (German, Judeo-Arabic [*Arabische Zeitung*], English, French, Italian, Romanian, Ladino [*Spanische Zeitungen*], Dutch, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, and Yiddish), see *Ibid.*, 460-475.

[78] Bader, *Medina ve-hakhamea*, 132-3; Michael Reimer, "'The good Dr. Lippe' and Herzl in Basel, 1897. A Translation and Analysis of the Zionist Congress's Opening Speech," *Journal of Israeli History* 34/1 (2015): 1-21.

[79] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:185.

in 22 surviving letters written between 1888 and 1895.[80] These represent just a portion of the letters the two exchanged, and we may assume that the correspondence between Nehama and Lippe was indeed more intensive than those Nehama maintained with other booksellers in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe.

The correspondence between Nehama and Lippe reveals the regular pattern of their commercial relations: Nehama would order various Hebrew books from Lippe, usually *maskilic* volumes. Residing in Vienna and with relatively easy access to books from the various *maskilic* centers, Lippe would in turn collect orders from Nehama, for whom he maintained an ongoing credit line. Each time the bill reached a certain sum, Lippe would inform Nehama of the sum due, and the latter would pay him. For example, Nehama wrote to Lippe on November 1891: "I hereby send you today directly from the post office the total of 11.64 frs [Gulden (*florin*)] that you say in your account I owe you."[81] Nehama was able to receive any payments due directly from the post office.

At least until the mid-1880s, we may assume Lippe would only send Nehama books after receiving payment. After a while, however, as the trust between the two men grew, it is probable the Lippe sometimes sent books to Nehama on an advance basis. This is hinted at in a testimony from November 1889: Nehama thanks Lippe for three book deliveries he provided in the previous months, "with all the books for which my soul desired and yearned, that you have sent me and I have received on time." We can infer from this document that Lippe had sent his counterpart the books without any advance payment requirement, which testifies to the great trust between them; thus, at the end of a long letter filled with personal details, Nehama writes: "Send me your bill that I owe you, and I shall pay."[82]

Yet the relationship between the Nehama and Lippe evidently evolved far beyond mere commercial transactions. In nearly every letter the two men exchanged warm

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[80] *Ibid.*, 15, 16, 31-32, 34-35, 39, 44-45, 45, 46 (two letters), 49, 61-62, 97-98, 104, 104-105, 125-126, 146-147, 170, 171 (two letters), 185-186, 187, 190.
[81] *Ibid.*, 105.
[82] *Ibid.*, 125-126.

greetings of a kind that rarely appear in Nehama's other business correspondence. Their tone was usually amicable and intimate; from time to time, they updated each other regarding personal medical information[83] and even exchanged gifts. For instance, Nehama sent Lippe a gold-plated silver goblet as a gift for his seventieth birthday (1893).[84]

Even before the two men met in person, their correspondence discloses a strong desire do so, a plan that failed to materialize due to mundane preoccupations and the geographical distance. For example, in the fall of 1888 Lippe heard that Nehama was planning to travel to Vienna for medical purposes, and wrote to him: "I was so pleased to hear that you intend to come to Vienna [...], and I shall be most fortunate to see your countenance (*demutkha*) – the image (*temunat*) of a great and wise man!"[85]

Nehama eventually visited Vienna in the summer of 1889, spending some two months in the city. His visit was primarily intended for medical treatments, but he also seized the opportunity to advance his scholarly interests. During his stay in the capital, he would often meet his old correspondent Lippe, and this visit intensified the close relationship between the two, as common in many relationships that began through correspondence (or, in later generations, through the telephone or digital means), before moving to direct personal contact. Some of the meetings even included their families.[86]

This personal friendship naturally had an effect on the commercial relations between the two. Lippe provided Nehama, a devoted customer of his bookshop who had also become a personal friend, with various special services it is reasonable he did not offer most of his clients. For instance, Lippe would notify Nehama in detail of the publication status of titles he desired, such as periodicals that had not yet been published.[87] Lippe also offered Nehama, from time to time, special offers and discounts. In January 1893, for example, Lippe offered Nehama an excellent

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[83] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 61, 92-95.

[84] *Ibid.*, 62.

[85] *Ibid.*, 15.

[86] *Ibid.*, 16, 126, 146-147. See also *Ibid.*, 15, 45.

[87] *Ibid.*, 16.

opportunity to purchase a volume of a prestigious Hebrew book he had acquired from a Viennese priest for 20 gulden (*florin*) – less than one-quarter of its original price of 90 gulden.[88] It is worth adding that even 20 gulden was a considerable amount (a monthly salary for a Galician agrarian worker in the peak season),[89] and along with similar amounts mentioned in many of Nehama's letters, this is evidence of the latter's financial abilities.[90]

Lippe and the Distribution of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*

Another prominent aspect of the personal relations between Nehama and Lippe is the latter's remarkable involvement in distributing the first volume of Nehama's collected letters in Viennese intellectual Jewish circles, and in particular among several key figures in the *Wissenschaft* circles of the time.

When Nehama published the first volume of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* in the spring of 1893, Lippe became its central distributor. Soon after the book was printed in Salonica, Nehama sent a copy to Lippe. The latter was delighted to receive it, and on May 26, 1893, he asked Nehama: "Perhaps you would like to send me several additional copies to distribute here [Vienna] among scholars [...] for a price you will set for your book [...]."[91]

Three days later, Nehama replied: "I hereby send you five additional copies of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*. Present them to whomever you wish, free of charge [...]. But let me know the names of the scholars to whom you forwarded [the books] on my behalf." Nehama's only specific request was that Lippe "offer [a

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[88] *Ibid.*, 44.

[89] Between 1857 and 1892, the gulden was divided into 100 kreuzer. According to a Jewish memoir from the period, in the high season, "the spring, the wages rose suddenly [from 12 to 16.5 kreuzer a day] and peaked during the harvest, when even the women were paid 60 kreuzer a day." See Joseph Margoshes, *A World Apart: A Memoir of Jewish Life in Nineteenth Century Galicia*, translated by Rebecca Margolis and Ira Robinson, (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 70.

[90] Compare: Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 197-199.

[91] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:46.

copy] to our friend Dr. Solomon Rubin."[92] Rubin (1823-1910), a key figure in the Galician *Haskalah*, lived in Vienna at the time. Lippe replied promptly, on June 5, 1893, sending the requested details of those who were given copies of the book. The recipients included some of the most prominent scholars of the *Wissenschaft* in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, all contemporaries of Nehama and Lippe:

> I have received his gift together with five copies of his precious book – and I did what I had to do, and presented [the book] to R. Dr. [Moritz] Güdemann, [Adolf] Jellinek, Rubin, and the Vienna community library (*beit eked sefarim*). One copy remains with me, and I shall offer this to R. Isaac Hirsch Weiss [...] – and the book that you have sent me as a gift I shall give the scholar [...] Meir Ish Shalom. And you will be so kind as to send me another book [for myself] [...].[93]

This excerpt presents a fascinating pantheon of *Wissenschaft* scholars who received Nehama's book. Güdemann (1835-1918) was serving at the time as the chief rabbi of Vienna; Jellinek (1821-1893) was a prominent scholar of the Midrash and Kabbalah; and Weiss (1815-1908) and Ish Shalom (Friedman, 1831-1908) were shortly after appointed senior teachers at the newly-opened Rabbinical Seminary in the city.[94]

On June 11, 1893, Nehama sent Lippe two additional copies, "to replace the one [copy] you asked for."[95] Thus, Lippe began circulating Nehama's book among Viennese *Wissenschaft* scholars he selected by himself, reflecting his conviction that the work contained "*Torah* words of the highest importance."[96]

Nehama had already made a name for himself among many of these Jewish *maskilim* four years earlier, during his visit to Vienna. On November 1889, after returning to Salonica, Lippe wrote to him that "quite many here (Vienna) who are

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[92] *Ibid.*, 171.

[93] *Ibid.*, 46.

[94] For bibliographical information about these figures, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 169 nos1002-1005 and the references there.

[95] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:187.

[96] *Ibid.*, 46. In original: "*dvarim ha-omdim be-ruma shel tora.*"

outstanding people, lovers of the *Torah*, are eager to know how you have been." Lippe continued:

> [...] Judah! *Now* your brethren thank you. Your name is known in Judah (*noda bi-yehuda*) for honor and glory [...], and here [Vienna] all lovers of their people and [its] *Torah* (*hovevei amam ve-tora*) honor and revere your name. All as one praise, glorify, and exalt the name of the wise and generous Rabbi Judah Nehama, the one and only (*ha-yahid veha-meyuhad*) among our Sephardi brethren! *The one* who will not discriminate between his Sephardi and Ashkenazi brethren – all beloved [...] to his pure soul![97]

Ismar Schorch has claimed that from the mid-eighteenth century, a "myth of Sephardi supremacy" existed among the Jews of Central Europe. He suggests that "as construed by Ashkenazic intellectuals, the Sephardic image facilitated a religious posture marked by cultural openness, philosophic thinking, and an appreciation for the aesthetic."[98] Schorch, followed by John M. Efron, have identified such a "myth of supremacy" in the synagogue architecture, liturgy, literature, and scholarship of Central European Jewry.[99] Lippe's lauding of Nehama as the "one and only among our Sephardi brethren" contains an element of this perception of "Sephardi supremacy," but it also contains no less an element, and perhaps more, of patronizing condescension.

Nehama was regarded as a "one and only" among the Sephardi as a peer and an intellectual, despite the fact that in reality he was just one of a number of Ottoman *maskilim* of similar status, some of whom were well known to Lippe himself.[100] This paternalistic attitude echoed the manner in which certain *Wissenschaft* scholars, such as Yom-Tov (Leopold) Zunz (1794-1886) of Berlin, S.D. Luzzatto of Padua, and Solomon Judah Rapoport (Shir, 1790-1867) of Prague, regarded

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[97] *Ibid.*, 147 (emphasis in the original).
[98] Schorsch, *From Text to Context*, 71.
[99] *Ibid.*, 71-92; John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*, (Princeton - Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).
[100] See Lippe, *Asaf ha-mazkir*, 324-325 (on Barukh Mitrani), 586 (on Abraham Danon).

Nehama and his fellow Ottoman *maskilim* as suppliers of knowledge rather than equal partners in discourse.[101] By way of example, in August 1851, S.D. Luzzatto wrote to Nehama:

> For now the ancient books, and particularly manuscripts, are dispersed across the Jewish Diaspora. And in the lands of the Orient, in particular, there can be no doubt that some precious treasures are lying in darkness, unwanted and unclaimed. My pious hope is that considerable benefit could come to me and to all those who love the study of Jewish history if you would provide me with a list of valuable and ancient books held by yourself and your friends.[102]

Then, Luzzatto assumed that in the "lands of the Orient" there was no comparable demand for these "precious treasures," and asked Nehama to prepare a list of ancient manuscripts and books held by him and his Ottoman Jewish peers so that he could use them in his research.

To return to Lippe's claim that Nehama was unique "among our Sephardi brethren," despite its Orientalist overtone, Lippe's comment embodies the perspective that the Sephardim were indeed "brethren" for the Ashkenazi Jews: members of the same religious and ethnic group, rather than complete strangers. It may be possible to detect in the reference to "Sephardi brethren" a manifestation of a "banal" Jewish proto-nationalism – to borrow the concept of "banal nationalism" – that binds together the Galician *maskil* now living in Vienna and his "Sephardi brethren," manifesting their affinity in an almost trivial manner.[103]

Be this as it may, the respect the distinguished European peers had for Nehama surely motivated him to continue distributing copies of the first volume of his letters. Furthermore, Nehama executed the entire distribution enterprise, which incurred substantial printing and postage costs, at his own expense. He refused to

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[101] I cannot expand on this aspect here. See Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 192-204.

[102] Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:9.

[103] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London - Thousand Oaks - New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), 11.

accept any payment for the book's distribution, although the amounts he spent on it must have been significant even for an affluent man like him.[104] This was his way to establish his legacy in the realm of *Haskalah* and to reinforce his position and self-esteem.

In the months following the book's publication, Nehama continued to send copies to Lippe, who distributed them in Vienna, and possibly also in other Austro-Hungarian cities. In the summer of 1893, Lippe wrote to Nehama: "Many and good among the wise men of our people (*hakhamei amenu*) who heard the glory of your book [...] yearn to purchase it for the price you will determine, and I have received letters from different Rabbis about your book." Therefore, Lippe asked him: "And so I shall dare to ask you to send me some editions for sale, for the price you will determine." [105] Nehama instantly sent additional copies, without requesting any payment. In August 1893, Lippe notified him that "I have received his [Nehama's] gift."[106] Nehama continued sending additional copies to Lippe, and in October 1893, Lippe thanked him for another delivery: "I have received your books and I shall give them to the scholars (*hachamim*)."[107]

Initiated by Nehama, and managed by Lippe, the distribution of the book aroused great interest among the Austro-Hungarian *Wissenschaft* scholars and *maskilim* in Vienna and beyond. Nehama received many notes of thanks from scholars who obtained the book through Lippe,[108] and reviews of the book were published in German *Wissenschaft* journals. In November 1893, an unknown author – probably Lippe – sent to Nehama "a translation (*ha'ataka*) [into Hebrew] of an article in German" published in a periodical whose name is not specified.[109] A few months later, Eliezer Berr, the editor of a German periodical published in Körmend in western Hungary, asked Nehama to publish an article about Ottoman Jewry, including Nehama's biography, though it is unclear what became

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[104] This is implicit from several remarks in Nehama's letters. See Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:49, 170, 171.

[105] *Ibid.*, 170.

[106] *Ibid.*, 171.

[107] *Ibid.*, 49.

[108] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 60, 64.

[109] *Ibid.*, 66-68. I was unable to locate the original article.

of this initiative.[110] It seems reasonable to assert that the publication of such articles about Nehama's book would have been inconceivable without Lippe's widespread network.

The wide-ranging relationship between Nehama and Lippe continued until the final years of their lives; the last documented evidence comes from March 1895.[111] Both men passed away around the turn of the century.

Concluding Discussion: Pan-Jewish *Haskalah* between "East" and "West"

I shall now seek to show that the relationship between Nehama and Lippe reflects the emergence of a "pan-Jewish" *maskilic* space. This space was not free of the hallmarks of the social and demographic dominance of the "West" over the "East" within the "Republic of *Maskilim*," but it certainly permitted the forging of strong friendships between the two sides of the Diaspora, bonds that strengthen internal Jewish solidarity.

This closing discussion draws on the theoretical foundation offered by postcolonial theory, which became highly influential since Edward Said's well-known book, *Orientalism*, was published in 1978. Said claimed that the stereotypical and patronizing attitude of what he termed the "West" toward what he termed the "East" was shaped in modern times under the influence of Western imperialism.[112] Over the past four decades, and particularly since the mid-1990s, enormous efforts have been made to apply postcolonial theory to the fields of modern Jewish history and Israel Studies. Suffice it here to mention the canonical

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[110] *Ibid.*, 62. Berr stated that the name of the journal he edited was *Ha-dvora* ("the bee," i.e. *Die Biene* in German). I was unable to locate a newspaper of this name in Körmend, and I am indebted to Prof. Jonatan Meir and Prof. Guy Miron for their beneficial advice on this matter.
[111] *Ibid.*, 97-98.
[112] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

works by Ella Shohat [113] and Yehuda Shenhav, [114] as well as two influential anthologies, the first from some 15 years ago and the second published in 2017. [115]

Said saw Orientalism as "a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient," [116] that appeared primarily in the presence of a colonial reality whereby a Western power adopted the policy of a country seeking to extend or retain its authority over other, non-Western, people or territories. However, as Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar have stressed, "Orientalism is an instance of colonial discourse, but it is also more than that. This holds true for Orientalism in general, and certainly for Orientalism where it concerns the Jews." [117] Efron stated that "rather than a straightforward means of asserting colonial, corporeal, and cultural authority, Orientalism could be a profound expression of one's own cultural anxiety and insecurity, one that could provoke deep-seated fears of inferiority." [118]

Accordingly, postcolonial theory may also be used in a situation that did not include direct colonial control, particularly when it is applied to "internal Orientalism" in the Jewish world itself, directed by "Western" Jews toward their "Eastern" coreligionists. [119]

I shall now turn to applying the conceptualizations of two scholars who over the past two decades have examined the question of the affinity between "Western" and "Eastern" Jews. The analysis here of the relationship between Nehama and

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[113] Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema. East/West and the Politics of Representation*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

[114] Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews. A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[115] *Orientalism and the Jews*, eds. Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, (Hanover - London: Published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England, 2005); *Colonialism and the Jews*, eds. Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff, and Maud S. Mandel, (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017).

[116] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

[117] Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, "Orientalism and the Jews: An Introduction," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, xiii.

[118] John M. Efron, "Orientalism and the Historical Gaze," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, 80.

[119] Davidson Kalmar and Penslar, "Orientalism and the Jews," xxiii-xxiii.

Lippe both draws on and reinforces these conceptualizations. Matthias Lehmann saw the institutionalization of the position of the emissary (*shadar*) in the eighteenth century as a practice of pan-Judaism: "both the idea and the experience of an interconnected Jewish diaspora community that transcended regional or ethnic divisions between, for example, Sephardic and Ashkenazi or Ottoman and European Jewries."[120] Lehmann suggested that in the eighteenth century the institution of the emissary established a "contact zone" facilitating contacts between Jews from geographically removed areas and cultures. As a result, these Jews "experienced themselves synchronically as part of a broader, pan-Jewish community […]."[121]

In some of his studies on the Jews of the Muslim countries in modern times, Yaron Tsur has argued that the relations of "internal Orientalism" between "Eastern" and "Western" Jews that developed from the late eighteenth century can be mapped along an axis with two poles. The first, which he terms the "integrative" pole, adhered to an ideal of absolute equality in the spirit of the values of inter-Jewish and national solidarity. At the opposite end of the axis, the "reluctant" pole, inegalitarian and exclusivist, was influenced by colonialist values and Orientalist discourse. Between these two poles a range of relations was possible; in some cases the attitude of "Western" Jews toward their "Eastern" counterparts might lean toward the "integrative" pole, while in others their attitude could be closer to the "reluctant" pole.[122]

The relationship between the Salonican *maskil* Nehama and the Viennese Lippe in many ways challenge a postcolonial dichotomy of "Orient" and "Occident," and appear to offer a model of a close bond possible within the pan-Jewish *maskilic*

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[120] Matthias B. Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land. The Sephardic Diaspora and the Practice of Pan-Judaism in the Eighteenth Century*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 2.
[121] *Ibid.*
[122] Yaron Tsur, "The Israeli Historiography and the Ethnic Problem," in *Making Israel*, ed. Benny Morris, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 231-233, 257-260; Id., "Otobiografiya miktzoyit, keilu" [A Professional Autobiography, Be like], in *Lines of Our Character: Exploring Israel, Writing about Ourselves*, eds. Avner Ben-Amos and Ofer Schiff, (Sde Boker: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute 2020), 560-561 [Hebrew]. See also Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 24.

space. Unlike Nehama's relations with other *maskilim* (such as S.D. Luzzatto, as mentioned above), the relationship examined here seems to lie closer to the "integrative" pole. How could such a relationship have developed in this manner? I will attempt to offer some hypothetical answers to this question.

Firstly, to a great extent, "money answereth all things" (Ecclesiastes 10:19). Nehama's elevated financial position, as well as the fact he was a loyal and valuable customer for Lippe's book trade for over a decade, may have made it harder for the latter to regard him as an allegedly "inferior", "Oriental" Jew.

Secondly, Nehama enjoyed a prominent status in his own community; he was privileged and affluent, and his marriage reinforced his social standing. While in objective terms his *maskilic* activities reached a limited circle in the local domain, he showed a strong sense of self-worth that may have been colored by the Sephardi concept of honor and dignity (in Ladino: *el onor*).

Like the Muslim-majority society around it, Ottoman-Jewish society confined expressions of admiration and respect to certain restricted groups and attached supreme importance to a person's family pedigree, a factor that in many cases also dictated socioeconomic status.[123] Nehama was a wealthy man from a respected family, and he married a woman from the Modiano dynasty of *francos* who enjoyed an even higher status. This allowed him to develop a self-image as a member of the Jewish elite of Salonica.

Lippe was also a respected man, though unlike Nehama he did not belong to the elite of his community and appears to have been significantly less wealthy. Moreover, despite living in an "Occidental" capital, Lippe was, like most Viennese Jews of his time, not originally from Vienna; born in peripheral Galicia, he came to the capital only after first settling in various provincial towns. In this sense, Lippe, despite his commercial success and established status as *maskil*, bibliographer, and bookseller, was somewhat overshadowed by the splendor of his

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[123] On the importance of honor among Ottoman Jewry, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, "'*El onor no se merka kon paras:*' Honor and its Meaning among Ottoman Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 11/2 (2005): 19-50.

new place of residence and its wealthy inhabitants. Although the Austro-Hungarian Jews were perceived as "Occidentals" relative to their Ottoman coreligionists, and although Nehama always remained on the fringes of the Jewish "*maskilic* republic," his pedigree, wealth, and elevated sense of self-worth may have enabled him to feel himself to be the equal, at least to an extent, of his "Occidental" counterpart, a Galician Jew who had become a Viennese.

Aziza Khazzoom has argued that the history of the Jewish Diaspora from the inception of the Jewish Enlightenment should be regarded as a series of processes of "orientalization" – that is, periods in which one group uses the East/West dichotomy in order to depict another group as inferior. Khazzoom mapped a "chain of orientalizations," according to which the approach of the majority Protestant society in Germany influenced German-Jewish attitudes toward the Jews of Central Europe; this approach influenced the attitude of those Jews toward their coreligionists from Eastern Europe (*Ostjuden*), and this in turn influenced attitudes among the latter group toward Jews from the Muslim countries. Khazzoom did not discuss the Ladino-speaking Sephardim of the Ottoman Balkans, but I would suggest that for some Austro-Hungarian *maskilim*, such as Lippe, these Sephardim occupied an intermediate space between Eastern European Jews and the Jews in the other Muslim countries, who were perceived as more "Oriental."[124] If this suggestion is accurate, it would seem that in the late nineteenth century, the borders between "East" and "West" were not as stringent as has sometimes been assumed, particularly in the case of the Ottoman Balkans.

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[124] Aziza Khazzoom, "The Great Chain of Orientalism. Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel," *American Sociological Review* 68/4 (2003): 481-510. See also idem, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel. Or, how the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). I thank Prof. Aziza Khazzoom for the insights she kindly shared with me. My tentative suggestion here invites further research based on additional case studies. For now, I would mention the following statement by Rodrigue: "the Judeo-Spanish culture area, more open to European influences, was more predisposed to the work of the *Alliance* than the Arab world." See Aron Rodrigue, *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Transition. The Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860-1939*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 49. Naturally, this does not detract from the importance of the scholarly worlds, including *maskilic* circles, in the other Muslim countries.

Thirdly, as two *maskilim* who did not share a mother tongue, Lippe and Nehama wrote to each other in Hebrew, the lingua franca of the *Haskalah*. Their proficiency in Hebrew in its various registers, and the fact that it was the mother tongue of neither, placed the two men on level ground. Had the correspondence between the two taken place, for example, in German, the Austro-Hungarian official language (which Lippe spoke well, but of which Nehama had at best limited knowledge), the situation might have been different.

The case of Nehama and Lippe clearly demonstrates the instrumental part language played in connecting a wide network of men of letters from all across the Jewish world, especially from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Indeed, in a comment from 1885, Nehama himself argued that the Hebrew language was the foundation for solidarity among Jews from different regions: "And what is the central bolt (*ha-bariah ha-tichon*) that links together this people […] across all corners of Earth? This is only the *Torah*, which is written in Hebrew. It encourages them [the Jews] and unites them to this day."[125] Thus, the correspondence of Nehama and Lippe shows how, in the modern Jewish distinction between "East" and "West," Hebrew helped stress the "integrative" pole over the "reluctant" one, to return to Yaron Tsur's proposed axis.

Fourthly and lastly: when examining the close friendship between two individuals, we cannot underestimate the importance of the rather prosaic factor of personal "chemistry." The personal connection between Nehama and Lippe had made them close friends – well beyond trade partners, or a bookseller and his client. Not every friendship can cross every border, and if the two were, for instance, a Frenchman and a Sub-Saharan African in the colonial era, the case would probably have been different. Nevertheless, it appears that the borders that separated Nehama and Lippe were certainly crossable. The two men's strong friendship, which apparently ended only as they approached death, certainly managed to cross these borders.

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[125] [Judah Nehama], *Zekher Tzadik* [Memory of a Pious Man], (Salonica: n.p., 1885), 85 [Hebrew].

This paper has offered the first analysis of the extensive contacts between the *maskilim* of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, based on a case study of the relationship between Judah Nehama of Salonica and Chaim David Lippe of Vienna. Drawing on previous studies, the discussion here helps to cast new light on the character of the *Haskalah* in the nineteenth century as a global movement that included Jews from across the Diaspora.

Based on the conceptualizations proposed by various scholars concerning the phenomenon of Orientalism in the Jewish context, and in particular on the studies of Lehmann and Tsur, the paper shows that by the second half of the nineteenth century a pan-Jewish *maskilic* space had emerged. In certain instances, at least, this space facilitated the strengthening of the "integrative pole" over the "reluctant pole" in the relations between Jews from "East" and "West," thereby also weakening the "internal Orientalism" that was prevalent in the Jewish world of the time. Thus the paper highlights the contribution of the *Haskalah* movement to consolidating the affinities between Jews from across the Diaspora during this period.

In the modern era, a form of intellectual "buffer zone" was created between the Jews of the Ottoman Balkans and their coreligionists in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, just as a military buffer zone separated the two sides. However, the analysis of the relationship between Nehama and Lippe suggests that in some cases, the similarities between the two were greater than their differences, enabling them to maintain a firm friendship over two decades. Even if Lippe regarded Nehama as "the one and only among our Sephardi brethren," the written word and the Republic of Letters of the *Haskalah* were ultimately able to draw together distant brothers.

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Tamir Karkason is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Jewish History, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and a teaching fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He completed the manuscript of his first book, on the Ottoman Jewish enlightenment in the nineteenth century. Karkason was the *Olamot* center visiting fellow at the Borns Jewish Studies Program, Indiana University (20182019).

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by *Luca Arcari*

In debating the terms at the core of this book—*Ioudaismos, Iudaismus, Yahadut, Yiddishkayt, Judentum, Judaism*—Boyarin (henceforth B.) starts, among others, from Annette Yoshiko Reeds' statements about our Academic categories for describing past (but also contemporary!) "othernesses:"

> Today, "Apocalypticism" and "Mysticism" are no longer taken for granted as neutral or universal categories of historical and comparative analysis. As with many other rubrics once common in Religious Studies – such as "Gnosticism," "esotericism," "paganism," "magic," "superstition," and even/especially "religion" – both categories were subject to reassessment, destabilization, and deconstruction, especially since the 1970s.[1]

In this same vein, in their recent book entitled *Imagine No Religion*, Carlin Barton and B. himself have argued philologically what many scholars had already partially showed, i.e. that there is no term or even set of terms in Greek or Latin that is able to describe what we today mean with the modern word "[Jewish] religion."[2]

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[1] Annette Yoshiko Reeds, "Categorization, Collection, and the Construction of Continuity. 1 Enoch and 3 Enoch in and Beyond 'Apocalypticism' and 'Mysticism'," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 29/3 (2017): 268-311; 268.

[2] *Imagine No Religion. How Modern Categories Hide Ancient Realities*, eds. Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2016). Concerning the terminological/epistemological problem evoked by Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin (as well as by Brent Nongbri, among others, in his *Before Religion. A History of a Modern Concept* [New Haven: University of Yale Press, 2013]), Anders Klostergaad Petersen has recently remarked: "I sympathize with the overall argument and the injunction to abandon the term religion in translations of (any) ancient texts. That said, however, I also have some severe queries with the argument. To be crude, one could argue that the authors are carrying coal to Newcastle. For a scholar in the study of religion it is an old truth that there can be no term 'religion' in the pre-modern world. This is the basic argument of Max Weber in his seminal *Zwischenbetrachtung* (see Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1963, 536-573]), and one may add the central contention of Durkheim as well. A century ago Weber emphasized how the invention of "religion" presupposed the detraction of the phenomenon from the wider cultural sphere—something dated by Weber to modernity. One could draw a distinction in the ancient world between the sacred and the profane, the latter designating diminishing degrees

With this new book, B. continues his explorations in the same direction. His main aim, here, is at demonstrating "that 'Judaism' as a name that Jews use is just such an 'ism' of modern invention" (p. 11). In B.'s eyes, if Judaism is a modern term, it implies that using it to refer to the past is the product of an anachronistic bias in which ancient Jewish forms of life and our modern conception of religion are found to be improperly associated.

As clearly emerges from the last statement, a key concept in B.'s deconstructionist journey is that of "form(s) of life":

> In investigating a language, we are investigating a form of life. A form of life that has no word that means "religion" cannot have religion in it nor can there be a 'Judaism' without a word that refers to it (p. 25).

In the first part of the book, B. develops further Steve Mason's positions against the meaningful usage of the term "Judaism" in antiquity.[3] More precisely, B. emphasizes that there is no "Judaism" as the name of a "religion" in antiquity. Discussing Jonathan Z. Smith's assertion that "religion is a product of the scholar's study,"[4] B. maintains, for example, that for their modern cultural formation, historians have constructed separate realms called "religion" and "politics;" polarizations of this kind—B. states—basically emerge as inadequate to look into the complex forms of life that are attributable to ancient and medieval Jewish organizations and descriptions concerning a particular world.

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of sacredness (*pro-fanum*) but never something categorically secular. I find it striking that this central contention of emerging sociology a century ago has neither been taken into consideration by Barton and Boyarin nor by Nongbri. Ultimately, I claim that their argument affirms Weber's and Durkheim's view, but from the perspective of early sociology it is pouring new wine into old wineskins" (Anders Klostergaard Petersen, in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, June 14, 2017, https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2017/2017.06.14 (*l.a.* June 8, 2020). I want to emphasize, here, that in dealing with the cultural universes of Judaism, it is important to abandon Christian-modern evaluations of the concept of religion, going further academic debates about the proper category definition of religion (which always remains a semantic "maneuver" of re-definition carried out on a western term). B.'s deconstructive *gesture* is particularly important because it makes patently clear that Judaism was often interpreted in light of Christian and/or modern theological/teleological hegemonic evaluations. Let us be aware of the historic implications of this interpretive operation in the field of Jewish studies, also taking into account that B. is an American Orthodox Jew.

[3] See especially Steve Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism. Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38/4-5 (2007): 457-512.

[4] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion. Essays in the Study of Religion*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17.

In discussing the famous passages in 2 Maccabees where the Greek term *Ioudaismos* firstly appears (see 2:21; 8:1; 14:38), B. maintains that if in the same text (see 4:13) the presence of *Hellenismos* functions as "acting like a Greek and being loyal to the Greek cause," *Ioudaismos* would be then seen "as a natural back-formed opposite to indicate acting loyally to the Jewish way of life and polity" (p. 43). B. vigorously states that *Ioudaismos* "means exactly what it ought to—namely, vied with one another in the activity, the doing of acts of dedication to the ways of the Judeans and partisanship for their cause against their oppressors, the 'barbarians'" (pp. 44-5). What substantially emerges in the text of 2 Maccabees, is a discursive Greek-centred reinvention of "Judaism" according to which there is not "the slightest shred of evidence for 'religion' and 'politics' as separate spheres in ancient Judaea" (p. 48).

B.'s interpretation of 2 Maccabees seems to explain the usage of *Ioudaismos* in the Pauline epistles as well (cf. especially Gal 1:13-14; see also 1 Cor 1:20-24, 9:20; 23:31; etc.). When in Gal 1:13-14 Paul says formerly he was very advanced in *Ioudaismos*, he is surely not referring to an abstract category or an institution but the practicing of Jewish ways of loyalty to the traditional practices of Jews, the same forms of life described by his contemporary Josephus as "the ancestral [traditions] of the *Ioudaioi*" (*Jewish Antiquities*, 20.41 and passim). Moreover Paul, in spite of the discursive dimension that is implicit in his usage of words like *Hellenismos* and/or *Ioudaismos*, refers "to the doing (especially the zealous conduct) of a life committed to keeping the Mitzvot or commandments, this designated as 'Judaizing' in much the same way that writing Greek properly might be designated as 'Hellenizing'!" (p. 51).

However, the case of Josephus' writings appears even more indicative. The historian's preference for the term *nomos*, as a kind of keyword for identifying various Jewish forms of life (for example, see *Against Apion*, 2:145-147.291-294), shows "a way far more expansive than our notion of law would predict" (p. 58). For Josephus, *nomos* incorporates civil and criminal law, the organization of government, plus cultic practice including Temple and private observance, and also beliefs about YHWH; his assembling all of these elements thus demonstrate the insufficiency of an improper (*i.e.* modern) separation of such categories in describing a specific Jewish representation of the world.

B. states also that Josephus uses various lexical items to describe the Judean way of life, recognizing it as a whole systemic entity; yet Josephus avoids defining such a complex unity with the noun "Judaism." How does Josephus interpret, if indeed

he does, the Judean form of life? B. emphasizes that for our historian Judeans "do not have a unique way of referring to themselves that marks them off from all the other species of Peoples in the world as a genus unto themselves;" according to Josephus, Judeans have regarded themselves as one of the family of nations. More precisely, and following Mason's interpretation about this, B. recognizes that "there won't be any Judaism or any word for it in a Jewish language for many centuries" (p. 59).

In the following section of his book, B. analyses, among other questions, the term *yahadut* as we found it in some medieval sources; this seems at first glance an abstract noun roughly parallel with modern Judaism, but B.'s analysis stands, as always, like a corrosive antidote to similar automatisms. The results of B.'s terminological analysis suggest two sets of usages that sometimes overlap. In juridical contexts, *yahadut* alludes to the status of being a Jew, of being a member of Israel as a juridical entity. If the origins of this usage are not clear, it is attested fairly early in medieval rabbinic sources, first of all as the designation of the purpose of an immersion in the *mikva* (for example, see the very late Midrash Sekhel Tov, Rabbi Menahem ben Shlomo, 1138), or as the indication for the status of Jewry itself (so that Abram was Abraham's name in *goyut*, and Abraham in *yahadut*, as we read in the anthology of commentaries on the Torah from the Tosafists of twelfth- to fourteenth-century Rhineland and northern France). The second set of usages is found especially in homiletic Rabbinic contexts. There, *yahadut* is used generically to allude to a practiced commitment to worship YHWH and loyalty to the founding practices of the Jews, to the Torah; not, therefore, much different from the *Ioudaismos* that B. has explored in the preceding section of his book.[5] B. concludes that in none of the scoured texts "does *yahadut* ever refer to an abstraction on the order of the 'Jewish religion' or even 'Jewish culture' as it does today" (p. 101). If in the fifteenth century, B. continues to find significant uses of *yahadut* that follow and develop its earlier significance, in the beginnings of the early modern period he glimpses indications that other usages of the word are developing more or less clearly. An important role in such a terminological/conceptual shift, according to B., was presumably played by the quotation of what is almost surely a corruption in Rashi's (1040-1105) commentary

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[5] B. brings to mind Rashi's (1040-1105) commentary to Sanhedrin 74b, a slightly later commentator on the Talmud, the RI"D (1165-1240), the exegetical activity carried out by Rav Sherira Gaon (906-1006), where we find—among others—a seemingly clean expression like *torat hayahadut*, and the collection of Esther Rabba (esp. 7:11): see pp. 82-85.

to Sanhedrin 74b.[6] Concerning the last aspect, anyway, B. underlines that toward the end of the early modern period in Jewish culture appear "further indications that some traditionalist Jewish intellectuals are beginning to utilize the distinction religious/secular in a fashion not entirely unlike their Christian and Western European contemporaries" (pp. 101-102).

The last section of the book follows the story of the formation of the idea/word "Judaism" "née (Christian Latin) *Iudaismus* in the Ekklesia and its very belated entry into Jewish parlance, thus precipitating the existence of modern Judaism in all its variety" (p. 102). B. embraces the thesis that "Judaism" as an abstraction in antiquity is a "Christian term of art invented initially for purposes of the formation of Christian orthodoxy" (p. 105) and/or theology. Here the question of "religion" is paramount, and B. takes us back to his earlier essay "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/ 'Christianity'," published in 2003.[7] In this essay, and with some variances in his book, B. argues that the stable category of "religion" was invented by Christians to distinguish themselves from the various other ancient practices in their midst; basically, B. looks at religion as a Christian-discursive invention, and if Judaism, as we know it, is a religion, then Christianity proceeded to invent it through a very stratified and complex discursive process. It is important to stress here that such a discursive march was pursued also in the following periods, often by transposing and modifying theological discourses in the scientific considerations about religion(s); what Kocku von Stuckrad has labelled as the "scientification of religion"[8] has favored the process by which Jews

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[6] The context of this passage is that in which Jews are instructed by the Mishna that they must be willing to die as martyrs even for a "light *mitzva*." The Talmud glosses the "light *mitzva*" with the Aramaic term *ʿarqθa demesana*, concerning which Rashi comments: "the shoe lace, for if it is the way of the Gentiles to tie like so and of Israel to do it differently, for example if there is an aspect of *yahadut* in the matter, and it is the way of Israel to be modest, even this difference where there is no *mitzva* at all but just a customary practice, he ought to be martyred in front of other Israel" (engl. transl. by B., p. 82). B. recalls that this text is cited as such by several later commentators without further explication. "The text of Rashi, as it stands, however, is barely construable and I, very gingerly, suggest that the text of Rashi that has come down to us is corrupt and should read [...] 'an aspect of *yehirut*:' arrogance, pride, or showing of *in the alleged Gentile practice*. This fits the context perfectly as it is a direct contrast to the alleged 'modesty' of the Israelite practice. Without this emendation, moreover, the text makes no sense, leaving out the crucial point— namely, that the Gentile practice is 'show-offy', while Jews are allegedly modest" (pp. 82-83).

[7] Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity'," in *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003), 65–85.

[8] Kocku von Stuckrad, *The Scientification of Religion. An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800–2000*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

have appropriated a theological Christian invention as an instrument of self-definition.

In the last section of his book, B. starts from the presence of Judaism in the Theodosian Code, but, from this, he takes some steps farther back in history in order to show the discursive "roots" of that theological-legal iceberg we found in the late-antique *Codex*. B. analyses the usage of *Ioudaismos* in Ignatius of Antioch's epistles (2nd cent. CE), in Epiphanius' and Jerome's writings (4th-5th cent. CE), as well as in other Latin theologians of late-antique Christianity, going far beyond David Nirenberg's approach according to which "anti-Judaism" was an hermeneutical *gesture* carried out by Christian theologians as regards a kind of anti-version of themselves.[9] For B. there are no differences between "Judaism" and "anti-Judaism", as "Judaism" itself is an "anti" category. It stands always as the "wrong religion" that highlights a Christian worldview. B. follows such a posture not only in the obvious polemical contexts of the Middle Ages, but already in the discursive productions of the late-antique Church Fathers as well as in their relative Jewish "incorporations" according to the "Westernization" that is implicit in the cultural program of the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[10]

If we look at Clifford Geertz's operative definition of "religion," it clearly emerges that B.'s claims against modernizations and/or theologizations of Judaism stand as a kind of political/militant program against all undue retro-projections arising from *our* ways of seeing otherness. Geertz has clearly recalled scholars' attention on the opportunities offered by an open, well-balanced and contextual definition of religion: he defines religion interpretively as a cultural system of a society with a system of symbols that acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions of the general order of existence in which one discovers one's significance, imbuing these conceptions with an aura of factuality so the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.[11] This would be the very conclusion of the matter, had B. not proffered pointed connections between power and discourse, or also the stratified ways by which

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[9] David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013).

[10] On the key role assumed by the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the process of "Westernization" of Judaism, see *Wissenschaft des Judentums Beyond Tradition. Jewish Scholarship on the Sacred Texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Dorothea Salzer, Chanan Gafni and Hanan Harif, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

[11] Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in Id., *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, (repr. ed. London: Fontana Press, 1993), 87-125.

hegemonic discourses create "realities" under which discursive "objects" are somehow forced to undergo.[12]

B. tries to recognize and distinguish historical objects in order to illuminate our own predicaments. Through the investigation of the past, B. aims at understanding the present, or at showing "the different ways that human beings— and, paradoxically, especially those we see as our ancestors—have chosen to pursue their existence as humans" (p. 8). B. underlines that such an approach is not discrepant with Foucauldian practice, especially because he also looked for the radical otherness and the genealogies of modern formations. B.'s project is not to be formulated as even an attempt at an "objective" and true depiction of the other's form of life; indeed, in B.'s eyes, the very form of the questions "Does *Ioudaismos* mean 'the religion Judaism'?" or even "What does *Ioudaismos* mean?" is generated from the present. If some "natives" would consider this quite an uninteresting set of questions and continue to confirm the validity of their language and forms of life, the presentist vantage offered in B.'s book enables the "other" language to function as a "language game," one that enables us to

> envisage a world in which people's natural reactions are different in certain striking ways from ours [...], or in which people's powers of surveying things was greater or lesser than with us. Reflection on the language-games that might be played in such circumstances by such people helps us to

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[12] For Antonio Gramsci's definition of "(cultural) hegemony," see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 7-10. Summarizing Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Timothy Mitchell has underlined its dimension of "Non-violent form(s) of control exercised through the whole range of dominant cultural institutions and social practices, from schooling, museums, and political parties to religious practice, architectural forms, and the mass media" (Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society* 19 [1990]: 545-77). While Mitchell has highlighted mechanisms of hegemony, Daniel Miller has emphasized its "cosmological" dimension: hegemony often emerges as a normative and universal pattern entirely based on assumptions constructed (or invented) as traditional and, as a consequence, monolithic (see Daniel Miller, "The Limits of Dominance," in *Domination and Resistance*, eds. Daniel Miller, Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley, [London: Unwin Hyman, 1989], 63-79). Hegemony deliberately obliterates what is particular and contingent, assuming a specific "tradition" as the unique way in both perceiving the world and mapping the universe (and the place of men in it). "Tradition" separates inside from outside, normal from aberrant; its logic legitimizes claims about truth and authority. Pierre Bourdieu has named such an invisible logic *doxa*, "the sum total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry" (Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 168).

> shake the grip of the thought that our concepts are the only possible ones, or that they are uniquely correct.[13]

It is important to note that the reasoning behind these considerations underlies the significance of Ludwig Wittgenstein's contribution about "a change from a conception of meaning as representation to a view that looks to use as the crux of the matter" (p. 22). B.'s "theoretical" approach aims at avoiding the dogmatism that adheres to us when we do not realize that it is dogmatism; B. claims for an historiographical theory leading to *askesis*, a journey that helps us learn not to look at other languages with lenses entirely constructed on our own cultural milieu. Following Talal Asad's statements, B. reinforces the view according to which "the attribution of implicit meanings to an alien practice regardless of whether they are acknowledged by its agents is a characteristic form of theological exercise, with an ancient history;"[14] this means that the statement "Judaism exists" makes no ontological sense and only has meaning in a language in which the word "Judaism" (or an equivalent) exists. It would follow that any talk of "Judaism" in antiquity, or in the Middle Ages for that matter,

> is *eo ipso* an ideological intervention, an assertion of the timelessness of the Christian concept "Judaism," a Form in the Platonic sense that can exist without anyone knowing that it does. Since to "imagine a language means to imagine a form of life,"[15] a language that has no word "Judaism" has no Judaism as part of the form of life (p. 154).

If that of "Judaism" is a discursive invention—more specifically, a Christian invention, it follows that it is involved in a complex network of various collateral communicative acts. What I mean is that every discursive creation is not isolated, but lives and interacts with other components that support it. This clearly emerges from an early Christian text that is not covered by B.'s analysis.

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[13] *Wittgenstein. Understanding and Meaning. Part I, Essays*, eds. G. P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, (Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations 1; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 61. B. considers history as that which we strive to write ourselves out of, looking for the differences, which doesn't necessarily imply ruptures. B. adds also that the search for difference has to be predicated on sameness as well; in doing so, B. finds Anna Wierzbicka, *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words. English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*, (Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22-23 very useful on the necessity for extensive analytical work to decide what is the same and what different.

[14] Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," in *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 161.

[15] This is a quotation from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, § 19.

Countering actions depicted as expressions of a particular Jewish form of life, the author of the Revelation of John (at the end of the 1ˢᵗ cent. CE) provides *his* answer: it is not possible to believe in Jesus and, at the same time, to implement forms of cultic mixture. In this discursive framework, I explain also John's attacks against forms of competing cultic leaderships; among these, the refusal of meats sacrificed to idols (Rev 2:6.14—15.20) and the polemics against female forms of visionary authority (2:20—23), appear both expressions of a corruption of what the seer of Patmos considers as the "true" cultic practices. The so-called Balaamites do not see feeding on meat sacrificed to the idols as a problem, and this tolerance pushes the seer of Patmos to accuse them of prostitution (2:14). The prophetess Jezebel also seems to support a similar tendency (2:20) and she is accused of "fornication" (with the same association that we find in 2:14). Balaamites are considered close to Nicolaites (2:25), and here we have a further reference to the *ekklēsia* of Ephesus (2:6) for its hatred towards the "works of Nicolaites, which I also despise." In this framework, the stigmatization against those who "say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (2:9; 3:9), emerges as an explicit reference to those who claim their Jewish origin despite their refusal of the faith in Jesus as it is proclaimed by John. As a whole, the author of Revelation claims for himself a "conservative" cultic identity—or a cultic identity actually "re-invented" as conservative—, that is contrary to any form of dialogue with surrounding hegemonic cultic backgrounds; but such an explicit refusal does not immediately mean that the seer is not sensitive as regards a "Jewish" self-definition as an instrument of orientation in a particular world; it remains over the discursive polemical attacks, but somehow it justifies and informs them.[16]

A very similar case, although on a different discursive plane, is that of Ignatius of Antioch, as clearly emerges especially from B.'s reconstruction. Writing of Ignatius' letters, B. suggests that

> *Ioudaismos* no longer means observance of the law as it did in Paul but a broader sense of Jewish 'doings' including verbal ones. In other words, for him (*i.e.* Ignatius) *Christianismos* and *Ioudaismos* are two *doxas*, two

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[16] I have analyzed the Revelation of John according to such a view in other essays: see Luca Arcari, *"Una donna avvolta nel sole" (Apoc 12,1). Le raffigurazioni femminili nell'Apocalisse di Giovanni alla luce della letteratura apocalittica giudaica*, (Padova: EMP, 2008), 237-79; see also Id., "'This Must be the Place (or Not?).' The Seven Letters of Revelation (Rev 2-3) and the Honoray Market of Urban Spaces in First-Century Asia Minor," in *Religion in the Roman Empire* 7/2 (2021), shortly to be published.

theological positions, a wrong one, and a right one, a wrong interpretation of the legacy of the prophets, and a right one (p. 155).

If, as B. does, it is correct to emphasize the fact that *Ioudaismos* in Ignatius does not seem to mean what it means in other Christian theologians of and before his time—namely the "false views and misguided practice," or "insisting especially on the ritual requirements of that system," as it emerges also, but not only, in the Revelation of John—, it follows that the discursive creation of "Judaism" is located at the core of a very stratified network of other correlated discursive components, at the base of which we find an implicit consideration concerning what "Judaism" really means in opposition to its "deviation," or to what is represented as a false definition of Judaism itself. In summary, we can say that since "Judaism" helps Christianity self-identify as the truth, and thus as "religion," it follows that Christianity simply becomes a "true Judaism," in opposition to what is discursively constructed as (a false) Judaism.

Ignatius is really emblematic about this. In his *Letter to the Philadelphians*, he emphasizes that *Christianismos* consists of "speaking of Jesus Christ," of the Gospel—still oral—while *Ioudaismos* is devoting oneself to the study of Scripture. Ignatius' opponents are those who say "Unless in the archives I find (it), in the gospel I do not believe (it)" (*Philadelphians* 8:2), so they are people for whom Gospel is *always* anchored in Scriptural (the Scripture they had, the Torah, and all textual materials related to it) exegesis. If they—in Ignatius' view—do not put Christ first, they are practicing *Ioudaismos*, or, in other terms, if they cannot ground their practices in Jewish Scriptures (the "archives") they do not believe in the Gospel that is orally announced. It is not totally clear if what Ignatius calls *Ioudaismos* refers to those who simply deny as a part of the Gospel itself anything of the history of Jesus that contradicts Scripture or isn't grounded in the Israel (*i.e.* speaking *of* Israel) textual materials.[17] But what emerges is that we are looking at a technician of discourse who is confronting the discursive practices of invention and/or re-invention of otherness in order to define his authority positions *hic et nunc*. Apart from the oral primacy claimed by Ignatius, his own writing ability

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[17] See the comprehensive essay by Enrico Norelli, "Ignazio di Antiochia combatte veramente dei cristiani giudaizzanti?," in *Verus Israel. Nuove prospettive sul giudeocristianesimo. Atti del colloquio di Torino (4-5 novembre 1999)*, eds. Giovanni Filoramo and Claudio Gianotto, (Brescia: Paideia, 2001), 220-264. For a new comprehensive approach to the figure of Ignatius of Antioch according to a "retrospective analysis," see Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity. From Reception to Retrospection,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 266-446.

testifies to the fact that we are in presence of a writing technician who opposes other (perceived) competitive abilities of the same kind; basically, we find ourselves in a communicative universe around which techniques of the discourse—that are in one way or another mirrors of particular communicative elites of the 2nd century—gravitate.

We come back then to how discourse creates "realities" that are likely to be incorporated by the people who constitute the same objects of these (realities) and which are assumed as instruments of orientation in a specific world. If as is almost universally accepted, between the 1st and the 2nd century there are "Christians" who came from "Judaism," in other words "Christians" who are "Jews," or perhaps better put, "Jews" who are "Christians," it means that discursive forms of definition of otherness are well-known and, somehow, embodied by people who recognize themselves as "part" of that discourse. One key trope across these considerations is the inter-discursive connection between "eliteness" (or "sub-eliteness") and other "power/knowledge" regimes.[18] With Christian inventions of Judaism we are looking at a historically framed discussion of a self-defining category, a theological/obliterating view rooted in elitist claims to truth and superiority, which also blurred or confused the boundaries between people, positions and traditional social status. As Ignatius shows, representational resources such as reading and writing were central to the production and dissemination of his opposition between *Ioudaismos* and *Christianismos*.

One cannot fail to be reminded of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "distinction."[19] Elites (and sub-elites) are those within a "field of power" who have considerable social, economic, cultural, and/or symbolic capital. It is not by chance that Bourdieu conceptualized elites relative to the power they have over others (to define tastes through consumption, association, or disposition), underscoring also how there is a constant struggle among elites for the relative strength of the resource they most firmly control.

Polemics regarding concepts of "Judaism" and/or "Christianity," especially in antiquity (but not only!), involve struggles both for leadership *within* specific fields and for dominance *across* fields, with the realm of public (or para-public) communication representing a shared competitive arena. Communicative

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[18] See especially Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I*, (New York: Random House, 1978).

[19] See especially Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

competition, however, requires some degree of public involvement, creating a variety of opportunities for those individuals which are outside of the traditional elite realm to structure partially the actions and behaviors of both the same elites and the dominated; such opportunities take the form of mechanisms of constraint. New discourses or new declinations of previous self-defining discourses within networked communication (like that devised by both Paul and Ignatius), in this sense, suggest an increased capacity of individuals outside the traditional communicative elites of the Roman empire to participate in the symbolic production of group identities in a partially mutated world, and thus to exercise their capacity for social constraint in a more individual manner.[20]

Luca Arcari, University of Naples "Federico II"

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[20] I adapt here Timothy Kersey's statements found in *Constrained Elitism and Contemporary Democratic Theory,* (New York, London: Routledge, 2016), 49. For the study of early Christian texts and/or groups in this direction, see Jörg Rüpke, *Pantheon. A New History of Roman Religion,* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2018), esp. 329-358.

Daniel Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion,* (New Brunswick – Camden – Newark NJ – London: Rutgers University Press, 2019), pp. xiii+219.

by *Daniel Barbu*

Boyarin's *Judaism* and the Question of Religion

What is Judaism? To this question most people can provide an intuitive response: Judaism is the religion of the Jews. Such an answer, however, also yields further questions: What exactly is religion? And who are the Jews? Leaving these questions aside for a moment, we can observe how scholars of Judaism have sought to define their subject-matter. Thus, for instance, Michael Fishbane, for whom "Judaism is … the religious expression of the Jewish people from antiquity to the present day as it has tried to form and live a life of holiness before God."[1] What is implicit in such a definition is the notion that different people have different ways of expressing belief in a transcendent, greater-than-human power (or powers), and that such beliefs shape their every-day actions and experience. That such a definition relies on a modern understanding of religion goes unnoticed, as is the fact that for most of their history, Jews never used the word "Judaism" (or "religion") to describe their relationship with God or to define their way of life. Only in the wake of the Enlightenment did Jews start talking of their particular beliefs, practices, traditions, in terms of "religion," a word which by then had gained a new currency and political agency in Western context.

This is the story Daniel Boyarin tells in *Judaism. The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, published in a series devoted to "key words in Jewish studies." Boyarin formulates a bold thesis. As he notes, "there is no word in premodern Jewish parlance that means 'Judaism,'" and thus, "from a linguistic point of view, only modern Judaism could be said to exist" (p. xi). Indeed, according to Boyarin, "it is highly problematic to ascribe to a culture a category or abstraction that it does not know or show in its language" (p. xi). By using the term "Judaism" to describe premodern realities, scholars inevitably and anachronistically impose a distinction between what does and what does not count as "religion." For Boyarin, "utilizing terms like 'religion' and 'Judaism' to delineate the concept worlds of people who had no such concepts, or words, is a practice of self-replication and not translation" (p. 8); and indeed: "A form of life that has no

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[1] Michael Fishbane, *Judaism. Revelation and Tradition,* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987), 12.

word that means 'religion' cannot have religion in it nor can there be a 'Judaism' without a word that refers to it" (p. 25).[2]

This is a bold statement indeed, in line with Boyarin's previous work on the word "religion," a word which, he claims, "obscures more than it reveals" the social and cultural realities, the "forms of life" of the people we endeavor to study (p. 7).[3] The notion that "religion," however defined, constitutes a discrete sphere of human existence, distinct from, say, politics, trade, or art, is indeed, as said, a modern notion. Pre-modern societies did not identify "religion" as a separate "sphere of life," and in fact did not necessarily have a linguistic analogue for the latinate word "religion." Boyarin's book is thus an intervention in recent debates on the usefulness of such a category for historical research, with Boyarin adopting a radical position within that debate, standing with those who have argued that the word "religion" should purely and simply be rejected. There can be no "religion" prior to the emergence of the modern concept of "religion", and hence, there can be no "Judaism" if "Judaism" is indeed considered a species of "religion."

Boyarin's book has undeniably opened an exciting debate among scholars of... Judaism.[4] Some have underlined the problematic philosophical underpinnings of Boyarin's argument.[5] Must the absence of a word or even a concept necessarily imply the absence of the things we refer to through that word? A common place example is oxygen, which was only "invented" (in the literal sense) in 1774; but surely no one would argue that there was no oxygen prior to the late eighteenth-century. This, however, is not Boyarin's argument. Nowhere does he claim that ancient and medieval Jews did not have beliefs, practices or traditions that may qualify as religion, but rather that, by imposing words such as "Judaism" or "religion" on ancient realities, we distort the conceptual frameworks of the actors themselves. The question is not whether Jews had or did not have "religion" but

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[2] Note that Boyarin's "point of view," then, is not only "linguistic."

[3] See already Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion. How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities,* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

[4] https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/introduction-marginalia-forum-daniel-boyarin-judaism/. Accessed September 19, 2020.

[5] Thus, Adele Reinhartz's contribution to the *Marginalia* forum, "Was the Word in the Beginning? On the Relationship Between Language and Concepts," https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/word-beginning-relationship-language-concepts/. Accessed September 19, 2020.

along which lines and by using which categories did *they*, rather than us, divide the world.

In fact, Boyarin's close survey of the Arabic word *dīn* (and Hebrew parallel *dat*) shows that medieval Jews did develop a conceptual lexicon in order to articulate classifications and comparisons, albeit not necessarily only in terms we would consider "religious." Words such as *yahadut* or *al-yahūdiyya* are attested in medieval Jewish literature, in reference to the collective of the Jews; yet, as Boyarin observes, never can these words be reduced to meaning "Judaism" as a "religion." Never are these words used as the subject of a sentence, for instance. They consistently mean less and more than "religion." In particular, these notions never fully distinguish between various elements we often tend to consider separately: common ancestry, food habits, dress, law, social and political organization, and so on, along with theological conceptions, rituals, prayer, and other "religious" institutions (in our eyes), just like the ancient Greek historian Herodotus in fact did not distinguish between the Egyptians way of sacrificing, building houses or eating.

In truth, Boyarin's methodological suggestion that we suspend or reject the use of words like "religion" and "Judaism" when reading ancient and medieval sources can indeed be rewarding, even when such an endeavor yields more questions than answers. It allows him to try and uncover, precisely, the ways in which the actors themselves classified the world, rather than impose our classifications on them. It further allows him to show how their conceptual frameworks differ from ours, thus contributing to a necessary and healthy exotization of the data at hand, which we too often simply translate into our terms, as if their words were really the same as ours.[6]

Boyarin's onclusions, I would suggest, are however too extreme, and are in fact undermined by Boyarin himself. Thus, when he writes (p. 133) that "If the word picks nothing in their form of life, it is semiotically meaningless," he seems to be adopting an intriguingly positive view of the work historians, or for that matter scholars, are expected to carry out.

To be sure, words that do not exist in another language are meaningless in that language; but surely Boyarin would agree that they are not meaningless in ours.

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[6] Carlo Ginzburg, "Our Words, and Theirs. A Reflection on the Historian's Craft, Today," *Cromohs* 18 (2014): 97–114.

Are not all historians, all scholars in fact, outsiders to the worlds of which they talk? And even when we seek to translate those worlds in our terms, adapting our words to the words of others, do we not remain always foreign speakers – however tempted we are to speak or pretend to speak as natives?

Ponting to the inevitable tension between the way in which insiders view themselves, as opposed to how outsiders describe and classify them (a tension opposing what anthropologists term an "etic" vs. an "emic" perspective), J.Z. Smith cited William James's ironic observation that "a crab would be filled with a sense of personal outrage if it could hear us class it without ado or apology as a crustacean."[7]

Science is indeed an imperialistic project; yet when we refuse to use our words to translate the words of others, we condemn ourselves to silence (when not to a mere parroting of the other). Boyarin's suggestion, however, is that rather than impose our words and let them retain their self-evident meaning, we should seek and distort our vocabulary in order to come closer to indigenous conceptions and epistemic frameworks. He thus cites Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (paraphrasing Walter Benjamin), noting that "a good translation ... is one that betrays the destination language, not the source language. A good translation is one that allows the alien concepts to deform and subvert the translator's conceptual toolbox so that the *intentio* of the original language can be expressed within the new one."[8] One may in fact recall the advice the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides gave to his translator, Samuel Ibn Tibbon: "The translator who proposes to render each word literally and adhere slavishly to the order of the words and sentences in the original, will meet with much difficulty and the result will be doubtful and corrupt. This is not the right method. The translator should first try to grasp the meaning of the subject, and then state the theme with perfect clarity in the other language."[9]

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[7] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (New York: Modern Library Edition, 1929), 10, first quoted (to the best of my knowledge) in Jonathan Z. Smith, "Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit," *History of Religions* 11/1 (1971): 67–90; Id., "A Matter of Class. Taxonomies of Religion," *The Harvard Theological Review* 89/4 (1996): 387–403; 402.

[8] Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation," *Tipití. Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2/1 (2004): 3–22, cited by Boyarin, *Judaism*, 5.

[9] Leon D. Stitskin, "A Letter of Maimonides to Samuel Ibn Tibbon," *Tradition. A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* 4/1 (1961): 91–95; 93.

Beyond words, the larger question raised by Viveiros de Castro in his *Cannibal Metaphysics* concerned modern science as a whole, albeit through the lens of social anthropology: "What do anthropologists owe, conceptually, to the people they study? ... Couldn't one shift to a perspective showing that the source of the most interesting concepts, problems, entities and agents introduced into thought by anthropological theory is in the imaginative powers of the societies – or, better, the peoples and collectives – that they propose to explain?"[10]

The political implications of that question are clear, and go beyond the easy critique of modernism and the assumed imperialism of Western science, the accusation that our words can ever only reflect a Euro-centric perspective: "We all know the popularity enjoyed in some circles by the thesis that anthropology, because it was supposedly exoticist and primitivist from birth, could only be a perverse theatre where the Other is always 'represented' or 'invented' according to the sordid interests of the West. No history or sociology can camouflage the complacent paternalism of this thesis, which simply transfigures the so-called others into fictions of the Western imagination in which they lack a speaking part. Doubling this subjective phantasmagoria with the familiar appeal to the dialectic of the objective production of the Other by the colonial system simply piles insult upon injury, by proceeding as if every 'European' discourse on peoples of non-European tradition(s) serves only to illumine our 'representations of the other', and even thereby making a certain theoretical postcolonialism the ultimate stage of ethnocentrism."[11]

Mutatis mutandis, must words like "religion" and "Judaism" necessarily be reduced to their Euro-centric, Christian, legacy? How much did those other ways of conceiving the world which a word like "religion" came to encompass eventually impact the word's sense and meaning, or even distorted its theologically-informed implications? For scholars of religion wary of the unreflexive use of common categories the answer is obvious. At least since F. Max Müller, they have (successfully or not, but that's a different question) sought to distinguish between "religion" in the general sense, the word as it used in daily parlance – when we distinguish, for instance, between this or that "religion" – and religion as a generic category, a sort of theoretical concept which

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[10] Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics. For a Post-Structural Anthropology,* (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014), 39-40.

[11] *Ibid.,* 40.

serves to establish a disciplinary horizon.[12] In this light, radical critics of "religion," who insist the word is too heavily fraught by European colonial history and a Christian theological perspective, sometimes seem to be fighting a Quixotical battle.

"Religion," when used by scholars, is restricted neither by daily language, nor by some sort of commonly accepted schleiermachian definition ("religion" as a matter of private, individual "faith," and as something distinct from other realms of human experience), indeed inherited from Protestant theology. In fact, the study of religion, ever since the discipline emerged in the late nineteenth-century (indeed first as a product of a colonial impulse to put the world in order), has been a battlefield, characterized by conflicting attempts to define "religion," including many endeavors to privilege an anthropological over against a theological outlook.[13] That Jewish scholars largely participated in that conversation (e.g. Durkheim) and contributed to the de-theologization of "religion" is a fact that should not be overlooked. In fact, they provide an example of the way in which even the Western discourse of religion has emerged out of a constant process of negotiation between different voices within the Western context, with Jews playing the role of those inner "others" whose distinct anthropological concerns and outlooks indeed informed the discussion on "religion."[14]

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[12] See Friederich Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion,* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873), 13. Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies,* ed. M. Taylor, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269-84 (= *Relating Religion. Essays in the Study of Religion,* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004], 179–96), 281–282: "It was once a tactic of students of religion to cite the appendix of James H. Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion* (1912), which lists more than fifty definitions of religion, to demonstrate that 'the effort clearly to define religion in short compass is a hopeless task' (King 1954). Not at all! The moral of Leuba is not that religion cannot be defined, but that it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, more than fifty ways. Besides, Leuba goes on to classify and evaluate his list of definitions. 'Religion' is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define. It is a second-order generic concept that plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that a concept such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays in anthropology. There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon."

[13] For a recent discussion, see Nicolas Meylan, *Qu'est-ce que la religion? Onze auteurs, onze définitions,* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2019).

[14] Perrine Simon-Nahum, *Les Juifs et la modernité. L'héritage du judaïsme et les Sciences de l'homme en France au XIXᵉ siècle,* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2018) and Jean-François Bert's review in *Asdiwal* 14 (2019): 267–69.

In what is perhaps one of his most oft-quoted statements, J.Z. Smith contended that "while there is a staggering amount of data, of phenomena, of human experiences and expressions that might be characterized in one culture or another, by one criterion or another, as religious–there *is no data for religion.* Religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study. It is created for the scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization."[15] Some scholars have taken this statement as a critique of the very concept of religion, arguing, precisely, that there can be no religion prior to the emergence of a semantic category allowing to distinguish religion from other aspects of human existence. There is, they argue, no reason to use a word which moreover carries a heavy burden of Eurocentric, if not Christiano-centric connotations, when studying people or cultures who in contrast with us did not have a concept of "religion," and thus most likely did not divide the world along these lines.

This, however, was not what Smith meant. His observation that "religion" as a category aiming to describe a specific field of human activity and experience is essentially a product of early-modern European history, in no way implied that scholars ought to dispense with the term, but simply that "the historian of religion must be relentlessly self-conscious." In other words, "religion" should not be taken for something self-evident, a trans-historical and trans-cultural phenomenon that we can identify "out there." Rather, like many of the abstract concepts developed in the human and social sciences, "religion" is a map, a tool allowing us to gather certain data and constitute a corpus with a view to answer some greater theoretical or comparative question, to interrogate the functioning of human societies from a necessarily partial but potentially illuminating angle. And as a matter of fact, many anthropologists, sociologists and scholars of religion have since long been able to offer constructive and analytically rewarding definitions. Thus, among contemporary scholars of religion, Bruce Lincoln has suggested defining religion as discourse claiming for itself eternal and transcendent authority[16]; and Philippe Borgeaud, musing on the original meaning of the Latin word *religio,* has offered to take "religion" as a way to describe everything which a given collective considers as customary practice, every tradition, law, habit, unspoken rule, which that collective takes for granted

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[15] Jonathan. Z. Smith, *Imagining religion. From Babylon to Jonestown,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), xi.

[16] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors. Thinking about Religion after September 11,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 5-8; Id., *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars. Critical Explorations in the History of Religions,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1; and cf. Meylan, *Qu'est-ce que la religion?,* 169-178.

and which cannot be displaced without arousing discomfort or anger, regardless of whether these traditions, laws, habits, or unspoken rules discursively refer to some sort of supernatural power or authority (or if they are referred to as "religious").[17]

Such definitions, which effectively destabilize a notion we normally use unreflexively, and subvert its commonly accepted and merely descriptive meaning, do not claim to say what "religion" is in a normative sense. Rather, they show how "religion" can serve as a "map" in our scholarly ambitions to interrogate past and present societies. Of course, the fact that it is possible to define religion in some analytically rewarding way does not mean that we can make away with a careful reflexive analysis of the history of "religion," a central category in the way *we* perceive and divide the world, of our cognitive language; what it does underline, however, is that the distance between "our" language and "theirs" is less an obstacle than a matter for further thought.

"Judaism" is a central category in the history of the Western discourse on "religion." Undeniably, it is first and foremost a colonial concept, imposed by outsiders to describe the "religion" of the Jews within a discourse heavily fraught by theological considerations. For much of its history, "Judaism" in fact pertains less to the history of Jews than to the history of Christians, or, to be precise, to the history of the Christian thought patterns from which we have inherited our discourse on "religion." Throughout its history, moreover, "Judaism" could be used to mean much more than simply a "religion." As shown by David Nirenberg, "Judaism" has long been a "figure of thought" through which Western thinkers have sought to express certain ideas about the world, to "critically engage the world," even in the absence of "real" Jews.[18] To a large extent, the history of "anti-Judaism," of the diverse ways in which ancient, medieval and modern actors sought to position themselves in relation to "Judaism," is in fact a history of the discourse on "Judaism" rather than simply a history of hostile attitudes towards Jews. In other words, "Judaism" is not

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[17] Philippe Borgeaud, *Exercices d'histoire des religions. Comparaison, rite, mythes et émotions*, eds. D. Barbu and Ph. Matthey, (Leyden: Brill, 2016), 186–187; *La pensée européenne des religion,* (Paris: Seuil, 2021).

[18] David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013).

necessarily bound by a discourse on religion, albeit this was the context in which the word was eventually adopted also by Jews.[19]

In the Enlightenment context, discussions of the various "religions" increasingly gave way to debates over "religion" itself, envisaged as a *sui generis* phenomenon, of which the many "religions" Europeans had "discovered" in the four corners of the world, evinced the surprising diversity. Protestant thinkers in particular came to insist on the individual character of "religion," religion not as a matter of practice, rituals and forms of worship but indeed as a matter of faith and belief. Friedrich Schleiermacher thus insisted that "the essence of religion is neither acting nor thinking, but intuition and feeling" – an idea which undoubtedly continues to infuse modern conceptions.[20] This was the context in which Jewish intellectuals adopted "Judaism" and started to speak of "Judaism" as their "religion," playing by the rules of a hegemonic discourse in order to gain a voice within contemporary political debates. But Jewish thinkers like Moses Mendelssohn did not simply appropriate "Judaism" and "religion:" they also *adapted* these words to serve their own intellectual interests, while introducing slightly dissonant connotations also reflecting a somewhat distinct epistemic framework.

For Mendelssohn, "religion" was indeed an individual matter, of personal belief and behavior, distinct from politics and other spheres of life. In his *Jerusalem, or, On Religious Power and Judaism* (1783), he thus argued that "Judaism" (*Judenthum*) qua "religion" is not concerned with power and politics and is a matter of individual conduct "meant to obtain temporal and eternal felicity." As such, their "religion" did not prevent Jews from integrating the state as full citizen. The adoption of the discourse of religion, which meant separating

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[19] See Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion. An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought,* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011). Boyarin (p. 105) rightly notes, however, that the question is not whether "Judaism" adopted the language of religion, but rather how Jews adopted "Judaism" in a context that saw the invention of "world religions."

[20] Friederich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. I/2, *Schriften aus der Berliner Zeit 1769-1799,* ed. G. Meckenstock, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 211. It is not uninteresting to observe that when discussing the "nature" of religion, Schleiermacher in fact turned to "Judaism," precisely to provide a counterexample. Schleiermacher thus insisted that "Judaism is long since dead," and "those who yet wear its livery are only sitting lamenting beside the imperishable mummy, bewailing its departure and its sad legacy" (*Ibid.*, 314; translated by John Oman). "Judaism," for Schleiermacher, denoted an unreflective adherence to the Letter, a system of sheer performance, of mechanical rites and practices, deprived of "life" and "spirit." As such in had no part in "religion" (cf. Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion*, 26).

religion from public life, conversely allowed creating a political space for Jews distinct from their "religion." But it also implied a subversion of the notion, as Mendelssohn asserted that the Jews' religion was "not a matter of belief but rather of behavior," "ceremonial laws not dogmas."[21] It is not impossible to see how this broadening of the concept also opened a path for later thinkers to contest a theological understanding of "religion."

"Religion" is not only the product of Western imperialism – a dominant voice muting the voice of others and imposing its concepts – but of a negotiation between discordant "emic" perspectives, ideas and political endeavors. Those perspectives, ideas, and political endeavors need not necessarily be erased, but must precisely be allowed to distort our own concepts and categories. In that light, even "Judaism," one may suggest, can accommodate the conceptual worlds of ancient and medieval Jews.

As noted, for most of its history "Judaism" indeed belongs to Christian theological discourse. Only in the wake of Enlightenment debates on "religion" as a distinct and autonomous sphere of life did Jews start to strategically make "Judaism" their own – just as other cultures confronted with Western categories in that context eventually adopted and adapted "religion."

Does it ensue that we should not speak of "Judaism" when studying pre-modern Jews? Obviously, if we take "Judaism" as the name of some sort of platonic entity, a "religion" the development of which we can observe and describe through time, and the essential features of which we can somehow compare to those of other similar formations, as if they existed independently of the discourse that construes them as "religion," then indeed Boyarin is right and the answer is yes. If, however, we use it with the same self-consciousness as we do when using "religion" as an analytical category, something which can constantly be corrected and modified in relation to the data it allows us to explore, then perhaps Boyarin is wrong and the answer is no.

There is no essence to "Judaism", no more than there is an essence to "religion," for both are fundamentally taxonomic categories, words we use in our languages to map those other worlds we seek to study.

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[21] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judenthum* (1783), 31, with Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion*, 20.

Daniel Barbu, CNRS-Université Paris Sciences et Lettres

Susanne Theresia Kord, *Lovable Crooks and Loathsome Jews: Antisemitism in German and Austrian Crime Writing Before the World Wars*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2018), pp. 347.

by *Lisa Silverman*

Given the current increase in violent acts against Jews, few could argue that antisemitism remains a powerful and persistent force. And historians, sociologists, and other scholars have already convincingly shown how deeply ingrained antisemitic ideology remains around the world. Less clear, however, is why. To help address this conundrum, S.T. Kord offers a thought-provoking, original approach: studying the relationship between representations of Jews and criminals in criminology, popular literature, newspapers, and other sources of 19th and early 20th century Austria and Germany. Given that the Nazis labeled Jews as a criminal race, Kord aims to find out whether they inherited a ready-made discourse. Through meticulously researched, in-depth case studies involving celebrated non-Jewish criminals juxtaposed with Jews who were vilified for their transgressions, she shows that explicitly linking individual Jews with criminality was neither widespread nor constant before 1933. However, early popular discourse also established the crucial groundwork for associating Jews with vice – that is, constant, habitual criminality. This foundation ensured that narratives calling for sympathetic criminal characters would only make sense to popular audiences if they were depicted as non-Jews – an omission that points to a more subtle form of antisemitism.

Beginning with an overview of sociological crime theories, Kord argues that early scientific accounts stressed evidence that Jews actually committed fewer violent crimes than non-Jews. Antisemitic attitudes in these sources remained limited to conspiracy theories in fringe publications implicating groups of Jews in plots for global economic domination, ritual murder, and white slavery. Taken together, however, these discussions helped prime audiences for Nazi-era propaganda that portrayed fighting crime as "an act of social self-defense without ethical implications" (p. 57). The book then turns to case studies, beginning with Wilhelm Voigt, a colorful con man who managed to temporarily occupy the Berlin Köpenick city hall in 1906 by convincing others that he was an army Captain. Voigt became a folk hero, a "symbol of resourcefulness, hilarity and humanity pitted against injustice, rigidity, humorlessness, militarism, and unthinking obedience – against everything, in short, that was wrong with Imperial Germany" (p. 62), and his story resonated for decades as fodder for myriad

lighthearted portrayals in popular culture. In contrast, the press widely vilified Tamara von Hervay, who was convicted of bigamy in provincial Austria in 1904, although Kord highlights the fact that the majority of the media's negative depictions of her did not explicitly focus on her Jewish background.

In 1920s Berlin, Franz and Eric Sass rose from poverty to become the very first pop stars of bank robbery with impressive heists and clever schemes that turned them into heroes for outsmarting anonymous, greedy banks and the police. Only after the Nazis passed a law in 1933 against habitual criminals that specifically targeted the Sass brothers were they caught and ultimately executed. Around the same time, however, newspapers reporting on the 1924 Vienna pornography trial of popular writer Hugo Bettauer and his publishing partner Rudolf Olden emphasized Bettauer's Jewish background to buttress their negative depictions. Curiously, however, these same sources passed up the opportunity to denigrate his far less colorful and newsworthy Jewish partner Olden, suggesting a strategic rather than pedantic deployment of antisemitism.

The next section traces the depiction of criminals in popular fiction, as narratives began to show criminal outsiders as repentant and often innocent victims of society. By the decades before World War II, major writers, artists, and filmmakers critiqued society by creating criminal characters who acted as mouthpieces for grand philosophical statements on the human condition. But this trend, which included portraying the era's sex murderers and serial killers as weak and childlike, ended after the Nazis came to power. While crime fiction remained popular, its emphasis shifted away from the likeable criminal to an efficient and competent police force. Still throughout the history of crime fiction during this broad time span, notes Kord, only rarely did authors highlight Jews as criminals.

Kord concludes from her research that Jews were often missing entirely from crime narratives. But while explicit antisemitism appeared only in fringe sources, it is significant that Jewish characters could still never serve broad audiences as admirable, lovable criminals. "As Germany and Austria stumbled from Empire to Republic and from there to dictatorship, the sympathetic criminal became a humanistic self-image of the law-abiding citizen, a symbol of decent 'Germanness,' and simultaneously an accessory to the Nazi crime of assigning the idea of serious criminality to Jews" (p. 234). Kord's plausible conclusion would have been strengthened further had she relied not only on easily identifiable antisemitic words and deeds to gauge audiences' receptiveness to Jewish characters, but also given equal weight to the more subtle ways that Jewish difference inflected

popular culture. For example, early criminologists may have shied away from unsupportable conspiracies about Jews and told the truth about their relatively marginal criminal activity, but by singling Jews out as a separate category, they, too, subtly engaged and perpetuated antisemitism. Moreover, describing press reports that do not explicitly mention Hervay's Jewishness as "neutral" overlooks subtle codes pointing to underlying bigotry against Jews, and especially Jewish women, that scholars have shown was widespread in fin-de-siècle Austria. As Alison Rose pointed out in her 2016 study of Hervay's case, "when reading between the lines, descriptions of her demeanor, appearance, and remarks often betray antisemitic sentiments and embrace stereotypes commonly seen in fin-de-siècle depictions of Jewish women."[1]

To be sure, Kord cites Shulamit Volkov's well-known 1978 study of antisemitism as a cultural code and Hannah Arendt's thoughtful comments on the topic, conceding that antisemitism "is both more subtle and more far-reaching than the press coverage of a few years can capture" and that it involves "an entire culture of perception" (p. 153). But if that is the case, then the explicit antisemitism highlighted in her research only tells part of the story. Distinguishing between the strategic uses of antisemitism in the fin de siècle and interwar years also would have helped buttress a more nuanced argument, since heightened political polarization after 1918 made delineating Jews and non-Jews a more salient force in German and Austrian culture. In Austria in particular, for example, antisemitism was often used to buttress divisions between urban and rural populations.

Kord's rich study is useful in showing that, before the Nazis came to power, ascribing explicit Jewishness to those accused of crimes did not resonate with broad audiences and usually interested only marginal writers while, at the same time, in order for criminals to be portrayed as popular heroes they had to be as non-Jewish (read: German) as possible. Recognizing the role that systemic antisemitism – the kind that operates under the surface and often remains unarticulated – played in supporting these phenomena would have helped even more to illuminate why readers and audiences accepted Jews's symbolic function as perpetrators of habitual, incorrigible crime, or vice, rather than seeing them as individuals.

Lisa Silverman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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[1] Alison Rose, *Antisemitism, Gender Bias, and the "Hervay Affair" of 1904*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books), p.83.

How to quote this article:

Jews and Gentiles in Central and Eastern Europe during the Holocaust: History and Memory, eds. Hana Kubátová and Jan Láníček, (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 230.

by *Tim Corbett*

The edited volume presents a collection of twelve essays that showcase recent research in Holocaust studies with a focus predominantly on East Central and Eastern Europe. The contributions go back to a pair of workshops organized in 2012 and 2014 and were originally published as a special volume of *Holocaust Studies* in 2017. The principal aim of this volume is to reexamine "Jewish-Gentile" relations from the Holocaust to the collapse of socialism in 1989-90, thus extending significantly further beyond the years of the Holocaust than the title suggests. Although the volume has as its subject the experience and aftermath of the Holocaust, the editors conceive of this work as an intervention "in the joint field of Jewish and Eastern European [!] Studies" (p. 11).

The eleven essays are arranged chronologically, beginning with examinations of various aspects of the Holocaust as it unfolded in Poland and Slovakia. The scope then extends to the postwar years with examinations of antisemitism, restitution, and commemoration in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Greece, and Poland, closing with a couple of essays extending the disciplinary scope to literary and film studies. As already outlined in the introductory essay by the editors, the volume not only presents a review of recent research trends in these geographic and thematic fields but also intervenes in the problematic societal and political discourses of post-socialist Europe with regard to the history of antisemitism, the Holocaust, and relations with Jews in Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. This attempt to "challenge the narratives of the Holocaust as an all-German responsibility (and as an all-German story to tell)" (p. 11) is arguably the greatest contribution of this volume, particularly in the way it highlights the failure in Central and Eastern Europe to deal with complicity in the crimes of National Socialism and the reprehensible treatment of surviving Jews after 1945, as well as the politics of denial and revisionism in the region today.

The essays offer critical overviews of the historiography in the respective countries under consideration, proceeding to highlight particular source materials from – as well as innovative approaches to – the history and aftermath of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. For example, the first essay, by Natalia Aleksiun, uses trial testimony to examine the betrayal of Jews by non-Jews under German occupation

in Galicia. With the trials often dismissed in historiography as communist show, Aleksiun's contribution is essentially a call to reexamine these trials as a source for Jewish/non-Jewish relations. Without going into each contribution individually, it is this synthesis of historiography, source pools, and methodologies that should make this volume a textbook for students of the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe and a basis for further exploration into the manifold themes and problems opened up, even if not necessarily explored in great depth, here.

A major problem with the work, however, lies in its failure to deal in any critical or explicit manner with its very own terms. The title alone – Jews and Gentiles in Central and Eastern Europe – predicates an unreflected upon dichotomy that virtually every essay in the volume unquestioningly adopts and perpetuates. The abstract before the title page already speaks of "Jewish-Gentile relations" as a form of "interaction between the individual majority societies and the Jewish minorities," whereby Jews are categorized as a collective that is a priori separate – and foreign – to the "majority societies" (a term used throughout) among whom they lived until their wholesale destruction during the Holocaust. This ethnicization and reification of Jewish "difference," unfortunately, shapes the entire volume, as reflected in the use of repeated categorical pairings such as – to take a couple of examples from the introduction – "Czech-Jewish coexistence" (p. 5) or "Polish-Jewish relations" (p. 8), the dichotomy in all such cases throughout the volume underlining the unspoken assumption that Jews are, per se, not Czechs, Poles, etc. In a particularly striking example, we find not only "the Jews and Slovaks" (p. 215) being contrasted – note the definite article here to emphasize the collectivity of "the Jews" compared to the vague collective of "Slovaks" – but also Nazi discourses being unquestioningly perpetuated in attributions such as "half-Jew" (p. 213) and "Aryan" (p. 215).

This is a troubling example of how essentialist categories have been adopted in a volume that otherwise criticizes nationalizing discourses in Holocaust memory. Ironically, this point is actually made in one of the essays by Máté Zombory, who critiques the emergence of dichotomous discourses in what he calls the present-day "regime of Holocaust memory" (p. 193). Zombory shows how in Hungary, the Holocaust was originally cast in national terms which occluded Jews in a categorical sense while incorporating crimes against Jews in the prosecution of war crimes against Hungary generally, thereby refuting the widespread tenet of Holocaust studies that the persecution of Jews was absent in early postwar discourses (pp. 181-184). The earlier discourse, Zombory finds, did not follow "the classification of the Nazi persecution," meaning the "homogenizing racial

identification of 'the Jews,'" and he concludes that it is striking "how diverse the conceptions of the recent past [i.e., right after the Holocaust] were compared to the regime of Holocaust memory [i.e. today]" (p. 193). He thus criticizes the fact that in the static, dichotomous, and hegemonic Holocaust discourse of recent years, "the distinction is not visible between Jews (who identify themselves as such) and those qualified as Jews (forcibly identified as such by Nazi authorities)" (p. 178) – a charge I would make against this volume, and more broadly against the field, as a whole.

The fact that this critical analysis was included in two successive printings of findings that perpetuate precisely this discourse suggests a worrying tone deafness in the field – an inability or unwillingness to engage with fundamental concepts or parallel developments in research. This is an issue, I believe, that resonates in the related field of Jewish studies, with its tenacious narratives of Jewish "assimilation," "acculturation," and "integration" into essentialized national "majority" societies, despite manifold developments undermining precisely this paradigm. This volume unfortunately needs to be regarded at least partly as a manifestation of the very nationalizing discourses it claims to be problematizing. I repeat that this work offers a concise showcase of the current state of the field as well as a (commendable) critique of the politics of memory in the countries under consideration, which can serve as a basis for comparative perspectives on universal issues in Holocaust research, such as collaboration, restitution, and commemoration. However, an equally critical reflection on precisely those national, cultural, "ethnic," perhaps even "racial" discourses that stood at the heart of the violence of the twentieth century is evidently still sorely needed in the field.

Another criticism that needs to be made, albeit one that goes beyond the immediate authorship of the contributors, is the astonishing lack of copy-editing of the majority of the articles, which at times presents difficulties in following the arguments being made. Beyond plain grammatical issues, this includes poor translations of source materials as well as confusing use of terminology. For example, Kateřina Šímová's essay translates a passage from a Communist Party report speaking of the "revision [?] of their [the Jews'] property," presumably meaning expropriation (p. 113), and employs the terms "semiotic" (twice including the tautological "semiotic sign," pp. 120 and 126), "linguistic," "semantic," "rhetoric," and "textual" so interchangeably that they lose all meaning. This seems to be par for the course for Routledge's output these days, which churns out such volumes to the astounding tune of 120 pounds sterling apiece (to be fair, now also

in paperback for only 36.99), obviously with very little regard to quality. This does a disservice not least of all to the authors themselves.

I would nevertheless conclude on the positive note that this volume absolutely makes a contribution as a textbook and a point of departure for further research into specific geographical, chronological, and thematic areas in the already well-trodden field of Holocaust studies. I hope, however, that scholars in Holocaust studies, Jewish studies, and beyond will in future spend a little more time engaging with the fundamental concepts they employ as well as with the critical reflections of their colleagues in the field – particularly when those reflections are published repeatedly in the very same volume.

Tim Corbett, University of Vienna

Ordinary Jerusalem 1840-1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City, Vol I., eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 594.

by *Nimrod Luz*

In a recent issue of *City* (March 20, 2016), Yiftachel and Bonano jointly muse on the uniqueness vs. ordinary nature of Jerusalem. Yiftachel, borrowing from Borges, suggests seeing Jerusalem as Aleph, a template upon which critical new urban theories may be based, and Bonano approaches Jerusalem as a paradigm when he offers, following Agamben, a theory of "whatever urbanism" based on ideas of the city. Jerusalem has surely never been an ordinary city and yet, as this edited volume reminds us, it was always inhabited by ordinary people who sought in their very different and resourceful ways to live their lives within its unique urban setting. Intriguingly titled *Ordinary Jerusalem*, this voluminous collection, the first fruit of an ERC funded project, includes work by the two editors and thirty-seven scholars from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds who together paint a variegated, original and thought-provoking canvas of 1840-1940 Jerusalem. Two key questions guide the individual chapters as well as the book's conclusion: Is Jerusalem an ordinary city? And: can we better understand its history through a local or global approach? These questions are taken on separately in each of the chapters, arranged in four sections and premised on that Jerusalem can only be studied by "ordinary" research. The book thus offers a new methodology for reading the city, through unpublished archival materials in different languages scattered throughout the world.

However, bringing the new methodology is but one of the significant contributions of this work. The Open University project is also a historiographical novelty in its choice of non-political timeline. By disregarding the widely accepted geopolitical periodization of Jerusalem's history into the Ottoman (1517-1918), followed by the Mandate period (1918-1948), the editors deconstruct – or avoid – the typical political strongbox. They thus also enable another important focus of the project: telescoping the city's residents and a plethora of urban issues through the idea of *citadinité,* an originally French, primarily post-Marxist, scholarly concept involving "the right to the city." For Lefebvre, the idea of *citadinité* extends beyond the privilege of a city's dwellers to occupy its spaces, conferring upon them the birthright to participate in their urban milieu as oeuvre and ongoing process of construction, destruction and daily negotiating. Framing the city through the idea of *citadinité* intertwined with an apolitical timeline advances

the study of daily Jerusalem life from the bottom up, replacing the hyperbolic top-down depictions tending to obfuscate the earthly nature of the city's daily life. I find this innovative and refreshing, critical and particularly insightful in creating an effective framework for the volume's many chapters and lookout points.

The twenty-six chapters of the book are divided into four thematic sections. The first, *Opening the Archives, Revealing the City*, consists of six chapters showing how Ottoman authorities, foreign powers and outside observers (travelers, most of them Christian religious figures) relied primarily on religious affiliation, referred to as *millet*, rather than other markers to identify the different groups and individuals dwelling together in the Ottoman Empire. This classification was not only imposed from above, but also upheld by local religious and political leaders, who personally gained from the lingering construction of socio-religious boundaries among the respective communities and other *citadines*.

The second section, *Imperial Allegiances and Local Authorities*, through its seven chapters considers various urban institutions: the courts, consulates, patriarchate and so forth, underscoring the growing impact of imperial governing logic on local conduct. The section goes on to highlight the relationship between the locals and the state by detailing an elaborate view of the way imperial institutions, municipalities, court records, police stations and others were instantiated in the local sphere as well as transformed by it. In the six chapters making up the *Cultural Networks, Public Knowledge* section, the changing character of the city is pitted against the increase in exchanges of different types of knowledge during the latter part of the 19th century. Was Jerusalem becoming an Ottoman city or did the emerging nationalistic conflict between Jews and Arabs hinge upon the city's predating Ottoman characteristics? This is explored through a variety of sources from Jewish newspapers through Christian printing houses to the photographic collection of a local Muslim Jerusalemite. The fourth section, *Sharing the City: Contacts, Claims and Conflicts*, concentrates in its seven chapters on different types of ties among Jerusalem's *citadines.* The authors rely on archival sources to trace how city locals – and, occasionally, influential figures – interacted and impacted each other. The various narratives lead to the question, posed by Algazi in his preface to this concluding section and by Fishman in the closing chapter of the book, if *citadinité* can serve as a frame to explore Jerusalem. I, for one, still think it does!

This book is a wonderful addition to the study of Jerusalem of the 19th-20th centuries. The novelty of its content is surpassed only by that of the approach put

forth by the editors and contributors. Surely, as Doumani in his preface to the collection's second section proposes, not all chapters can in equal measure meet the challenge of the Open Jerusalem project. But be that as it may, it has been a long time since I last encountered such a thought-provoking, innovative, well-informed and informative volume. Its importance goes far beyond the field of Jerusalem research; the collection will impact both the methodology and the theory of studying urbanism, urbanity, and urban citizenship.

Nimrod Luz, Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee

How to quote this article:

Premiers savoirs de la Shoah, ed. Judith Lindenberg, (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2017), pp. 334.

by *Antoine Burgard*

This collection of essays draws on and enriches the growing body of works that reject or, at least, add nuance to the idea of a silence about the Holocaust before the 1960s. It does this by documenting early knowledge production of the "Destruction" (*khurbn*) – a term that most authors rightfully favor to avoid other anachronistic names. Several contributors have pioneered this historiographical trend, especially Samuel Kassow and Laura Jockusch, while others are developing it further.[1] The book's ambitions are clearly laid out in the first pages of its introduction: it aims to historicize Holocaust testimonies – "*objet évident*" (p. 7) – by examining the prehistory of the 'era of the witness' and focusing on the Polish Jewish world. This choice to focus on Polish Jewry – which neither the book's title nor its abstract reflect – could have been further explained, beyond the sole quantity of available material "without equivalent in Europe" (p. 9).[2] This limitation is, however, nuanced by the various contributors' efforts to insist on the collective nature of the act of writing, editing, collection, and preservation (p. 14-15) and to capture the "vast transnational network" (p. 17) that developed during and immediately after the genocide. Looking beyond the spatial borders of Poland and its Jewish communities, the book also challenges the disciplinary boundaries between history and literature and the artificial and *a posteriori* distinction between early historiography ("*première historiographie sur le genocide*") and testimonial literature ("*littérature de témoignage*").

The book's structure in three sections is not always self-evident but does not affect the reading. The first section predominantly focuses on trajectories of authors and their writing: Peretz Opoczynski that "virulently" documented the everyday life and complex mosaic of the Warsaw ghetto (Samuel Kassow); Oskar Rosenfeld and Jan Karski, whose understanding of the ghetto as a "world" is thoroughly examined by Catherine Coquio who brings into dialogue Hannah Arendt, Michael Foessel, and Abraham Cytryn, among others; and Michel Borwicz, who wrote *Écrits des condamnés à mort sous l'occupation nazie* in 1953 (*Writings of Those Sentenced to Death Under Nazi Occupation*) and whose trajectory from

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[1] See, for instance, Simon Perego, *Pleurons-les. Les Juifs de Paris et la commémoration de la Shoah, 1944-1967*, (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2020).

[2] Translations are mine.

literature to history is analyzed by Judith Lyon-Caen. Borwicz's book, Lyon-Caen demonstrates, can be seen as a pioneer in its French context but "comes less as a surprise" if understood in its Polish Jewish context (pp. 82-83). In the second part of the first section, Arnaud Bikard examines the work – "essential because somewhat originating from the margins" (p. 110) – of Avrom Zak and explores in detail his experience of survival and displacement in the Soviet Union, first as a refugee and then as a prisoner of the Gulag. Carole Ksiazenicer-Matheron focuses on Leib Rochman, author of *Mit blinde trit iber der erd* (*With Blind Steps upon the Earth*), and discussed his work in the light of others, from Terrence des Pres to Paul Auster. Laetitia Tordjman explores the trajectory of Oser Warszawski that wrote *Rezidentsn* in 1943, an account – "both immediate testimony and novel" (p. 128) – of his survival in France until his evacuation to Rome in September 1943. In the final contribution of this section, Anna Ciarkowska interrogates the influence of Lwów and its multicultural dimension – what she terms, using her own coinage, "lwowism" – on the writings of Piotr Rawicz. She argues that reconstructing the vanished world of the city can help better understand the life of the writer, especially his youth.

In the second section, Laura Jockush gives a detailed overview of early Jewish historical commissions and documentation centers in France, Poland, and Germany. One of the pioneers of the field, Jockush concludes her chapter by putting forward potential avenues for future research, especially the necessity to assess the relations between the various initiatives and the impact of non-Jewish institutions (p. 185). The contribution of Cecile E. Kuznitz is a useful account of the work of YIVO between 1940 and 1953, during which period the institution tried to help European Jewry, document the destruction, commemorate the victims but also "look towards the future by focusing on its new American homeland" (p. 205). Like Jockush, Kassow, and Schwarz, Kuznitz's chapter is her first work available in French. The section ends with a contribution of Aurélia Kalisky, who looks at Abraham Levite's introduction to the proposed Auschwitz collection – a long excerpt is reproduced in the first pages of the chapter – and examines the complicated trajectory of the text, often edited, shortened, and translated from one language to another (p. 213).

The third part of the book explores more specifically two crucial spaces of knowledge production about the Destruction, Buenos Aires and Paris. Its first section focuses on the series *"Dos poylische yidntum"* (Polish Jewry), published between 1946 and 1966. By analyzing the transnational networks that developed through the series, Jan Schwarz interrogates the myth of "the genocide as the end

of Yiddish." The series, he argues, "embody the diversity and abundant production of Yiddish culture during the twenty years that followed the Holocaust but also its complete invisibility outside its own linguistic and cultural boundaries" (p. 242). This invisibility should not erase the essential role such work played in the recomposition of Yiddish culture in Hebrew and English. Malena Chinski looks at the role of Marc Turkow, one of the main instigators of the series, and thoroughly examines his correspondence. Through this material, she highlights many unknown components of "*Dos poylische yidntum*"'s two decades of existence. She insists on the massive influence of the Claims conference financial support, especially after 1955. The Claims' narrow understanding of what surviving the Holocaust meant – the individual and direct victim – clashed with Turkow's idea that all Polish Jews were collective survivors of a "vanished world" (p. 254). Judith Lindenberg offers a close reading of several books of the series that are all "writings of historians" but not always "writings of history" (p. 257). By doing so, she restores the multiple identities of their authors (writer, resistant fighter, victim, and more) and the various fields they were involved in (history alongside sociology, literary criticism, and others). The second part of this section focuses on Paris as the 'center of the Yiddish world.' Constance Pâris de la Bollardière explores the trajectory and work of Yankev Pat, secretary general of the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC), especially his correspondence between 1946 and 1948. This material reveals the political and artistic activism of Pat and, through him, the important role of the JLC as well as the "entangled relations between the memory agenda and the reconstruction efforts of the Polish Jewry" (p. 290). In his contribution, Simon Perego asks the crucial question of the reception and the uses of this early literature about the Destruction by examining the diverse corpus of texts that was used during Paris-based Jewish commemoration practices between the end of World War II and the Six-Day War. He highlights how such use contributed to a different commemorative approach to the Warsaw ghetto uprising, one that relied on emotions and grieving rather than on a celebration of heroism and political engagement. In the last chapter of the book, Éléonore Biezunski analyzes the forgotten *De Teater Shpigl*. This unique theatre journal, created by Aaron Poliakoff in 1951 and whose first chief editor was Elie Wiesel, participated in a wider reflection about the past and the future of the Yiddish language and culture. Through the almost ten years of the journal's publications, Biezunski unravels the social networks of the Parisian Yiddish world in the aftermath of the war – networks that were animated by a constant flow of "uprooted" artists that were either migrating or on tour (p. 320).

Premiers savoirs de la Shoah offers a detailed depiction of the many early initiatives to document the genocide and the vanished world of Polish Jewry. If the contributions are uneven in their efforts to overcome the boundaries between literature and history, the book as the whole successfully portrays the diverse trajectories of the authors and the wide-ranging nature of their works that constituted a complex corpus crucial to the understanding of the genocide and its memorialization.

Antoine Burgard, Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah postdoctoral fellow (University of Manchester)

Sara Yael Hirschhorn, *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 368.

by *Caterina Bandini*

A study that is "half about 'Jewishness' in contemporary America, and half about 'Americanness' in contemporary Israel" (p. 18): this is the intent of Sara Yael Hirschhorn's first monograph on the role of American Jews in the Israeli settler movement. Drawing upon a nearly decade-long research based on interviews, media, academic sources and archival materials, the book explores the motivations of young, well educated, mainly white-collar professionals American Jews who chose to leave their comfort zone to settle over the Green Line between the late 1960s and the late 1980s. The main object of inquiry is the combination of liberal values and an illiberal project, which is also the author's personal concern as she identifies with American liberal Zionism from the very first pages.

The first chapter opens with a statistical and demographic profile indicating 60,000 people (an estimated 15% of the whole settler population) as the number of settlers of Jewish-American origins who hold citizenship in the United States, a large cohort among American-Israeli citizens living under Israeli jurisdiction. The author highlights the role of the Six-Day War in re-activating an important network uniting largely inactive American Jews, some of whom would later refer to this moment as the starting point of their commitment to the settler enterprise. It bears emphasizing that, as other scholars quoted in the chapter have pointed out, the 1967 turn did not create the sentiment of solidarity within this group – it awakened it. The sociological concept of abeyance structures, developed by social movement theory, would have helped clarify the continuity in Jewish American support to Israel between 1948 and 1967, when dormant networks were re-activated and led to further mobilization.[1]

The war also represented a moment of intensive religious revival – merely sketched out in the chapter – that served as the basis, together with previous activist experiences, for Jewish immigration to the West Bank. Most of the future Israeli settlers were newly observant Jews coming from the upper middle class, whose primary identity was as liberal or left-wing activists engaged in the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam war protests. The interviews excerpts bring up that

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[1] Verta Taylor, "Social Movement Continuity. The Women's Movement in Abeyance," *American Sociological Review* 54/5 (1989): 761-75.

settlement activity was perceived as an expression of Jewish American liberalism, as a struggle for freedom analogous to those of the Vietnamese or the African-American population.

This theme underlies the following three chapters, which present case studies of Israeli settlements established by American groups. In all three, modern-day pioneers aimed to conciliate religio-political imperatives with an alternative, communal lifestyle project. Interestingly, moving to the West Bank was not perceived as a break with their original background, but rather as a way of bringing America to the occupied territories. Two aspects of the settlers' experience are particularly well analyzed: the more or less successful connection of the various American groups with the Israeli bureaucracy, and the problematic relations between American settlers and other populations present on the territory (notably, Palestinian communities and non-American Jewish settlers).

Chapter Two constitutes the first attempt to narrate the story of the American settlers who founded Yamit in the Sinai. The first group of immigrants came to the Peninsula in the fall of 1975, less than two years before the general elections that would bring Likud's Menachem Begin to power as Prime Minister. From the beginning, the relationship between the Israeli government and the aspiring settlers was very tense, revealing a conflict of idealism and realpolitik. The Sinai Peninsula was a post-war strategic site for the State of Israel; the Israeli government had decided to give housing preference to the families of IDF soldiers who were going to work at the nearby military bases. Furthermore, the Begin administration was secretly consenting to exchange the Sinai for a peace deal with Egypt while publicly rejecting any plan to evacuate the Peninsula. The effect of the Camp David Accords on the settlers was devastating: a member of the American *garin* doesn't hesitate to refer to the demolition of Yamit in April 1982 as his "own personal Holocaust" (p. 92).

Efrat and Tekoa, both located in Gush Etzion in the West Bank, are the subjects of the following two chapters, respectively. Efrat was founded by an Israeli activist and an American Rabbi in 1983. Unlike Yamit, it is the emblem of a very successful cooperation between founders and the Israeli authorities, benefiting from access to the highest corridors of power from the very beginning of the project. Although Palestinian claims to the land were immediately raised, Efrat settlers had an initial alliance with local Palestinians against Gush Emunim activists, before the outbreak of the First Intifada and the Oslo process put a drastic end to this fragile cooperation.

Tekoa was founded as an outpost for military support after the Yom Kippur War in 1975. Four years later, Garin Lev Tzion, founded by Zionist activists from the Upper West Side in Manhattan, settled in the area. Of the three cases analyzed, Tekoa has experienced the harshest clashes with the native Palestinian population, with a long series of attacks and murders still ongoing today. Strikingly, Tekoa's late Rabbi Menachem Froman was the founder of a controversial religious peace movement. I should add that shortly after his death in 2013, his widow and two of his students founded a joint Israeli-Palestinian initiative for inter-religious dialogue and reconciliation based in Gush Etzion.

It appears clear that the attempt to conciliate Western universalism and Jewish particularism is a predominant characteristic of the American-Israeli discourse beyond the Green Line. The last chapter of the book highlights the antithetical paths chosen by American settlers: from acts of terrorism to public relations projects, with the latter being a reaction to the former. Against the backdrop of bloody attacks committed by some American-Israeli settlers, others invented a rights-based discourse to defend the settlements vis-a-vis the international community. Although it tackles the little-known history of settlers' diplomacy, the last chapter seems more a list of names and events than a cohesive reflection on the tensions pervading American-Israeli settler society at the dawn of the Oslo peace process. Advancing in time beyond Oslo to the mid-1990s, it would have been beneficial to portray the new generation of American settlers in greater detail.

The book under review is a highly readable, historically grounded, and nuanced account of a crucial component of the Israeli settler population. It heralds a second generation of scholars studying the settlers, but without the typically politicized preconceptions: approaching the settlers neither as fanatic monsters, nor, in my view, by focusing exclusively on their hostility towards the Palestinians or their praised contribution to the Zionist project. In doing so, the book echoes other recent works on the topic that underline the complex articulation of religio-political imperatives with lifestyle and economic concerns.[2] The author rejects most of the popular terminology used to characterize the settlers, including notions of extremism, right-wing allegiance, and zealotry. Instead, she describes her interviewees as "nice [people] engaged in a not-so-nice political program" (p. 11). In the conclusion, she emphasizes how settlements are far from being the only

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[2] Marco Allegra, Ariel Handel, and Erez Maggor, *Normalizing Occupation. The Politics of Everyday Life in the West Bank Settlements*, (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana university press, 2017).

obstacle to a future peace agreement, and calls for a deeper understanding of the "multiplicity of ideologies, constituencies, and discourses within this movement today" (p. 221) – which appears as an urgent scholarly and political imperative.

The author's social proximity to her interviewees is definitely an ethnographic asset, and more details about this relationship would have been helpful. At the same time, her connection with the Zionist narrative brings about debatable choice of words (Palestinians who commit attacks against settlers are always referred to as "terrorists") and informs the theoretical framework, as in her argument for the classification of *aliya* as a legitimate "ethnic return migration" (p. 18). More elaborate references to other historical cases (the India-Pakistan parallel is only invoked in the conclusion) would have helped inscribe the Israeli settler movement in the broader framework of settler colonialism. Finally, a more thorough examination of the economic backbone provided by American Jewry to the settler enterprise would have completed a portrait of the constituency under consideration.

Caterina Bandini, École des hautes études en sciences sociales

Michael Brenner, *Der lange Schatten der Revolution. Juden und Antisemiten in Hitlers München 1918 bis 1923,* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2019), pp. 399.

by Ulrich Wyrwa

At the beginning of the age of extremes, an extreme antisemitism emerged from the historical confluence of war, revolution and counterrevolution in Europe, and one of its most powerful new motifs was that of Jewish Bolshevism. True enough, the percentage of revolutionaries coming from Jewish communities was disproportionately high, not only in Russia, but also in Budapest and Munich. Even though these individuals thought of their activism not as Jewish, but as revolutionary, their family background fed the antisemitic delusion. Within the Jewish communities, the participation of Jews in the revolution triggered fierce defensive reactions and accusations. The complexity of these circumstances has so far been inadequately illuminated. Michael Brenner has now presented a thorough study on Munich Jews and antisemites in Revolution and Counterrevolution, which reconstructs the intertwined links between antisemitic phantasmagoria and Jewish revolutionaries, the behavior of Jewish liberals and social-democrats, the counterreactions from Jewish communities, and activities of converted Jews.

The fact that the number of Jews in the Bavarian Revolution was disproportionately high, as Brenner explains at the outset, has been emphasized and elaborated upon many times. A systematic study of the attitude of Jewish revolutionaries to their Jewish origins has, however, been lacking, as has a reconstruction of the attitude of the majority of the Jewish population to the revolution. Brenner shows that the Jewish background of many revolutionaries was "a fiercely discussed topic" among Jews, with the majority being "resolute opponents of the revolution," or at least viewing it "with concern" (p. 14). Furthermore, Brenner's particular interest is in "integrating the events more strongly into the context of Jewish history" (p. 19).

Brenner notes that most of the Jewish revolutionaries no longer participated in Jewish community life, and had no connection to religion. But "they did not deny their Judaism, either" (p. 21). According to Brenner, the "antisemitic myth of a 'Jewish revolution'" is therefore "just as absurd." He succinctly sums up this connection in the subheadings: "Jewish revolutionaries do not make a Jewish revolution" (p. 25) and "like the Jewish community's claim to protection, the

Jewish revolutionaries are all no longer Jews" (p. 28), an assessment that is also often found in literature.

Skillful and convincing, Brenner sets out to integrate the history of the Bavarian Revolution and Counterrevolution more completely into Jewish history, by introducing the central chapters of his presentation of each case with explanations of the Jewish festivals celebrated in the temporal context of the political events of the time. Brenner examines in detail the relations of Jewish revolutionaries such as Kurt Eisner, Gustav Landauer, Erich Mühsam, Ernst Toller and Eugen Leviné with Judaism and asks what influence their origins had on their political activities. Brenner also examines Jewish contemporaries who were less central to the political events, as well as a number of Jewish liberal or social-democratic activists. He closes this chapter with references to conservative and right-wing extremist Jews who fought against the republic of councils, some of them in the Freikorps.

Brenner introduces the chapter on the "Pogrom Mood in Munich" of April 1919 with references to the Pesach Festival celebrated that month. The focus is on the antisemitism unleashed immediately after Eisner took office. Brenner refers to a collection of hundreds of antisemitic letters sent to Eisner, kept in the German Federal Archives. Portraying in detail the antisemitism of the Catholic Church in Bavaria, Brenner also points to the accusations that then papal nuncio in Munich, Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII), who fled the city during the revolution, made against Kurt Eisner, whom he saw as the "symbol of the revolution" (p. 139).

Brenner also addresses the complexity of questions associated with the murder of Kurt Eisner, pointing out that the murderer, Count Anton von Arco auf Valley, on his mother's side also had a Jewish family background.

The defeat by military force, including the extremely aggressive, antisemitic Freikorps, of the republic of councils, was accompanied by the brutal murder of the Jewish revolutionary Gustav Landauer, among others. The aftermath left the authorities faced with growing hatred against Jews and the likelihood of pogroms. What distinguishes the police reports of these events is that, as Brenner writes, they are "themselves full of antisemitic stereotypes" (p. 155).

After the suppression of the revolution – Brenner introduces this chapter with the Jewish New Year festival, Rosh Hashanah - Munich became the "refuge of the reaction" and "the capital of antisemitism in Germany" (p. 183). The Bavarian

military was again "in the hands of the far right (p. 191). Hitler had "in this atmosphere […] an easy game" (p. 186); his "rapid political rise" had begun (p. 192).

As early as January 1920, the first mass events held by antisemitic organizations took place in Munich. The journalist Paul Nikolaus Cossmann, who had converted from Judaism to Catholicism, was also involved in the creation of the antisemitic climate. Cossmann was an influential editor of the daily newspaper *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* and editor of the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte.* In both, Cossmann propagated the canard of the stab in the back and played a decisive role in spreading the accusation.

In connection with Cossman's Jewish self-loathing, Brenner also points to another extremely bizarre biography: Ignaz Trebitsch-Lincoln, a Jew born in Hungary and converted to Protestantism in England, became active as a Jewish missionary in Canada. In 1910, he was elected to the British House of Commons as a liberal and then offered to work for the German authorities as a spy during the First World War. Arrested in England, he was expelled after the war. He then went to Germany, where he supported the Kapp Putsch in 1920. After the Putsch's failure, Trebitsch-Lincoln fled to Munich, where the Bavarian police protected him from an arrest warrant from Berlin. Shortly thereafter, he joined work on conspiracy plans alongside General Ludendorff. The communist newspaper *Red Flag* on the other hand connected him with Benito Mussolini. Trebitsch-Lincoln fled to Vienna with false papers issued by the Munich police. "The Munich police files," Brenner sums up, "show the complete confusion that the impostor Trebitsch-Lincoln created here, as well" (p. 252).

Brenner opens the last chapter, "The City of Hitler," with Sukkoth 1923. On September 28, a Sukkah burned down; the same day saw an attack on a Munich synagogue. The situation of the Jews in Bavaria became more and more precarious during that month, especially since the Prime Minister was planning the expulsion of Eastern Jews and searched for allies in the right-wing camp. Finally, the night between November 8-9, 1923, was the date of Hitler's coup. For most Jews in Munich", Brenner emphasizes, "this night meant the first real confrontation with the life-threatening horrors of National Socialist terror" (p. 282). The antisemitic climate in Munich after the suppression of the revolution "served Adolf Hitler as a stage" and "as an ideal testing ground for his later plans." Nevertheless, Brenner emphasizes, "no direct path led to 1933" (p. 318).

Summing up the results of his study, Brenner writes that this chapter of German history makes clear "the misunderstanding of many German Jews" about the practical meanings of emancipation (p. 315). After 1919, no Jewish politician in Bavaria ever held "government office again" and even in everyday life the "old trenches persevered" (p. 315). Furthermore, "this historical episode is a learning play in the complexity of 'Who is a Jew?'" (p. 316).

At the end of the book, Brenner refers to another Jewish festival, Purim on March 12, 1933, a holiday commemorating national rescue from imminent danger of annihilation. A few days after the holiday – Brenner concludes with this memory – "the first German concentration camp opened;" another few weeks later "the first four concentration camp murders of Jewish prisoners took place" (p. 319).

Rarely has the complexity of the relations between Jews, revolution and antisemitism been reflected so thoroughly as in this study by Michael Brenner of the Munich Revolution.

Ulrich Wyrwa, Universität Potsdam and Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der TU Berlin

Irene Aue-Ben-David, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtschreibung im 20 Jahrhundert. Zu Werk und Rezeption von Selma Stern,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2017), pp. 315.

by *Dominique Bourel*

This important book comes from Jerusalem! The author is the very active researcher who heads the Leo Baeck Institute in Israel. Following an earlier work on Selma Stern by Marina Sassenberg,[1] the present volume offers new insight, study of new archival material and a new research undertaking. Selma Stern was outstanding not only in her rereading of the emancipation of the Jews in Germany, but also as a person. The book follows a chronological sequence in Selma Stern's life: a historian at the Academy for the Science of Judaism (1920-1934), Researcher under Hitler (till 1941) and Worker in Exile (till 1981). This enables a wonderful exploration in the workshop of one of the most fascinating historians, female, Jewish, and successful as a researcher. Her work had two focuses: the emancipation of the Jews in Prussia (1925—1971/1975) and a monograph on Jud Süss (1929).

Selma Stern came from a Jewish family of Baden: she was born in 1890 in Kippenheim; her father was a physician. The first female student at the *Grossherzogliches Gymnasium* in Baden Baden, she was one of the first women to earn a Ph.D. in history in Germany. In 1920 she went to Berlin, where at the well-known *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* she eventually met her husband, the renowned "*Alt Historiker*" Eugen Täubler (1879-1953). In exile in the USA after 1938, following Täubler's death Stern lived in Switzerland and died in Basel in 1981.

History of books (*Werkesgeschichte*) is neither biographic nor an analysis of texts (p.15). The first part of the book is about Stern's work in the *Berlin Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums.* The second part deals with her research under the Nazis till 1941. The third and last part covers her achievement in exile in the USA. It is remarkable that one of the major projects of the academy was concerned with Prussian Jewish politics. We know that the Jews and the Huguenots were two minorities tolerated in this country after 1671 and 1685, respectively, after expulsions from Vienna and from Paris. Two leading Catholic powers expelled

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[1] Marina Sassenberg, *Selma Stern (1890-1981). Das eigene in der Geschichte. Selbstentwürfe und Geschichtsentwürfe einer Historikerin,* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

these two groups, thus unwittingly benefitting Prussia (and other lands in the world). Stern began to study in Heidelberg (1909), one of the first universities in Germany to accept women to as free auditors, and subsequently as regular students. She later went on to Munich (1911). Her student research work (1914 nachdr. 1965) was about Anacharsis Clots, a fascinating German figure during the French Revolution. The *Habilitation* was very difficult to obtain: the first *Habilitation* of a woman in Munich at the faculty of philosophy was in...1947! In 1920, Stern was able to plan a large project at the *Akademie* about the Jews in Prussia. The head of the Academy was Eugen Täubler, with whom she had a romantic relationship after 1920. They eventually married in 1927. But Täubler left the academy in 1922 to become a professor of history, specializing in the Greek and Roman Empires, at the University of Zurich. He was later granted a professorship in Heidelberg in 1925, as *Ordinarius für Alte Geschichte*. The academy's new director was the philosopher Julius Guttmann. Stern did her research not only in the very rich archives in Berlin, but also in Halberstadt, Magdeburg, Stettin and Königsberg. An important question was: why and how did the Prussian kings view tolerating the Jews? What was the price the Jews were ready to pay? Where did the civil servants work for and against the Jews in the state apparatus? The aim of the study was influenced by the norms of the German *Wissenschaft* and the well-known *acta borussica*. This entirely new orientation should be examined. The first volume, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden,* came out in 1925. The author shows that the *Grosse Kurfürst* and his 'modern' staff needed the Jews for the construction of the absolutist state after devastating wars. It is impressive to follow in great detail how the question was elaborated in various offices. Political, economic, and philosophical reasons were presented and disputed. We also see that in some provinces (Halberstadt) it was easier for the Jews. In other cases things were more difficult. Each king wanted to reorganize his administration to make it more efficient. And each administration had new ideas. The *Grosse Kurfürst* began, then came the first king, Friedrich I, "König *in* Preussen" (and not *of* Preussen) who wanted to be involved in the life of new communities. The case of Frederic II is better known, especially his Judeophobic laws and his pragmatic actions. One of the most innovative contributions of Aue-Ben-Davids book is the careful study of the reception of the different volumes as Stern became a highly respected historian and her subject came to occupy center stage at the academy. Between 1925 and 1930, 21 critiques were published, both academic and simply popular. The process of the emancipation was clarified and very well examined. New was also the inscription of Jewish history into Prussian history. More than that, Stern said that the Jews were instrumentalized by the state and the *Kurfürst*. The way was paved for the work of the next king, Friedrich Wilhelm I. She edited

more documents with the help of Dr. Arthur Levinson between 1927 and 1937. Stern wanted to follow the history of the 18th century, where the period of Friedrich Wilhelm I was a setback. The former "pioneers of the economy" had to be supervised and restrained. The burgeoning economy of Prussia was partly a result of the competition between the Jews and the Huguenots. But the Jews and their communities had to be scrutinized: they had to write in German and each community had a watching officer or state servant in charge of its life. But it is clear that the obligation to learn German and to use it was a push factor in favor of acculturation. Before the publication of the second volume, Stern offered her insights in the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (1935/36). Between the years 1935-1941 Stern worked on her research for the planned third volume to cover the years 1712-1812. Till 1936, Stern added works in Munich and Düsseldorf. The book also analyzes the position of the archives after 1933. But after 1941 it was forbidden for Jews to visit archives in Germany with the exception of family inquiries. We have to imagine the sepulchral atmosphere in the *Lesesaal* of the Prussian State Archive with only three Jews: Selma Stern, Jacob Jacobson (1888-1968), former director of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* (1920-1939), and Ernst Poser (1892-1980), an archivist in the State Archiv and coworker of the *acta borussica*! After the war Stern was able to publish the enormous and authoritative 7 volumes, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, Tübingen (1962-1971 with index 1975).

At the same time, in Stuttgart Stern did research on court Jews, who accounted for an essential moment in the history of the emancipation. She discovered the material about the "*Hoffaktor und Finanzienrat*" Joseph Süss Oppenheimer. The *Jud Süss* (1929, 3,000 copies) is also about the difficult relationship of a Jewish servant and the state. The history was tragic, ending with a condemnation and a public burning on February 4, 1738. We know that the case was also the subject of a historical novel by Lion Feuchtwanger (1925, 200,000 copies till 1933!) and then that the case had a dubious fate in the Third Reich. We have recent studies about this contested figure. It is another prehistory of the emancipation with the sad fragrance of catastrophe. Very interesting is also Aue-Ben-David's contextualization of the "*Jud Süss Effekt*" in the Weimar Republic. Here the history of the reception is once again important. It is the year (1929) of the Moses Mendelssohn celebrations all around Germany and the fall of the Nazis in the *Reichstag*. The central question was now the germanization of the Jews and not only a political administration history. This *Jud Süss* for some was a provocation, while for others it was a "*mene tekel*," an anticipated cry. The first reception came in 1930, before the worsening of the situation and the fatal year 1933.

Well documented, very readable, full of new data and challenging ideas, this book is an essential research work in German Jewish historiography, the *Frauenforschung* and the history of the emancipation in the 18th century.

Dominique Bourel, CNRS (Sorbonne)

Joshua Teplitsky, *Prince of the Press: How One Collector Built History's Most Enduring and Remarkable Jewish Library,* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2019), pp. 336.

by *Mirjam Thulin*

Leopold Zunz's (1794–1886) grief when in 1829 the Bodleian Library in Oxford purchased the book collection of the late rabbi David Oppenheim of Prague (1664–1736) is almost legendary. Together with the collection of the Hamburg merchant Heiman J. Michael (1792–1846), acquired in 1848, the Oppenheim collection showed a Jewish version of early modern passion for collecting, and a treasure of the Jewish book culture in Central Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The descendants of Oppenheim sold the library which had originally been worth 150,000 thalers for only 9,000 thalers/ 2,080 pounds, as they were in financial distress. Fortunately, thus the collection remained intact until today.

Collections like Oppenheim's library are a treasure for the history of (Jewish) booklore and book cultures, but also for the history of ideas and knowledge. Joshua Teplitsky, an assistant professor of history at Stony Brook University, tells us the story of Oppenheim and his collection knowledgeably and enthusiastically. He presents Oppenheim as the spider in a net of Jewish scholarship, printing, and "early modern Jewish governance" (p. 2). Although Teplitsky focusses on the building of the library and on how Oppenheim used the book collection for various purposes, he devotes also much of his study to the dazzling life of the "Prince of the Press."

David Oppenheim was born in Worms; one of his earliest tutors was the well-known rabbi Yair Hayim Bacharach (1639–1702). Oppenheim was wealthy and related to contemporary Jewish court factors, among them his powerful uncle Samuel Oppenheimer (1630–1703), court agent of the Holy Roman Emperor in Vienna. David Oppenheim became even richer when he married his first wife Gnendl, the daughter of Leffman Behrends (Liepmann Cohen, 1634–1714), the court agent of Hanover. In 1684 Oppenheim was ordained as a rabbi. His first post as a rabbi was in Nikolsburg in Moravia. In 1702 he moved to Prague to follow the call to become chief rabbi of Prague and later Landesrabbiner of Bohemia. In addition, he assembled honorary titles, among them "Prince," or Nasi, of the Land of Israel.

These posts and honorary offices found symbolic expression in his library, a collection of ultimately about 4500 printed Hebrew and Yiddish books and 1000 manuscripts. Consequently, it constitutes the center of Teplitsky's study, along with the quest for Oppenheim's personality, intellectual life, politics, and the passion for collecting books. Following the understanding of collecting as knowledge, Teplitsky describes Oppenheim's library as a "deeply material way of knowing" (p. 7), and as a mirror of how cultural and political authority interacted and were intertwined. Moreover, he frames his study as a contribution to the history of Jewish political cultures and practices (pp. 13-14), not least because books became a form of currency for Oppenheim and his circles, all based and set in a specific early modern power structure of early modern Central Europe.

Dissertation-based books typically benefit from a clear focus and structure, and this holds true in Teplitsky's case, too. The endnotes, bibliography, and the index make up a third of the book, quite unusual for an American academic book. They allow readers to follow up topics easily. The book is divided into five chapters. Every chapter ends with a conclusion that brings together all results and places them in the bigger picture of (Jewish) book cultures and history of knowledge. Pictures of and from Oppenheimer's book collection, photos of his notes, manuscripts, and printed title pages make the written narrative vivid.

Following a concise but thorough introduction, the books starts off in the first chapter on the making of Oppenheim as a book collector (pp. 22–55). Teplitsky introduces Oppenheim's life and legacy, how the collection started and how family and kinship, related or befriended court Jews, scholars and rivals were involved in the process. Chapter two turns to "Politics, Patronage, and Paper" (pp. 56–92), and relates the significance of Oppenheim and his library up to the early years of the eighteenth century. It shows how Oppenheim further developed his library through purchases. Moreover, he increasingly received books as gifts from various people who hoped that he would use his outstanding power position in both the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds for advocating for the donor. In this context, Teplitsky also discusses the court Jews' and Jewish communities' networks in which Oppenheim was involved as mediator, as well as Oppenheim's involvement and engagement in the support of the Jewish residents in Jerusalem, who gratefully and respectfully called him "Prince," or Nasi, of the Land of Israel.

Chapter three turns to knowledge and cultural history (pp. 93–129) and discusses the significance of Oppenheim's book collection for the decision-making in Jewish legal questions. Thanks to his library, Oppenheim was ahead of many of his

rabbinic colleagues in this regard because he was able to consult the relevant literature quickly. From 1793 onward, the collection was housed at Oppenheim's father-in-law's home in Hannover in order to protect it against Catholic censorship in his hometown of Prague. In Hanover, the library was accessible through guardians and librarians for multiple users, among them rabbinical scholars and judges, but also Christians like Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739), a Protestant theologian and author of the Bibliotheca Hebraica (first published in 1683, revised and expanded between 1715 and 1727). Chapter four focusses on the Jewish printing press (pp. 130–161). Oppenheim invested in the new media of the time not only as collector of valuable incunabula and books, but also as the holder of copyrights and printing privileges. Chapter five turns to Oppenheim as a legal scholar and to books as political objects (pp. 162–187). Teplitsky analyzes how Oppenheim shaped the Jewish book market, for instance through his *haskamot* (*approbata*) for Hebrew books, and how he dealt with criticism and accusations against books he supported, as well as the involvement of Catholic censorship. In fact, his *haskamot* were one of the few writings of Oppenheim that were printed before the twentieth century (p. 171). The chapter-long epilogue and conclusion (pp. 188–205) tell about the fate of the library after Oppenheim's death, the cataloguing of the collection in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which came about not least with the aim to selling it at a good price.

The exposition of the chapters already shows how many important topics and details Teplitsky covers in his study. The author effortlessly takes the reader into a lively world of courts and politics, patronage and philanthropic networks, and he tells in detail of local and regional Czech-Jewish history. He only touches on Oppenheim's economic activities in the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. It must remain open if Oppenheim's financial activities were limited to the court factor families with which he was related. At the same time, Teplitsky respectfully deconstructs legends, such as Oppenheim's mythmaking relationship to his powerful uncle Samuel (p. 228, FN 39). In contrast to the somewhat hyperbolic subtitle of the book, Teplitsky calls the Oppenheim collection in his conclusion a "library of Ashkenaz" and "Ashkenazi library" (pp. 204-205). Nonetheless, he successfully places his study not only in the history of (Jewish) book cultures, but also of early modern European (book) collections, cabinets of curiosities, giving and traveling. Ultimately, Teplitsky does a worthwhile service to Oppenheim, too, because until this book there was – surprisingly – no comprehensive biography of David Oppenheim and the legacy of the "Prince of the Press."

Mirjam Thulin

Mirjam Thulin, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN and Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz

The Holocaust and North Africa, eds. Aomar Boum and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), pp. 349.

by *Piera Rossetto*

This volume arose out of the 2015 conference "On the Margins of the Holocaust: Jews, Muslims, and Colonialism in North Africa during the Second World War," held at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and co-organized by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and a number of research centers at the UCLA itself.

As clearly stated in the introduction to the volume by the editors Sarah Abrevaya Stein (historian) and Aomar Boum (anthropologist), a key question lies at the core of this project: "Why has North Africa been written out of Holocaust history and memory, and, conversely, why has the Holocaust been excised from so many narratives about North Africa?" (p. 2). To address this, the editors present a multidisciplinary collection of essays with this manifold aim: to enrich the understanding of how the Holocaust unfolded in North Africa; to offer new readings on the impact of the Holocaust on North African Jews and Muslims in the postwar period, by considering different realms in which this impact is expressed (literature, memoirs, politics); and finally, to incorporate these new insights in the "larger geographies of the Holocaust" (p. 16).

The volume is divided into four parts and includes 15 chapters. Parts I to III consider a variety of case studies in the French colonies and protectorates (from French West Africa to Algeria) from a multidisciplinary perspective (history, anthropology, cultural studies). Later in this review, I will briefly discuss each chapter's content and sources. Part IV, "Commentary," includes six essays by scholars of the Holocaust and Holocaust memory, as well as North African and French imperial history, meant to mirror – in the editors' view – "the focus of the preceding parts of the book" (p. 16). Given the more 'reflective nature' of this part (consisting of about fifty pages), one might consider reading it first as an introduction to the thorny issues that had until recently made it unthinkable to discuss the Holocaust in connection with North Africa; this can also help attune the reader to some of the interpretative keys suggested throughout the volume.

The chapters by Susan Gilson Miller (ch. 12) and Haim Saadoun (ch. 13) provide the readers, especially those less familiar with studies of North Africa and North African Jewries, with two important tools: a detailed chronology tracing the

development of the historiography of World War II in North Africa among academics and the general public in Israel (Saadoun); and a sharp critique of what caused the long absence of Sephardim in Holocaust historiography (Gilson Miller). A Eurocentric tradition in Holocaust studies along with the scarcity and challenge of accessing sources (and resources), made it difficult for "a specific North African narrative" (p. 226) to emerge until recently.

An important stumbling block to overcome was an earlier trend in Holocaust studies, seeking to establish an inviolate category of 'the victim' or of 'the survivor.' If 'the victim' or 'the survivor' of the Holocaust is an *a priori* established category based on the European experience only, then the fate of most Jews in North Africa, which was utterly different from that of Jews in Europe, is sentenced to being excluded. However, since the turn of the twenty-first century, as Susan Rubin Suleiman notes (ch. 11), the tendency has rather been to "emphasize specificities" (p. 215), and to let the unique destiny of individuals emerge from the collective (p. 216). As she poignantly affirms, "there is no such thing as 'the survivors,' only *survivors* who underwent different kinds of suffering and whose responses [...] were not similar" (p. 216).

Suleiman suggests adopting the "concept of inclusion with diversity," which would imply considering "the *same* historical event but seen from different perspectives" (p. 216). This approach is in line with the most recent developments in Holocaust studies as clearly outlined by Todd Presner (ch. 15). This chapter, together with that by Omer Bartov (ch. 10) on other aspects linked with the "competition of victimhood" (as it unfolded in Europe beginning in the 1980s-1990s and in Israel), might serve as a kind of additional introduction for readers who are not well-versed in Holocaust studies and Holocaust memory.

As suggested by its title, "Where Fascism and Colonialism Meet," the first part of the book (chs. 1-3) explores the overlapping and intersecting of colonial pre- and postwar policies with anti-Semitic legislation in North Africa. The chapter by Daniel J. Schroeter (ch. 1) considers the case of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and takes the reader through a complex and detailed historical account of the enactment and abrogation of both the Crémieux Decree and the *Statut des Juifs* (also known as the Alibert law). As the historian demonstrates, while Vichy's anti-Semitic laws reproduced Nazi legislation in many respects, they nevertheless need to be understood "on a longer continuum," as "integral to French colonialism, embedded in the racial policy toward both Muslims and Jews across North Africa" (p. 48).

Mainly based on secondary sources, the contribution by Jens Hoppe (ch. 2) aims to ascertain the responsibility for anti-Jewish violence in Libya, in particular between 1938 and 1943, a question on which "other historians have rarely focused" (p. 51) and which constitutes an Italian-German-British affair, according to Hoppe. Most convincing in the article is the author's demonstration of the responsibility of the Italian fascist regime for anti-Jewish violence: here Hoppe refers to Sarfatti's definition of "an independent 'maturing process' of fascist anti-Semitism" (p. 51). In the category of "anti-Jewish violence," Hoppe includes attacks against Jews in Libya by Italian fascists as early as in the 1920s (as proved by historian Michele Sarfatti); the enactment of anti-Semitic legislation in 1938; and the internment of Libyan Jews in camps in Libya, as well as the deportation of foreign Jewish citizens to concentration camps in Tunisia, France, Italy and Germany.

The fascinating chapter by Ruth Ginio investigates the case of French West Africa (FWA), where only 110 Jews lived during the Second World War. After defining the historical framework of pre-war FWA and outlining the situation in the French Empire after June 1940, Ginio considers the efforts made by the Vichy regime to extend its ideology of National Revolution (centered on family, work, and fatherland) to the West African colonies. She then moves on to examine the persecution of the very few Jews living in the federation by presenting how individual Jewish cases were handled by the French colonial authorities to accord with directives from the Vichy regime. Her wise use of microhistories from FWA is particularly effective since it constantly refers to the wider French colonial context. In this way, she manages convincingly to demonstrate how the implementation of anti-Jewish legislation against this tiny Jewish presence in the FWA "shed light on the obsessive nature of Vichy policy and its blind and irrational implementation" (p. 77).

Part II of the volume (chs. 4-6), deals with individual experiences of occupation, internment and race laws in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The case of the Bedeau internment camp in Algeria during the Second World war is at the core of Susan Slyomovics' chapter (ch. 4). Originally, the camp was one of the many detention sites built since the beginning of the French conquest of Algeria in 1830. After the enactment of the 1940 Vichy *Statut des Juifs* and the abrogation of the Cremieux Decree, the camp became - in a kind of "racial specialization" (p. 112) - an internment camp for Jewish Algerian soldiers. This designation of the camp remained in effect even after the 1942 Allied landing and liberation of North Africa. Based on historical evidence and personal recollections of former Jewish

inmates, Slyomovics proves how Vichy control continued after Vichy's fall, since the discrimination against Jewish Algerian soldiers "remained deliberately in place in post-Vichy liberated Algeria" (p.106). In fact, Jewish Algerian soldiers were not reintegrated into the Army and were forced into work units in detention camps until July 1943. This case study exemplifies Hannah Arendt's definition of race and bureaucracy as the "two new devices for political organization and rule over foreign peoples [...] discovered during the first decades of the imperialism" (p. 95).

The chapter by Daniel Lee (ch. 6) is another brilliant example of how fruitful connecting the study of the Holocaust in North Africa with the history of the French empire is. The author investigates the changes that occurred between late summer 1941 and spring 1942 in the anti-Semitic legislation in Tunisia, a French protectorate since 1881. While attention has typically focused on the German occupation of Tunisia (November 1942-May 1943), Lee suggests looking at earlier years more closely. Although he concentrates on a strikingly short period of time, the analysis he provides of the "policy making chain of command overseeing the Jewish question in Tunisia" (p. 139) is undoubtedly original and convincing. Lee unveils how competition among the protagonists of the time (the French colonial administration, the Tunisian government and the Vichy regime) along with the struggle by the Residency to maintain sovereignty triggered a contest of sorts as to who would be the most rigorous in implementing the anti-Semitic legislation in the protectorate. This caused a rapid worsening of life conditions for the Jews who had settled in Tunisia prior to the German occupation.

The chapter co-authored by Aomar Boum and Mohammed Hatimi (ch. 5) expands the focus to the pre-Saharan regions of rural Morocco, known as *bled* (a notion explained in the essay). The title *Blessing of the Bled* effectively conveys the authors' principal claim that the Second World War - and its impact on the economy of the region - "did not mark a turning point in Jewish-Muslim relations in the *bled* or worsen Muslim attitudes toward or treatment of local Jews" (p. 114). Boum and Hatimi base their argument on interviews conducted by Boum in the rural areas of Morocco and on archival sources (unfortunately limited and scattered). What emerges from the sources is that, apart from one major legal crisis known as the Plundered Lands Case, relations between Jews and Muslims remained good throughout the war. This particular case, analyzed in depth by the authors, shows how the interference of French colonial administrators animated by anti-Semitic sentiment threatened the traditionally good Muslim-Jewish relations in a rural setting afflicted by droughts and famine, where mutual collaboration was essential for survival.

Part III, "Narrative and Political Reverberations" (chs. 7-9), explores the nexus of the Holocaust and North Africa and its repercussions on politics through the lens of literary texts. The chapter by Aomar Boum (ch. 7) deals with memoir and literary works by former prisoners of Vichy internment and labor camps in North Africa, such as Max Aub, a Mexican-Spanish Jew who survived the camp of Djelfa in Algeria. Aub was a literary critic, playwright, and novelist, as well as a Spanish republican. His diary is an almost unique case of documentation, since prisoners of the Vichy internment camps in North African colonies were not allowed to keep records of their daily experiences. As Boum shows, despite their possible limitations "as factual testimonies" (p. 153), these texts represent an invaluable source for understanding the unique elements of these camps, whose history has only recently started to attract scholarly attention. As Boum argues, internment and labor camps in North Africa "exemplify a different model of internment" (p. 150) as compared to the German Nazi camps in Europe, since prisoners in North Africa had "a margin of hope of survival" (p. 157) despite the harsh conditions of the desert and the abuses they were subjected to. The value of the literary texts discussed by Boum – "archives of emotion" (p. 167) as he describes them – is in their capacity to "lift the veil of silence" (p. 166) that has long covered the memory of Vichy camps in the region.

The chapter by Lia Bozgal (ch. 8) also deals with a relatively unknown literary corpus of chronicles written in French and published in Tunisia between 1943 and 1946, in particular, the accounts by Paul Ghez and Robert Borgel. While generally relegated to the footnotes in historiography, observes Bozlag, these chronicles should be more "rigorously mined for the rich microhistories they contain" (p. 169). The author takes on this task by exploring the poetics of these works – "tropes, narrative techniques, and discursive strategies" (p. 171) – such as the recourse to irony, euphemism, and apostrophe. Her contention is that these poetics reveal an "aesthetic of restraint" (p. 174), a sort of ambivalence, an ethics of *pudeur* in the words of historian Claude Nataf (p. 171). Precisely this restraint constitutes, together with the duty felt by the authors to recount what they witnessed during the German occupation of Tunisia, the main paradox of the Tunisian chronicles. Rather than remain trapped in this paradox, Ghez and Borgel opt to write and in so doing actually participate "in the literature of the Holocaust without setting off a contest for victimhood" (p. 184).

Finally, the contribution by Alma Rachel Heckma shifts the focus of this more literary-oriented part of the volume from the little-known works seen in the previous chapters to the well-known oeuvres by Moroccan Jewish novelist

Edmond Amran El Maleh (1917-2010), *Parcours immobile* (1980) and *Mille ans, un jour* (1986). Heckma's aim in this essay is to "address Jewish engagement in the PCM [Moroccan Communist Party] through the crucible of the Vichy years" (p.185). She does so by interpreting these semi-autobiographical fictions in light of El Maleh's biography as a Moroccan Jew and as a former leader of the Moroccan Communist Party. Heckma buttresses her interpretation of El Maleh's biography and characters with an exhaustive account – drawing in part on the archival sources of the Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme in Rabat, Morocco – of the interwar period and the profound impact that it had on Moroccan society as a whole, in which it caused multiple "political awakenings" (p. 204), eventually transforming the PCM into a national liberation party. El Maleh's biography and characters thus exemplify the marginality experienced by communist Jews in the aftermath of the Vichy period.

A collection of commentaries, briefly touched upon at the beginning of this review, closes this rich and illuminating volume, which, in my view, fully achieves its aims. The essays enrich our understanding of how the Holocaust unfolded in North Africa, most notably by unveiling the deep entanglement between colonialism and fascism. Moreover, they enable, in Michael Rothberg's words, a "more concrete understanding [...] of the place of Jewish and Muslim communities within that dynamic" (p. .243). The individual cases discussed in the volume display a variety of political, social and geographical situations that the authors carefully contextualize. This is a crucial approach in order to avoid the pitfalls of generalization and essentialization, as Gilbert Achcar – to cite but one example – has shown in his analysis of the reception of the Holocaust in the Middle East.[1] Finally, this collection of essays shows the fruitfulness of a joint work of reflection, scrutiny, and interpretation in uncovering, in a truly multidirectional perspective,[2] the entangled nature of the long neglected relationship between knowledge of the Holocaust and North Africa.

Piera Rossetto, University of Graz

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[1] Gilbert Achcar, *Les Arabes et la Shoah*, (Paris: Actes Sud, 2009).
[2] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

Cordelia Hess, *The Absent Jews: Kurt Forstreuter and the Historiography of Medieval Prussia,* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2017), pp. 323.

by *Ingo Haar*

In *The Absent Jews*, Cordelia Hess tackles a key topic in German history and writes about the connection between science and political power under National Socialism. For two decades now, research has been being conducted on the part that German historians played in the genocide of the European Jews and Slavic people in Eastern Europe, but here Hess focuses on the role played by archivists. As Raphael Lemkin, the father of the Genocide Convention, pointed out, the physical destruction of a nation or ethnic group is preceded by the removal of their cultural heritage. This finding is still unproven in Germany except for individual research on the looting of archives by Wolfgang Freund, Esther Abel and Anja Heuss and the genealogical research that Jürgen Schlumbohm works on.

The key focus of this book by Cordelia Hess, medieval historian and chair of Nordic History at the University of Greifswald, is the Königsberg archivist and medievalist Kurt Forstreuter (1897–1979). As there is hardly any evidence for the presence of Jews in the area around the eastern Baltic in the Middle Ages, especially in the State of the Teutonic Order (*Deutscher Orden*), the region has long been considered as being without Jews. In her study, Cordelia Hess questions this thesis of the absence of Jews and investigates whether this is not rather the result of the destruction of Jewish sources during the Holocaust, an activity closely related to Forstreuter. He belonged to the German nationalist avant-garde of the German *Ostforschung*, albeit as a historian of minor importance. This group of right-wing pioneers with their ideas of ethnic cleansing and ethno-nationalist policies about demography gained a foothold as "servants of the state" in universities and archives from Berlin to Danzig and Königsberg and in the Historical Commissions of the Federal Republic of Germany well into the 1960s. Forstreuter is a good example of how former members of the Nazi bureaucracy became deeply involved in the history of the new Federal Republic of Germany. Like other nationalist scholars, Forstreuter used a paradigm in his academic thesis which Hess calls the "bulwark discourse."

Forstreuter is interesting, because not only did he professionally interpret documents, he also managed them as an archivist. He was not just anyone. Not only did he manage the file collection of medieval and modern Prussia in the Königsberg National Archives that was important for Jewish history, but he also

conducted his own research on them. Prussia appeared to him as a bulwark of the Germans – and of their ethnic as well as national order – against the Slavic East, which always appeared, like the Jews, as a Polish, Russian or Lithuanian threat to German national identity and national borders.

Like Theodor Schieder and Werner Conze, who both became leading figures in West German historiography and presidents of the Association of German Historians, Forstreuter joined the Nazi regime as a scholarship holder in the publication office Berlin-Dahlem. However, unlike Schieder and Conze, he never became a card-carrying member of the Nazi Party. Nonetheless, Forstreuter both benefited from and participated in the Nazi regime. He was responsible for 70 per cent of trips made by all archivists to occupied Poland and Lithuania from 1939 onwards. He had to identify, sift through, record and transport the contents of occupied or abandoned archives. As Hess shows in Chapters 1 and 2, this included the disappearing of entire archive components that were thus lost forever to Polish posterity and survivors of the Holocaust.

Hess stresses that there was no master plan to systematically locate the archives and steal them from their owners. Nevertheless, Forstreuter cooperated very closely with the SS and other Nazi offices involved in the elimination of the Jews. The agreement of the archivists of the Prussian Archive Administration and the Nazi Party authorities was based on the goal of abandoning the Treaty of Versailles in favour of German hegemony in the East, and of strictly separating the ethnic and national groups in order to strengthen the group of Germans in this area.

One of Hess's contributions in Chapter 3 is that she sees Forstreuter's work in the Nazi resettlement and extermination policies as closely linked to his scholarly writings on "German order" in the Middle Ages. Similarly, the National Socialists also used this semantic figure of the East, that for a long time had been civilized by the Germans, in order to derive power and claim persecution. In this, not only Jewish Eastern Europe, but also Poland as a historical subject was to be made to disappear from the map.

The lasting value of Hess's work lies in the fact that she is the first scholar to systematically work on the problem of archive theft as defined in the United Nations Genocide Convention. She provides, from the German side, the first and long-overdue proof of Raphael Lemkin's hypothesis that genocide not only pursues the goal of physically killing a group, but also of making their culture

invisible. If Hess's findings are accepted, they will result in consequences for the present day.

Hess states in Chapters 4 and 5 that Forstreuter not only made entire archives disappear, but with his own particular history of the East and further publications in the new Federal Republic of Germany he also made sure that Jews and Jewish communities no longer emerged as a historical subject in the history of Old Prussia. If that is true, all follow-up projects that go back to Forstreuter or to the Historical Commission for East and West Prussian Research have a responsibility to explain this "absence" of Jews in Prussian history which Hess asserts in Chapters 6 and 7. But so far nothing has happened to change this. Only American and Polish scholars discuss this question.

A doubtlessly painful but, nonetheless, inevitable revision of their editions and representations, which are obviously under suspicion of manipulation, will be necessary if Hess's claims are correct. Yet Arno Mentzel-Reuters, a former member of the Historical Commission for East and West Prussian History, attacked Hess sharply in *Francia*, a well-known German journal. Hess in turn replied to his criticisms in the same issue in a detailed commentary.[1] In his review, Mentzel-Reuters refers to a small preliminary study by Hess that appeared in *Yad Vashem Studies* in 2014.[2] He is himself active in the Commission and was the president from 2010 to 2019. Incidentally, Forstreuter led this Commission under Hitler in the 1930s and 1940s and later worked for it again when it was re-established in the Federal Republic under Adenauer with federal funds as an institution for displaced persons (*Vertriebene*). Mentzel-Reuters accuses Hess of pursuing a hate campaign against Forstreuter. He assumes that she wants Forstreuter personally "discredited." But how serious are these ideas?

Well, Cordelia Hess's interpretation may not appeal to every historian. Criticism is certainly a good way to discover the truth, and it may also help to counter the misinterpretation of sources or exaggerated value judgments. Over the years,

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[1] Arno Mentzel-Reuters, "Review of Cordelia Hess, *The Absent Jews. Kurt Forstreuter and the Historiography of Medieval Prussia*, New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017," *Francia-Recensio*, 2 (2018): https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/frrec/article/view/48312/42068. Cordelia Hess's reply, at https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ index.php/frrec/article/view/ 51887/45842. Accessed September 19, 2020.
[2] Cordelia Hess, "Some short business trips. Kurt Forstreuter and the Looting of Archives in Poland and Lithuania, 1939–1942," *Yad Vashem Studies* 42/2 (2014): 91–122.

however, a style of confrontation has developed that treats all historians who ask critical questions unfairly. They are seen as traitors. There is a desire to shoot the messenger if the bearer is bringing bad news.[3] In his review, rather than focusing on the uncomfortable truth, Mentzel-Reuters is punishing Cordelia Hess as an author. He accuses her of manipulating sources and artificially inflating Forstreuter's responsibility for archival theft. Finally, Mentzel-Reuters interprets a letter written by Forstreuter about being ill as an attempt by Forstreuter to resist following his boss's terrible orders. At the end of the war, he was transferred to the Defence Forces as a radio operator and Mentzel-Reuters believes that Forstreuter no longer acted in the spirit of the National Socialist genocidal policy and he distanced himself from it internally. He claims that Forstreuter was only acting on orders and was nothing more than a bureaucrat.[4] However, he offers no evidence or sources to support this claim. Nor does he recognize that the elimination of cultural heritage is the bloodless first step to killing a nation or an ethnic group. It is, in fact, a step on the road to genocide.

Ingo Haar, Jilin Foreign Studies University Changchun

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[3] There is another case here. See Esther Abel, "Aktenraub und Völkische Wissenschaft. Die Aktivitäten des Osteuropahistorikers Peter Scheibert im Sonderkommando Künsberg, seine Entschuldungsstrategie und die seiner 'Schüler'," in *Völkische Wissenschaften. Ursprünge, Ideologien und Nachwirkungen*, eds. Michael Fahlbusch and Ingo Haar, (Munich: De Gruyter, 2020), 208–241.

[4] Arno Mentzel-Reuters, "NS-'Archivschutz' in Zichenau," *Preussenland* 6 (2015): 100–115; 105ff.