



The Great War.
Reflections, Experiences and Memories
of German and Habsburg Jews

(1914-1918)

edited by *Petra Ernst, Jeffrey Grossman, Ulrich Wyrwa*

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Contents

FOCUS

Petra Ernst, Jeffrey Grossman, Ulrich Wyrwa

Introduction

VI-XX

Cartsten Schapkow

*German Jews and the Great War: Gustav Landauer's and
Fritz Mauthner's Friendship during Times of War*

p. 1

Ulrich Wyrwa

*German Jewish Intellectuals and the German
Occupation of Belgium*

p. 18

Péter Bihari

Aspects of Anti-Semitism in Hungary 1915-1918

p. 58

Filip Hameršak, Ljiljana Dobrovšak

Croatian-Slavonian Jews in the First World War

p. 94

Gerald Lamprecht

*The Remembrance of World War One and the Austrian
Federation of Jewish War Veterans*

p. 122

DISCUSSION

Ernst Toller, *Complete Works: Critical Edition*
by **Steven Schouten**

p. 144

REVIEWS

- Robert Weinberg
Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia.
The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel /
 Edmund Levin
A Child of Christian Blood. Murder and Conspiracy i
n Tsarist Russia: the Beilis Blood Libel
 by **Darius Staliunas** p. 155
- Atalia Omer
When Peace Is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp
Thinks about Nationalism, and Justice
 by **Jon Simons** p. 161
- Yulia Egorova, Shahid Perwez
The Jews of Andhra Pradesh: Contesting Caste
Religion in South India
 by **Galit Shashoua** p. 165
- Sharon Rotbard,
White City, Black City: Architecture and War
in Tel Aviv and Jaffa
 by **Barbara Mann** p. 168
- Nevenko Bartulin
Honorary Aryans: National–Racial Identity and
Protected Jews Independent State of Croatia
 by **Vjera Duic** p. 172
- Sarah Panter,
Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte
im Ersten Weltkrieg
 by **Elisabeth Weber** p. 176
- Keren Friedman-Peleg
Ha-‘am ‘al-ha-sapah: ha-politiqah shel traumah be-’Israel
[A Nation on the Couch: The Politics of Trauma in Israel]
 by **Tamar Katriel** p. 180

Emanuele D'Antonio

La società udinese e gli ebrei fra la Restaurazione e l'età unitaria.

Mondi cattolici, emancipazione e integrazione della minoranza

ebraica a Udine 1830-1866/70

by **Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti**

p. 185

**The Great War
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by Petra Ernst, Jeffrey Grossman, Ulrich Wyrwa

This issue is devoted to the situation of German and Habsburg Jews during World War I. It delimits its scope in this way for the simple reason that Imperial Germany and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire formed one of the two opposing wartime alliances. At the outset of the war German and Habsburg Jews widely expressed their loyalty to their home countries, consenting to fight against the Triple Entente of the British Empire, France, and the Russian Empire. The methodological focus of this issue is to examine the dialectic between expectations and experiences among the Jews of both Wilhelmine Germany and the Habsburg Empire,¹ expanding the dimensions of this dialectic by considering the development of war memories.²

After two years of murderous fighting and of an atrocious, hitherto unseen industrialized form of warfare the First World War was nowhere near an end. On the contrary, the year 1916 witnessed some of the war's most devastating battles, including the Battle of Verdun, "the longest battle in world history."³ In three hundred days of attrition warfare more than 200,000 soldiers lost their lives, an average of 666 dead every day or twenty-seven dead every hour.⁴ The landscape

¹ Reinhart Koselleck, " 'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont' - zwei historische Kategorien" [1976], *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck (Frankfurt /M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349-375; English translation: "Space of Experience and Horizon of Expectation: Two Historical Categories," *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* ed. Reinhart Koselleck (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).

² Petra Ernst proposes this triad of expectation, experience and memory in Petra Ernst, "Der Erste Weltkrieg in deutschsprachig-jüdischer Literatur und Publizistik in Österreich," *Krieg, Erinnerung, Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Siegfried Matt (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 47-92, 59, 63-68; on memory in this context, see: Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

³ Olaf Jessen, *Verdun 1916: Urschlacht des Jahrhunderts* (München: C.H.Beck: 2014), 12; Gerd Krumeich, Antoine Prost, *Verdun 1916. Die Schlacht und ihr Mythos aus deutsch-französischer Sicht*, (Essen: Klartext, 2016).

⁴ An analog determination of what the First World War was like has been given by Gert Buelens in his impressive study on war poems: *Europas Dichter und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014), 285.

had been devastated, and was ravaged by relentless artillery shelling.⁵ An anonymous photographer took a picture of the desolated landscape at Fort Vaux near Verdun, which is presented here as the frontispiece of this issue. The young Jewish psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), later a pioneer of social psychology and group dynamics as well as founder of psychological field theory, served in the Prussian army. In 1917 he wrote an article titled “The Landscape of War” (“Kriegslandschaft”), in which he sought to provide a phenomenology of the landscape to convey how it was experienced on the battlefield.⁶ In a peacetime landscape, Lewin begins, “the area seemed to extend out to infinity on all sides.” Yet, when one moves from the rear toward the front, and increasingly toward the enemy, one experiences a reshaping of the landscape. This new “landscape of war” is now “bounded.”⁷ As one’s “idea” of the bounded area, e.g. of the position of the first trench, the connectedness of various visible markers, the distances to the “boundaries” becomes more determined, the bounded area becomes a “zone,” referred to by Lewin as a “border zone.”⁸ While at a forward position, this zone differs from “danger” zones, which begin later and for the most part increase “in the direction of the enemy” but which are not strictly fixed. In the trenches, for instance, more exposed areas become “danger zones,” and one finds “unconnected islands of danger at the rear extremity, frequently bombarded villages and crossroads, for example.”⁹ Abandoned trench positions are “still full of death and war” and they are “left behind in the countryside as a ‘war formation’” as are “burned-down villages” as well.¹⁰ Lewin’s phenomenological observations are instructive because they provide us with an example, not untypical of intellectuals, of how young Jewish scholar attempting to make sense of the war experience by immediately transforming it into theoretical explanation.¹¹

⁵ Anne Duménil, “21. Februar 1916: Die Hölle von Verdun,” *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Eine europäische Katastrophe*, eds. Bruno Cabanes, Anne Duménil (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013), 168-178.

⁶ Kurt Lewin, “The Landscape of War,” trans. Jonathan Blower, *Art in Translation* 1/2 (2009): 199-209; 201; originally published as: Kurt Lewin, “Kriegslandschaft,” in *Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie* 12 (1917): 440-447; further references are to the English translation.

⁷ *Ibid.* 201.

⁸ *Ibid.* 202.

⁹ *Ibid.* 202.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 208.

¹¹ Alfred Joseph Marrow, *The Practical Theorist: The Life and Work of Kurt Lewin* (New York: Basic Books, 1969). Later, Lewin’s field theory was one of the sources for Pierre Bourdieu in shaping his concepts: Olaf Kretschmar, “Sozialwissenschaftliche Feldtheorien – von der

Verdun was by no means the only devastating battle of 1916. It had not yet come to an end when the Battle of the Somme – “the bloodiest battle” of the Great War – had begun, by the end of which more than one million men had been killed or wounded.¹² At the Eastern Front, in the meantime, Russia had initiated the Brusilov Offensive, likewise one of the most lethal battles of World War I. In the course of these two years, European Jews passed through a series of tempests as well as inner turmoil, having gone from an initial phase of hope and enthusiasm to one of despair and terrifying dread.¹³ Forced to fight against their own coreligionists on the enemy front, they underwent a dialectical break between that which they experienced, or what Koselleck refers to as their “Erwartungsraum,” and their horizon of expectation.¹⁴ From the moment the governments decided to go to war, the ruling classes – especially in Germany and Austria-Hungary – felt urgently compelled to present themselves as victims of foreign aggression. Within both alliances the political classes attempted to forge social cohesion, to integrate society in a new national or imperial unity, and to convince the whole population to fight in unison against the foreign aggressor. Even if the myth, invented later, of the “August Days” in Germany was by no means so all encompassing as nationalist activists claimed in retrospect,¹⁵ the German ruling class nevertheless realized its aims to a considerable degree, and large segments of society felt it their duty to defend their country and enlist. Similar efforts took place in the countries of the Entente, as well. Their aim was to forge a new unity that would reinforce social loyalty to the state, national sentiment, and commitment to the nation states as well as to the dynasties of the Empires. The ruling classes proclaimed a truce between the political parties, known as the *Burgfrieden* in German. The rulers and state apparatus propagated this political line first among the working classes, whose international orientation raised doubts about their reliability, but they addressed such propaganda to all classes and the members of all religions, Jews included. In fact, the Jewish

Psychologie Kurt Lewins zur Soziologie Pierre Bourdieus,” *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 1/4 (1991): 567-579

¹² *Die Deutschen an der Somme 1914-1918: Krieg, Besatzung, Verbrannte Erde*, eds. Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, Irina Renz (Essen: Klartext 2006).

¹³ Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 155-156.

¹⁴ Koselleck, “‘Erfahrungsraum’ und ‘Erwartungshorizont’ - zwei historische Kategorien.”

¹⁵ Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 37-46; David J. Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 10-14; Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 23-29.

populations in all the European countries responded in broad terms no differently from the rest, tending to welcome the war policy with open arms.¹⁶ In October 1939, the historian Abraham G. Duker, later editor of the journal *Jewish Social Studies*, had given a brief historical outline of the Jewish participation in the First World War, underlining, that the “casualty figures for both sides demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of the Jewish soldiers saw actual combat, and their sacrifices equalled their comrades-in-arms.”¹⁷

Moreover, not only the integrated upper class Jews shared in this attitude, but also the younger generation of Zionists, although some radical young Zionists, like Gershom Scholem, opposed the war. In Germany and Austria many Jews hoped that this enthusiastic participation would bring an end to remaining forms of discrimination and to hindrances on their legal and social equality; additionally, they hoped the war would finally bring liberation for the Jews of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, even among Jews the dimension of the support for the war remains unclear. The evidence drawn from literary sources shows concerns at the outset regarding the war, and the voices of those who expected and hoped for peace were far more frequent than those of the belligerent.¹⁸

At the same time, European Jews found themselves placed in an extremely difficult and awkward situation. French and British Jews, for instance, who were self-confident, conscious of their achievements and of the decisive contribution of their countries to Jewish emancipation, now found themselves in a coalition with Russia, the country in Europe that all European Jews and, indeed, Europeans in general viewed as the most anti-Semitic in the world. British and French Jews found it troubling to be confronted with this unexpected and unwanted situation.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg: Kriegserfahrung, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2001), 53-87; Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933* (New York: Picador, cop. 2002); Marc Saperstein, “Morris Joseph and the West London Synagogue in the First World War,” in *European Judaism* 48/1 (2015): 33-46; Pierre Birnbaum, “French Rabbis and the ‘Sacred Unity’ During the First World War,” in *European Judaism* 48/1 (2015): 47-58.

¹⁷ Abraham G. Duker, “Jews in World War I. A Brief Historical Sketch,” in *Contemporary Jewish Record. A Review on Events and a Digest on Opinion* 2/5 (1939): 6-29; 8.

¹⁸ Ernst, “Der Erste Weltkrieg in deutschsprachig-jüdischer Literatur und Publizistik in Österreich,” 47-72, 59.

¹⁹ David Cesarani, “An Embattled Minority: The Jews in Britain during the First World War,” in *Immigrants and Minorities* 8 (1989): 61-81; Philippe E. Landau, *Les Juifs de France et la Grande Guerre: Un patriotisme républicain 1914 - 1941* (Paris: CNRS 1999) .

German and Habsburg Jews, on the other hand, could pose as liberators of the oppressed and afflicted Russian Jews, Polish Jews included. Austrian as well as German rabbis proclaimed a holy war as revenge for Kishinev,²⁰ and they supported the German political rulers in their attempt to win over Polish Jews as partners, promising them liberation from Russian oppression. Yet German Jews, too, had been forced into an extremely difficult situation in regard to the western front. They had to legitimate a war against those countries, especially France and Great Britain, which had been at the forefront of Jewish emancipation.

Arriving at the frontlines, Jewish soldiers must have realized that they were compelled to fight against their coreligionists on the opposing front--Jews against Jews. Hence the broad willingness of Jews to serve in opposing armies had disastrous consequences for European Jewish history overall. More seriously still, even family ties among those living in different European countries suffered, with the sons of families forced to confront each other in battle.²¹ Transnational bonds that had previously existed among Jews in Europe now broke down; the war destroyed the *histoire croisée* that had characterized European Jewry in previous decades.²² This war, therefore, was a decisive turning point in modern European Jewish history.²³

With the collapse of the illusion that the war would end quickly and the growing number of debilitating experiences at the front the situation within the civil societies as well as the armies changed dramatically. In view of the disastrous course of the war, the public mood once again turned against the Jews. In search of a scapegoat to blame for defeats at the front and for the unsuccessful, never-ending war, anti-Semites in Germany and Austria-Hungary held the Jews accountable. They renewed anti-Jewish agitation, with anti-Semitic articles appearing again in the newspapers, while anti-Semitic groups reorganized. Amidst this new anti-Semitic agitation we can find the re-emergence of old

²⁰ Marsha L. Rozenblit, "A Holy War and Revenge for Kishinev: Austrian Rabbis Justify the First World War," in *European Judaism* 48/1 (2015): 74–82.

²¹ See the PhD project: Carl-Eric Linsler, "Jüdische Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkriegs: Die Geschichte der Familie Frank als deutsch-französische Familienbiographie," *Portal Militärgeschichte*, May 26th, 2014 (<http://portal-militaergeschichte.de/node/1087>).

²² See the chapter "World War I: The End or the Pinnacle of Jewish Transnationalism?" in Penslar's, *Jews and the Military*, 152-160; Shulamit Volkov, "Juden und Judentum im Zeitalter der Emanzipation: Einheit und Vielheit," *Juden in der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Beck (München: Beck 1992), 86-108.

²³ Mark Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914 - 1919*, (London-Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 1992).

stereotypes, that of the Jewish shirker accused of evading military service at the front, as well as of Jewish hucksters and war profiteers, exploiting those who were sacrificing their lives for the nation.²⁴

The difficult situation for the Jews became even more complicated when, in May 1915, Italy and, in August 1916, Rumania entered the war, and these both on the same side. As a result, joining the Entente were the two countries in Europe most extremely opposed in regard to civil and political integration of their Jewish populations.

Furthermore, for East European Jews the conduct of the war was utterly disastrous. It was so because the territory in which nearly 80 % of European Jews lived--the area from the Pale of Settlement within the Russian Empire to Galicia in the Habsburg Empire – had become one of the most devastating battlefields of the war, having been conquered and reconquered repeatedly by the opposing armies. Indeed, the aforementioned Brusilov offensive of 1916 led through this territory.²⁵ Moreover the war had devastating consequences for East European Jews because this war, as total war, was conducted against not only opposing armies but also civilian populations.²⁶ Consequently, the dense Jewish population of these areas suffered all the more from the battles waged there.

In the very same year, October 1916, the Prussian War Ministry instituted the notorious *Judenählung*, a census of Jewish soldiers serving in the German army.²⁷ The announcement and conduct of this census profoundly shocked large segments of the German Jewish population which had, until then, not questioned its place in German society and felt no less committed to the war effort than the rest of the population. Recent studies have called into question

²⁴ Werner Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus in Deutschland 1914-1923," *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution, 1916-1923*, eds. Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 409-510; Forthcoming: Werner Bergmann, Ulrich Wyrwa, "Antisemitism," *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (<http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/home/>).

²⁵ Frank M. Schuster, *Zwischen allen Fronten: Osteuropäische Juden während des Ersten Weltkrieges (1914-1919)* (Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau, 2004).

²⁶ Anton Holzer, *Das Lächeln der Henker: Der unbekannte Krieg gegen die Zivilbevölkerung 1914-1918* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008).

²⁷ Jacob Rosenthal, *Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten: Die Judenählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen* (Frankfurt/M - New York: Campus, 2007); Werner T. Angress, "The German Army's 'Judenählung' of 1916: Genesis – Consequences – Significance," in *Leo Beack Institute Year Book 23* (1978): 117-137.

the degree of shock produced by the Jewish census. They view earlier studies as somewhat exaggerating its impact in retrospect and question as well whether the census had the same effect in the different German-speaking countries.²⁸ Even so, the fact remains that the German Jewish press responded sharply to the census, expressing palpable outrage. Hence for German as well as Habsburg Jews, the Great War “marked a turning point in their self-perception” – a tumultuous change from a sense of their own considerable integration to that of rejection.²⁹

German and Austrian Historical Research on Jews and World War I

German historiography regarding World War I was dominated up to the 1960s by a political and diplomatic focus that still held sway in the politically groundbreaking studies of Fritz Fischer about the “German grab for world power,” focusing on the responsibility of the German and Austrian rulers for the outbreak of the war.³⁰ This methodological approach shifted during the 1970s to an emphasis on social and economic historical factors.³¹ In the 1990s, beginning with the landmark volume edited by Gerd Krumeich, Gerhard Hirschfeld, and Irina Renz, historical research again shifted methodologically, turning to a focus on the history of everyday life, on how populations experienced the war, and to a greater emphasis on cultural history.³² More recently, at its 100th anniversary, historians have turned to critically scrutinizing global aspects of the War,³³ yielding the rather unexpected and unintended result that, with the publication of the most influential and controversial book of that commemorative year,

²⁸ Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War*; Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War*.

²⁹ Christhard Hoffmann, “Between Integration and Rejection: The Jewish Community in Germany 1914-1918,” *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 89-104, 90.

³⁰ Fritz Fischer, *Der Griff nach der Weltmacht*, Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf: Droste 1961); published in English as *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, trans. C. A. Macartney, intro. James Joll and Hajo Holborn (New York: Norton, 1967); see also the collection of essays: *Kriegsausbruch 1914*, eds. George L. Mosse, Walter Laqueur (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1970).

³¹ Jürgen Kocka, *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg: Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

³² “Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch... .” *Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkrieges*, eds. Gerd Krumeich, Gerhard Hirschfeld, Irina Renz (Essen: Klartext, 1993); for an overview of the changes in German historical research on World War I, see Gerd Krumeich, “Kriegsgeschichte im Wandel,” 11-24.

³³ See the special issue *Der Erste Weltkrieg in globaler Perspektive*, ed. Oliver Janz, of the journal *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 40/2 (2014).

Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers*, the question of the responsibility for the war has now returned.³⁴

Regarding historical research on German Jews and the First World War, after a strong initial treatment in 1969 by Egmont Zechlin in his monumental study of German politics during the First World War,³⁵ the topic attracted increased scholarly interest, beginning with an important edited volume in the series published by the Leo Baeck Institute.³⁶ Werner T. Angress, a contributor to that volume, subsequently published further studies on this topic,³⁷ and he touched also on one of the most frequently mentioned issues: the Jewish census of 1916.³⁸ In 1977 George L. Mosse gave a brief Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture that offered an innovative perspective on the war experiences of German Jews.³⁹ Later, Mosse expanded his focus to include the symbols of death and cult of fallen soldiers that emerged during the war.⁴⁰ The unpublished dissertation by Stephen Magill, however, in which the author presented World War I as a pivotal crisis in the experience of German Jews has generally been omitted from consideration.⁴¹ Drawing on Magill's and other recent scholarship, Christhard Hoffmann

³⁴ See in this regard the special issue of the *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 64/7-8 (2016), "Die unerwartete Wiederkehr der Schuldfrage: Der Erste Weltkrieg in der geschichtswissenschaftlichen Kontroverse." For a discussion of new studies on World War I on the occasion of the 100th anniversary, see: Ulrich Wyrwa, "Zum Hundertsten nichts Neues: Deutschsprachige Neuerscheinungen zum Ersten Weltkrieg (Teil I)," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 62 (2014): 921-940; (Teil II), 64/7-8 (2016): 683-702.

³⁵ Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969).

³⁶ *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, ed. Werner E. Mosse (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971).

³⁷ Werner T. Angress, "Das deutsche Militär und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen* 19 (1976): 98-105.

³⁸ Werner T. Angress, "The German Army's 'Juden-zählung' of 1916: Genesis - Consequences - Significance," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23 (1978): 117-138.

³⁹ George L. Mosse, *The Jews and the German War Experience 1914-1918* (New York: The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, 1977).

⁴⁰ George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). The historical link from the First to the Second World War that Mosse had drawn in this volume as well as his theses on the brutalization of German policies as a cause of the rise of National Socialism have recently been challenged by some historians; see Benjamin Ziemann, *Gewalt im Ersten Weltkrieg: Töten - Überleben - Verweigern* (Essen: Klartext, 2013) and Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴¹ Stephen Magill, *Defense and Introspection: The First World War as a Pivotal Crisis in the German Jewish Experience*, Phil. Diss. Los Angeles 1977.

published an essay in 1997 about the ambivalent Jewish experience in Germany between “integration and rejection,”⁴² and, in the same year, Peter Pulzer published a dense and inspiring overall account for the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*.⁴³ In 2001 Ulrich Sieg published a landmark study on German Jewish intellectuals in the First World War,⁴⁴ and in 2007 Jacob Rosenthal published a volume on the Jewish census of 1916.⁴⁵ Indeed, in recent historical research the outstanding importance of the Jewish census has been increasingly scrutinized.⁴⁶ Most recently, Sarah Panter has published a comprehensive comparative study on Jewish history during the First World War, comparing experiences as they varied among Jews in Germany, Austria, Great Britain, and the United States.⁴⁷

In Austria, the history of World War I was for a long time a topic that came under the exclusive purview of historians of military institutions; it was characterized as “officer’s historiography.”⁴⁸ Consequently Austrian research has been severely limited in terms of methodology and subject matter. A first step towards a critical historical approach to World War I was taken in Austria only with a conference in 1968 devoted to the collapse of the Habsburg Empire.⁴⁹ Even then, Austrian historians avoided discussing the question of war guilt, unlike West Germans for whom Fischer’s work provoked a huge public and

⁴² Hoffmann, “Between Integration und Rejection,” 89-104.

⁴³ Peter Pulzer, “Der Erste Weltkrieg,” *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Neuzeit, vol.3, Umstrittene Integration 1871-1918*, eds. Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, Monika Richarz, (München: Beck, 1997), 356-380; published also in English in *Integration in Dispute 1871 - 1918*, vol. 3 of *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, eds. Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, Monika Richarz, (New York, NY : Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), 366-384.

⁴⁴ Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg: Kriegserfahrung, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2001).

⁴⁵ Rosenthal, *Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*; see. note 22.

⁴⁶ Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War*.

⁴⁷ Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*; see the review of Elisabeth Weber in this issue.

⁴⁸ Oswald Überegger, “Vom militärischen Paradigma zur ‘Kulturgeschichte des Krieges’? Entwicklungslinien der österreichischen Weltkriegsgeschichtsschreibung zwischen politisch-militärischer Instrumentalisierung und universitärer Verwissenschaftlichung,” in *Zwischen Nation und Region: Weltkriegsforschung im interregionalen Vergleich: Ergebnisse und Perspektiven*, ed. Oswald Überegger (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2004), 63-122; 83; see also: Rudolf Jeřábek, “Die österreichische Weltkriegsforschung,” *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse*, ed. Wolfgang Michalka (München: Piper, 1994), 953-971.

⁴⁹ *Die Auflösung des Habsburgerreiches: Zusammenbruch und Neuorientierung im Donauraum*, eds. Richard Georg Plaschka, Karlheinz Mack (München: Oldenbourg, 1970).

scholarly debate around the subject--the so-called “Fischer Controversy” (“*Fischer-Kontroverse*”). As a result, Austrian scholarship on the First World War remained relatively weak in terms of both methodology and substance.⁵⁰ Improved research on the subject really began in Austria only in 1993 with the publication of the first critical and comprehensive history of the Habsburg Empire during the Great War, even if this volume, too, was written by a military historian.⁵¹ Subsequently, Austrian historiography of the war has gradually broadened, with a strong upsurge ultimately occurring on the occasion of the 100th anniversary. This anniversary has witnessed a huge outpouring of publications in which Austrian historians have presented new critical perspectives on the politics of the Habsburg ruling classes, drawing on innovative research methods and exploring new aspects and neglected contexts of the war.⁵²

Not surprisingly, given the path taken by Austrian historiography, the specific situation of Habsburg Jews in World War I has long been a blindspot. Significant impulses have come from non-Austrians like the American historian Marsha Rozenblit who has focused on the dilemmas of the broad variety of Habsburg Jews and their “tripartite identity,” on Austrian Jews and the Spirit of 1914, and the experience of Habsburg Jewish soldiers⁵³; or from the British historian David Rechter who, in his volume on the Jews of Vienna during the First World War, examined the expectations of Vienna Jews in the context of Viennese political culture and the plight of Jewish refugees during the war.⁵⁴

As a war fought from the very outset against civilian populations as well as armies, World War I had its most dramatic impact on the non-combatant Jews of Galicia and the Bukovina. German historian Frank M. Schuster has given this topic extensive and intensive treatment in his recent dissertation, completed at

⁵⁰ Überegger, “Vom militärischen Paradigma zur ‘Kulturgeschichte des Krieges?’” 108-109.

⁵¹ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers: Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Graz-Wien-Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993); republished in a revised and extended version on occasion of the 100th Anniversary as: *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918* (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau, 2013).

⁵² U. Wyrwa, “Zum Hundertsten nicht Neues, Teil II,” 685-688.

⁵³ Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 2001).

the University of Basel, which focuses on the dramatic situation of the Jews “between all the frontlines.”⁵⁵

With this outpouring of new scholarship on the occasion of the First World War’s 100th anniversary Austrian historians – with a fundamental contribution from the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz—together with historians from Germany, the United States, and elsewhere are shedding new light on the specific expectations and experiences of Habsburg Jews at the time.⁵⁶ The journal *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, to name a further example, published a special issue on “Rabbis and the Great War” in 2015, presenting different attitudes and perspectives from eleven European countries. As Jonathan Magonet notes in an introductory editorial, “sermons preached during the war” can explain “the significant fact from a Jewish perspective that the First World War was the first conflict in which hundreds of thousands of Jews loyal to one European nation state found themselves in direct conflict with Jews holding a similar allegiance to another state.”⁵⁷

This issue of the journal *Quest* focuses on the REFLECTIONS, EXPERIENCES AND MEMORY of German and Habsburg Jews during and after the Great War, but the contributions can, alas, address only some of the many aspects of this complex and disturbing history. The articles selected here concern different contexts, specific constellations, and diverse situations of central European Jewish history and culture. Hence, Carsten Schapkow presents the reflections of two German Jewish intellectuals during the War and the dialogue that took place between them. He considers, first, the Austrian-Hungarian writer Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923) who later moved to Germany, became a skeptical philosopher and went on to author fundamental linguistic studies and a monumental opus on the history of atheism; the second is Gustav Landauer

⁵⁵ Schuster, *Zwischen allen Fronten: Osteuropäische Juden während des Ersten Weltkrieges*.

⁵⁶ Gerald Lamprecht, “Juden in Zentraleuropa und die Transformationen des Antisemitismus im und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg,” in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 24 (2015), 63-88; see the issue: *Der Erste Weltkrieg aus jüdischer Perspektive: Erwartungen-Erfahrungen-Erinnerungen*, eds. Gerald Lamprecht, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel and Heidrun Zettelbauer for the journal: *Zeitgeschichte* 41/4 (2014). The first number of the *Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies / Jahrbuch für europäisch-jüdische Literaturstudien* 1 (2014), ed. Petra Ernst on *European-Jewish Literatures and World War One*, or the edited volume: *Jüdische Publizistik und Literatur im Zeichen des Ersten Weltkrieges*, eds. Petra Ernst, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel (Graz: Studienverlag, 2016).

⁵⁷ Jonathan Magonet, “Editorial,” in *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 48/1 (2015): 1-2.

(1870-1919), the social anarchistic thinker and politician of the Bavarian Council Republic who advocated public enlightenment and education and who, after the counterinsurgency against the Council Republic, was arrested and assassinated by anti-Semitic *Freikorps* members. Although they belonged to different generations, Mauthner and Landauer maintained a close friendship even through the war years, and they conducted a dense conversation reflecting on their own experiences of the war and the dramatic situation of Eastern European Jewry, and beyond that, on their intellectual orientation as Jews in a dramatically changed world. Their dialogue, as Schapkow shows, provides new insight into central perspectives that shaped the course of 20th-century European Jewry.

Likewise focused on reflections and experiences, Ulrich Wyrwa examines the response of German Jewish intellectuals to the German occupation of Belgium, one of the first acts of war by the German army. Including, additionally, the voices of Habsburg Jews as well as some converts, Wyrwa seeks to determine if and in which ways they all understood Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality and the new feature of the war as one against a civilian population. Wyrwa bases his argument on autobiographical sources of German Jewish soldiers, German military rabbis, and other German Jewish witnesses to events in Belgium, as well as on coverage of the war in German Jewish newspapers; finally, he explores the responses of German Jewish intellectuals and socialists to the war against Belgium, with special focus on their experiences and perceptions in the war's first months.⁵⁸

The year 1916 was a decisive turning point in the Jewish experience of the First World War for it was in that year that Germany and the Habsburg Empire witnessed the aforementioned resurgence of anti-Semitic agitation and propaganda as well as the first signs of extreme anti-Semitism. The initial policy of a *Burgfrieden* had by then clearly broken down. Peter Bihari examines this rise in anti-Semitism and its development during the war in the Kingdom of Hungary as well as Jewish responses to it. Hungary is an important case since before the war it was one of the countries in Europe that had effectively rejected anti-Semitic prejudices in the public sphere and in which Jews had experienced relatively extensive social integration. After violent attacks on Hungarian banks motivated by anti-Semitic rage around 1916 and after the publication of a volume refuting charges against Hungarian Jews in 1917, the Hungarian Jewish journal

⁵⁸ These first two papers had originally been presented at the 16th World Congress of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2013.

Twentieth Century conducted a broad public inquiry into the ‘Jewish question’, to which Bihari devotes an incisive discussion. The anti-Semitic agitation, however, did not subside. Rather, it now entered into the debates of the Hungarian parliament where especially populist and anti-liberal MPs accused Jews of war profiteering and exploitation of the Hungarian people. From there, it surged into a broad anti-Semitic campaign led by predominantly Catholic newspapers. Far from being a spontaneous outburst of popular feelings, Bihari shows, Hungarian anti-Semitism was fairly well organized and coordinated, mainly by ecclesiastical circles. He further shows how the First World War became the catalyst for this new anti-Semitic campaign.

Continuing the exploration of the Jewish experience, Ljiljana Dobrovšak and Filip Hameršak present the observations and perceptions of Croatian-Slavonian Jews during World War I. Drawing on a broad range of war diaries, memoirs, and other autobiographical sources, they explore, first, the religious and charitable activities of Jewish societies and, then, the biographies of Jewish individuals of different orientations, including liberal Jews, Zionists, and converts of Jewish background. As in Hungary, anti-Semitic attitudes increased in this period in the former Habsburg crownland Croatia-Slavonia, leading after the defeat of the Central Powers to protests and mass looting of Jewish businesses and property in 1918/19. The Jewish population of Croatia-Slavonia had, like German and Austrian Jews, entered the war with great expectations, but by war’s end and in the immediate aftermath these expectations gave way to a mood of deep disappointment. In their essay, Dobrovšak and Hameršak also consider the practices of mourning and remembrance by Jews in Croatia-Slavonia, which had been confined for almost a century to the family milieu. Beginning with World War I, the majority of the fallen on the territory of Croatia and Slavonia, in general, received no memorials. In a series of images accompanying their text, Dobrovšak and Hameršak describe some of the--more or less well maintained--cemeteries along the former frontlines.

Memory is also central to Gerald Lamprecht’s contribution, which scrutinizes the activities of the Austrian federation of Jewish war veterans, the *Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, founded in 1932. It was this institution that initiated the erection of Jewish war memorials in several Austrian cities. Focusing primarily on coverage of this activity in the *Bund’s* journal, *Jüdische Front (Jewish Front)*, Lamprecht analyzes the ways that Austrian Jews commemorated the war and their fallen, then turns his attention to the Jewish discourses on their experiences

during the conflict and the contemporary situation of increased anti-Semitism in the Austrian Republic.

In conclusion, we note that like every scholarly undertaking this one, too, must unavoidably leave in its wake significant and regrettable gaps, even as it opens up new subjects for debate. Of greatest critical concern for us is the lack in the current special issue of any treatment devoted specifically to the situation of Galician and Bukovina Jews. This is even more regrettable because these Habsburg provinces had sizeable Jewish populations, amounting to 10 % and nearly 13 % of the total population, respectively. From August 1914 onward, these areas and their populations suffered terribly. Massive troop formations moved across Galicia and Bukovina with devastating results. In a recent article, Petra Ernst has described the impact of “ever changing conquests and recapture of vast areas and the consequent destruction of numerous villages – by both czarist and Austro-Hungarian units – as well as collective branding of civilians, [...] by military commands on both sides.” This, she adds, “all meant that the populations of Galicia and the Bukovina [...] were very badly hit by the war. As fighting also led to increased tensions among the different nationalities settled in these regions, it was the Jewish community, which suffered especially under these circumstances. Faced with such chaos, masses of people fled their homes and their villages, even those who did not fall victim to deportation or forced evacuation.”⁵⁹

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Among her recent publications: *Europäisch-jüdische Literaturen und Erster Weltkrieg / European-Jewish Literatures and World War One*, [Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies / Jahrbuch für europäisch-jüdische Literaturstudien 1], (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); *Jüdische Publizistik und Literatur im Zeichen des Ersten Weltkriegs*, ed. together with Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, (Graz: Studienverlag, 2016). Forthcoming:

⁵⁹ Petra Ernst, “History and Narrative – Galicia during World War One in the Light of German-Jewish Literature and Journalism,” in *Europäisch-jüdische Literaturen und Erster Weltkrieg / European-Jewish Literatures and World War One*, ed. Petra Ernst, special issue of the *Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies / Jahrbuch für europäisch-jüdische Literaturstudien*, 1 (2014): 133-160; 138.

Schtetl- Stadt – Staat: Raum und Identität in deutschsprachig-jüdischer Erzählliteratur des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts.

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**German Jews and the Great War: Gustav Landauer's and Fritz Mauthner's
Friendship In Times of War***

by *Carsten Schapkow*

Abstract

The present paper examines the friendship of Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923) and Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) at the time of World War I. Mauthner's and Landauer's correspondence in wartime stimulated debate about the war, on the one hand, and German and Jewish identity, on the other. Most significantly, both intellectuals perceived in Germany, as a place of culture, a profound transformation. This was particularly the case when they found themselves compelled to consider what Germany should look like after the defeat in 1918. The debate between Landauer and Mauthner had a deep impact on their sense of general Jewish questions and their approach to the fate of Eastern European Jewry during the war.

World War I brought not only destruction and death to Europe; it also transformed the map of Europe. On a more intimate level it also challenged personal relationships. This can be studied in the case of the friendship between the anarchist Gustav Landauer and the critic of language Fritz Mauthner. Their friendship changed during the war because both men developed different interpretations of the war and its immediate aftermath. This change serves as an example of how the correspondence between friends in wartime prompted debate about the war, on the one hand, and German and Jewish identity, on the other. Most significantly, Germany, in the perception of these two intellectuals as a place of culture and as native country, was transformed. This process had a profound impact on both Landauer's and Mauthner's approach to the fate of Eastern European Jewry during the War period, which developed into their sense of a general Jewish question.

When the war began in August 1914, 3,8 million Germans were drafted. Over the course of the war 13 million German men served as soldiers. Of the approximately 600.000 Jews in Germany, 100,000 were drafted during the war while another 10.000 joined as war volunteers. All in all 30.000 Jewish soldiers received war decorations. Some 12,000 German Jewish died by the war's end in 1918.¹ Scholarly consensus holds that at its outset in 1914, the war was widely perceived by German Jews as a possibility to finally prove to their fellow Gentile citizens that they were indeed Germans, first and foremost, who would not hesitate to give their lives for Germany on the battlefield. Prior to 1914, German Jews had developed a variety of forms of belonging to Germany that did not always and necessarily include assimilation. The role of the military, as Derek Penslar has demonstrated, had a very significant impact on Jews in Germany who strove for integration and many times had to learn about rejection while serving.²

One of the reasons for German Jews to participate enthusiastically in the war, or to at least show a patriotic attitude when not serving as soldiers, was the still fragile situation of the Jews living in the German Empire. Anti-Semitism remained an issue, even though Jews in Germany had become citizens of the Empire in 1871, following the legal adoption of the principles of civic equality first promulgated by the *Norddeutsche Bund* in 1867. The problem of anti-Semitism particularly increased during and after the 1879-1881 Berlin anti-Semitism Controversy (*Berliner Antisemitismus-Streit*) with its focus on the role of German Jews in Germany as well as the question of Eastern European Jewish immigration to Germany. Despite apparent German liberalization, in reality it was impossible for Jews to advance in the civil service, the military, or the professorate.

Wilhelm II's so-called *Burgfrieden* proclamation at the outbreak of the war asserted that the empire would no longer distinguish between Germans of different political beliefs, but would instead see only one unified German people. Many Jews living in Germany believed this to be a call for their support in the

I would like to thank the two anonymous readers of an earlier version of the article for their comments. Sincere thanks go also to Tryce Hyman for his insightful comments and edits.

¹ Gerhard Hirschfeld, "Germany," *A Companion to World War I*, ed. John Horne (Malden, Ma: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 432-446; 440. Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 3. See also Peter Pulzer: "Der Erste Weltkrieg," in *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, eds. Michael A. Meyer et al. (München: CH Beck, 2000) vol. 3, 356-380.

² Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military. A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

war effort as well, believing as well that their loyalty would finally help to make anti-Jewish sentiments vanish. As early as August 1 the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* [Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith] founded in 1893 to fight anti-Semitism, published a call to serve in the war effort. It stated: “Fellow believers – We call on you ‘beyond what is deemed necessary to offer your service to the Fatherland’ [...] give money and goods and volunteer for military service.”³

In this regard it is not surprising that German Jews believed in the argument made by many German intellectuals that the war was one that set German *Kultur* against both western civilization and Russian barbarism. The latter notion played a crucial role for German-Jewish soldiers in general. It is moreover important to note that the majority of German Jews as well as non-Jewish Germans perceived the war at the outset as a defensive act.

Despite the early enthusiasm of German Jews, several first-hand accounts show evidence that such enthusiasm vanished slowly or had transformed by 1916. Peter Pulzer, in his book *Jews and the German state: The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933*, writes: “What can be said is that if Jews were not exempt from the war euphoria of 1914, they recovered from it more quickly.”⁴ Already in 1915, both in public debates as well as in the *Reichstag*, Jews were accused of not serving in the military but of enriching themselves instead through their involvement with the 200 *Kriegsgesellschaften* [Warfare societies]. These same accusations would later lead to the infamous “Jewish census” (*Juden-zählung*) in the German army. To what extent the *Juden-zählung* of 1916, the registration of Jews in the military, provided evidence of dwindling war euphoria is difficult to determine, and the interpretation also depends on when and where contemporaries wrote about their experience with it.⁵

³ “Aufruf des Verbandes der deutschen Juden und des Centralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens vom 1. August 1914,” printed in *Im Deutschen Reich. Zeitschrift des Zentralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, 20/9 (1914): 339. All translations of primary sources from the original German into English are mine.

⁴ Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German state. The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003).

⁵ On the “Jew Count” see in particular Anna Ullrich, ““Nun sind wir gezeichnet” – Jüdische Soldaten und die “Juden-zählung,”” in *Krieg! 1914-1918 Juden zwischen den Fronten*, eds. Ersten Weltkrieg, Ulrike Heikau and Julia B. Köhne (Berlin: Hentrich&Hentrich, 2014), 217-238. Michael Geheran, “*Juden-zählung*,” 1914-1918, Online International Encyclopedia of WWI, ed. Ute Daniel, 2015 (http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/juden-zahlung_jewish_census).

Overall, the military was held in very high esteem within German society. The initial wave of national euphoria during the war made opposition rare. For example, over-identification with the German cause was very apparent even when rumors of German War crimes against civilians in neutral Belgium—which later came to be known as the Rape of Belgium—began to emerge. In response to these rumors, 93 German scholars signed a pamphlet entitled “To the Civilized World” that decried any possibility that such barbarity could come from German soldiers. These signatories perceived Germany’s actions in Belgium to be part of a defensive war that responded to attacks on German troops. Ludwig Fulda, Hermann Sudermann, and Georg Reicke drafted the call for signatories. Among them were 58 university professors, 43 of whom were members of the prestigious Prussian Academy of Science and Culture. Only ten of the signatories would later withdraw their names from the proclamation when it became apparent that the Rape of Belgium had indeed taken place. As can be seen, disenchantment with and opposition to the war were slow to develop.

Despite the jingoism prevalent in German society there had been a pacifist forum in Germany at least as far back as 1892, when Bertha von Suttner (1843-1916) founded the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft*, or German Peace Society. Additionally, on November 16, 1914, only a few months after the outbreak of World War I, the pacifist *Bund Neues Vaterland* [the League New Fatherland] was established. The League, which would be banned in 1916, protested against both the war itself and wartime annexation of lands. In the summer of 1916 the *Zentralstelle Völkerrecht* [Central Office for International Law] was established with local offices throughout the entire German Empire. Its goals were to promote the democratization of Germany and peace without annexations. The call to establish the office was signed by 170 personalities, amongst them Gustav Landauer and his wife Hedwig Lachmann.⁶ Members of anarchist organizations active in Imperial Germany since around 1900, numbering some 2000 individuals like Landauer, clearly opposed the military and the war.⁷ During the war it was almost impossible to publish anything critical about the Central Powers’ war effort that would pass the censor. Because of this censorship private correspondence between opponents of the war became crucial.

⁶ See Gustav Landauer, *Sein Lebensgang in Briefen. Unter Mitwirkung von Ina Britschgi-Schimmer. Band 2*, ed. Martin Buber (Frankfurt am Main: Rütten&Loening, 1929), 159.

⁷ Ulrich Linse, “‘Poetic Anarchism’ versus ‘Party Anarchism’: Gustav Landauer and the Anarchist Movement in Wilhelmian Germany,” *Gustav Landauer: Anarchist and Jew*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 45-63.



Fig. 1: Gustav Landauer (1870-1919)

Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) was one of the few intellectuals who criticized the war from the beginning. Landauer was as an anarchist and an outsider even among the radical leftists living in Germany.⁸ His dissent was informed by his sense of identity, in that he actively derived his dissent from the fact of his being a German *and* a Jew.⁹ Indeed, the Jewish aspect of his identity seemed to grow during the War. For his long time friend Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923), on the other hand, the outbreak of the war provoked mixed reactions.

The two men had known each other since 1890. In that year Landauer had submitted his play *Hilde Hennings* to Mauthner who praised the work and hoped to find a publisher for Landauer. Their friendship contained a paternal aspect, where Landauer occupied the position of filial ‘son’ to Mauthner in the role of figurative ‘father’. But their correspondence shows that they each needed the other for the sake of a productive exchange of ideas. For certain, Landauer was greatly influenced by Mauthner’s philosophy of language. When Landauer was imprisoned during 1899/1900 he proofread Mauthner’s *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* and provided substantial comments.

Mauthner even declared that without Landauer’s help this work would not have been completed and published.¹⁰ In sum their friendship was over the years

⁸ See Eugene Lunn, *Prophet of Community. The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1973); Michael Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia. Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europa: A Study in Elective Affinity* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1992); Corinna Kaiser, *Gustav Landauer als Schriftsteller: Sprache, Schweigen, Musik* (Berlin-Boston: de Gruyter, 2014); Linse, “‘Poetic Anarchism’ versus ‘Party Anarchism,’” 45-63.

⁹ On the multiple connections Landauer had with anarchism and Judaism, see most recently *Gustav Landauer: Anarchist and Jew*, ed. Mendes-Flohr; Gianfranco Ragona, *Gustav Landauer anarchico ebreo tedesco* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2010); *Gustav Landauer. Ausgewählte Schriften. Band 5. Philosophie und Judentum*, ed. Siegbert Wolf (Lich: Verlag Edition AV, 2012).

¹⁰ “Die Herausgabe hätte ich aber gar nicht bewältigen können ohne die Freundschaft Gustav Landauers, der mich unermüdlich bei Ordnung und Sichtung Manuskripts unterstützte.” (Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache. Erster Band. Sprache und Psychologie* (Stuttgart

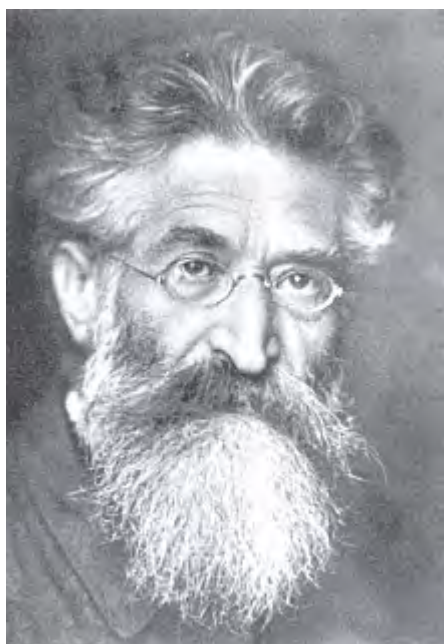


Fig. 2: Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923)

always demanding and intellectually stimulating for both. In his autobiography, Mauthner indicated the idea that he had decided on a solely German identity when he moved to Germany in 1876, and as a consequence left the Jewish Community in 1891. Born into an assimilated Jewish family of Prague with almost no attachment to Judaism, Mauthner grew into a skeptic of Judaism who harbored anti-Semitic sentiments as well. He never converted to Christianity, however, because he considered himself an atheist.¹¹

Mauthner's self-identification as a German can be seen in his lifelong dealings with the philosophy of language as well as in his autobiography, *Prager Jugendjahre*, published in 1918.¹² In the autobiography, Mauthner describes his situation in terms of being a double outsider. This was for him the case specifically as "a Jew who lived as a German boy in a Slavic land"¹³ in the years that followed the Revolution of 1848 and the Austrian defeat at Königgrätz in 1866, years also marked by the heated debate over nationalism in Prague. In the philosophy of language one of the main foci for Mauthner is on the concept of *Muttersprache*, the mother tongue. In his major works, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (1901-1902) and *Die Sprache* (1906), as well as in *Muttersprache und Vaterland* published in 1920, Mauthner further elaborates on the relevance of the mother tongue in the context of his critique of language. Note Mauthner's

und Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Zweite Auflage, 1906), VIII. See also Lunn, *Prophet of Community*, 153-160.

¹¹ On the friendship between Mauthner and Landauer, see Carsten Schapkow, "Ohne Sprache und ohne Religion? Fritz Mauthners Sprachkritik und die zeitgenössischen Debatten über Deutschtum und Judentum," in *An den Grenzen der Sprachkritik. Fritz Mauthners Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturkritik*, ed. Gerald Hartung (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2013), 19-49. On Landauer, Mühsam, and Mauthner see also Carolin Kosuch, *Missratene Söhne. Anarchismus und Sprachkritik im Fin de Siècle* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2015).

¹² Fritz Mauthner, *Erinnerungen I. Prager Jugendjahre* (München 1918).

¹³ "Ich war Jude und ich lebte als deutscher Knabe in einem slawischen Lande." (*Ibid.*, 110)

critique of Eastern European Jewry: “The Jew will only become full German (“Volldeutscher”), if expressions of Jargon (“Mauschelausdrücke”) became a foreign language to him or if he does not understand it at all.”¹⁴ Obviously Mauthner, himself born as a Jew in Prague, can be seen in a rather broad geographical sense as belonging to Eastern European Jewry himself. Culturally, however, Mauthner did not see himself being part of Eastern Europe and its diversity of languages.¹⁵ Mauthner would not have produced his oeuvre on the critique of language without the discussions he had with Gustav Landauer, something exemplified by the fact that he dedicated *Die Sprache* to Landauer.¹⁶ The continuing exchange of ideas between the two men is also apparent within the pages of *Muttersprache und Vaterland*.¹⁷

In addition to influencing him as a critic of language, the debate with Landauer about the significance of the war reawakened Mauthner’s consciousness of his own Jewish identity. This renewed awareness becomes manifest in particular when both men consider Germany’s future after its defeat in 1918, becoming especially apparent in their correspondence when viewed against the background of the broader debate on Jewish identity in German-Jewish circles of the era.

Unlike his friend Mauthner, Landauer considered his Jewish identity to be an important part of his personality, and claimed to share with other Jews the capacity for mutual recognition merely by sight.¹⁸ As for Mauthner, it is only in his letters to Landauer that he clearly defines how he understands his Jewish identity—namely as a duct in his head—to be a particular style or characteristic. Mauthner maintains that this duct also had an impact on his German identity – an impact he felt ambivalent about even while believing it to be ineluctable.¹⁹

¹⁴ “Der Jude wird erst dann Volldeutscher, wenn ihm Mauschelausdrücke zu einer fremden Sprache geworden sind, oder wenn er sie nicht mehr versteht.” (Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, 541).

¹⁵ Steven Aschheim describes Mauthner as an “Ostjude”; an expression he sets in quotation marks. See Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 54.

¹⁶ See Gerald Hartung, *Die Sprache* (Marburg: Metropolis Verlag, 2012), 149.

¹⁷ Fritz Mauthner, *Muttersprache und Vaterland* (Leipzig: Dürr und Weber, 1920). Fritz Mauthner’s letter to Gustav Landauer, December 21st, 1915 in *Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Hanna Delf, Julius H. Schoeps (München: Beck, 1994), 312. See Landauer’s response (*Ibid.*).

¹⁸ See Paul Breines, “The Jew as Revolutionary: The case of Gustav Landauer,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 12 (1967): 75-84; 76.

¹⁹ “Der Eingang hat mich wieder durch Form und Inhalt entzückt. Dann aber lag es wohl an mir

The friends had also differing views in their understanding of Zionism. As an example: in 1913, Landauer published the article *Sind das Ketzergedanken* in the anthology *Vom Judentum*, edited by the Prague Zionist Association *Bar Kochba*. Hans Kohn, in his introduction to *Vom Judentum*, described a “crisis of spiritual life” (*Krise des geistigen Lebens*) and analyzed Jewishness in terms of a “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*).²⁰ According to Kohn, contemporary Judaism was torn and the individual Jew was an “idolater” (*Götzendiener*) who was in the process of vegetating in his current state of assimilation.²¹ In his article, Landauer puts an emphasis on the fruitful connection between Germanness and Jewishness.²² His sympathy, however, clearly lies with the “new nation in formation” that would grow “independently from other common nation states through work for humanity.”²³ According to Landauer, the Jews had an advantage in that they held their neighbors “in their breast,” which would make them a role model that expressed his ideal of working to improve humankind.²⁴ Landauer calls for “being Jewish with full consciousness and a clear acknowledgement of this dual and dialogical principle.” This “Jewish complex” directly speaks to the idea of a complex identity, which in itself is part of a process.²⁵ In contrast, Mauthner wrote to Landauer in response to the article to explain that he could not agree with Landauer’s position on questions of contemporary Jewish identity. For Mauthner, such complexities as those asserted by Landauer did not exist. Rather, Mauthner claims to feel only as a German despite the “duct” in his head, noted above, that, Mauthner confessed, still connected him with the Jewish part of his identity. To contextualize this statement we must understand that as a young man living in Prague, Mauthner

(und uns), dass alle Prämissen zu meinem Standpunkt zu führen schienen: “Ich fühle mich nur [als] Deutscher; weiß dabei, dass meinen Gehirn irgendwie einen Duktus hat, den man jüdisch nennt; umso schlimmer oder um so besser, ich kann es und will es nicht ändern.” Deine Conclusio ist anders, und nur darin gehen wir auseinander“ (Letter Fritz Mauthner to Gustav Landauer, October 10th, 1913, in *Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 282).

²⁰ *Vom Judentum*, eds. Kohn, Vorwort, Krojanker (Prag, 1913), VI.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² See Landauer, “Sind das Ketzergedanken,” 255.

²³ *Ibid.*, 253.

²⁴ “Unsere Nation hat die Nachbarn in der eigenen Brust; und diese Nachbarnossenschaft ist Friede und Einheit in jedem, der ein Ganzer ist und sich zu sich bekennt. Sollte das nicht ein Zeichen sein des Berufs, den das Judentum an der Menschheit, in der Menschheit zu erfüllen hat?” (*Ibid.*, 257).

²⁵ *Vom Judentum*, eds. Landauer, *Ketzergedanken*, Krojanker, 255.

made the “decision” to become *only* a German.²⁶ Following his move to Berlin in 1878 he always referred to himself as a German for whom Bismarck’s politics of action held great appeal and inspired much admiration. There was no room for complexity in Mauthner’s concept of identity.²⁷

A particular point of disagreement for Mauthner was Landauer’s conception of the nation. Mauthner perceived himself solely as a German without connection to or solidarity with the Jews in either Germany or Eastern Europe.²⁸ The mere existence of Eastern European Jews seemed to appear in Mauthner’s view as a threat to the existence and status of assimilated German Jews like himself. During the war, the positions of Landauer and Mauthner became even more implacable. Mauthner embraced Kaiser Wilhelm II’s proclamation from August 1914 that from now on he would recognize only one German nation and would refuse to recognize Germans of various tribes, based on religion, ethnicity, or political orientation. Although clearly not an admirer of Wilhelm II, but rather, as noted above, preferring Bismarck as a man of action, Mauthner described himself in the terminology of the so-called *Burgfrieden* as someone who was part of the German people.²⁹ He likewise felt that a defeat would question his own decision to become a German when he moved to Berlin and left his Jewish identity behind in the Habsburg Empire.

Gustav Landauer felt little enthusiasm for anything when the war broke out. On July 21, 1914 he wrote to his friend, author and translator Ludwig Berndl, in Karlsruhe:

Dear friends, we will terminate our vacation and travel back home. There is nothing to hope for any longer, and nothing to be afraid of; it is there.” Landauer continues:

²⁶ Fritz Mauthner, *Erinnerungen I. Prager Jugendjahre*, (München, 1918); Jacques LeRidder, Fritz Mauthner, *Scepticisme linguistique et modernité, une biographie intellectuelle* (Paris: Parution, 2012), 75-81. On Mauthner’s biography see also Gerson Weiler, “Fritz Mauthner— a study of Jewish self-rejection,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 8 (1963): 136-148.

²⁷ Letter Mauthner to Landauer on October 10th, 1913, in *Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 282.

²⁸ “It is possible for Mauthner’s Jewish Duktus to exist without it’s having any impact on his attachment to Germany and German national identity.” (James Goldwasser, *Fritz Mauthner’s Way of Being a Jew*, in Elisabeth Leinfellner/Jörg Thunecke, eds, *Brückenschlag zwischen den Disziplinen: Fritz Mauthner als Schriftsteller, Kritiker und Kulturtheoretiker*, eds. Elisabeth Leinfellner, Jörg Thunecke (Wuppertal: Arco Verlag, 2004), 51-61; 55.

²⁹ See Fritz Mauthner, *Abdankung. Aufruf vom 3. November 1908, Fritz Mauthners Ausgewählte Schriften. Band 1* (Stuttgart und Berlin, 1919), 366-368.

“In these times ‘we need the voice of Tolstoy and any strong human voice – and help.’ [...] And wherever we can help other people, who suffer, we want to help without consideration of any political views.”³⁰

Landauer, who opposed the war from the beginning, quite contrarily argued that even in times of war it was crucial to engage in philosophical debates. He expresses this opinion to Mauthner on September 29, 1914, with reference to Fichte’s colloquium on the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1813 and wonders why people were not having this kind of dialogue now?³¹ Fichte’s philosophy in particular – as Ulrich Sieg has shown – was referenced during the years of war to attack the external enemy but also to construct internal unity.³²

For Landauer this meant engaging in philosophy and recognition of all individuals regardless of their nationality, especially in times of war. Yet, the reality in Germany looked different. What Landauer recognized was “the disgrace of lethargy, fogginess, and drunkenness amongst almost all of our intellectuals,” as he wrote to his wife Hedwig on December 18, 1914.³³ Landauer expressed his feelings towards the war probably best in his letter from January 2, 1917, to his friend Auguste Hauschner (1850-1924), a committed pacifist: “There is only one defeated allowed in this war: war itself.”³⁴

In this regard it is worth noting that Landauer treated soldiers with respect, although he was an outspoken opponent of the war. In a letter to Hugo Warnstedt on August 10, 1915, Landauer responded to Warnstedt’s hope not to serve any longer as a soldier. Landauer declared in the letter that he would not refuse to shake hands with someone who used a gun in order to survive in times of war. According to Landauer, this man would not be responsible for what he did. Still, he had to atone. In consequence, the moral responsibility rested upon

³⁰ Landauer, *Lebensgang in Briefen. Band I*, 459.

³¹ “Aber, wenn ich das Gegenteil sehe, wenn einer sich entschuldigt, dass er, in dieser Zeit Philosophie treibt – Fichte, 1813, hat sich nicht entschuldigt, als er sein Kolleg über “Wissenschaftslehre hielt” – dann darf ich traurig werden” (Landauer to Mauthner on September 29th, 1914, in *Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 292).

³² Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg. Kriegserfahrungen, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 163-164.

³³ Landauer to Hedwig Mauthner, December 18th, 1914 (Landauer, *Lebensgang in Briefen, Band II*, 18).

³⁴ Landauer to Auguste Hauschner, January 2nd, 1917 (*Ibid.*, 172).

the spiritual leaders of the general public, who had completely failed.³⁵ Landauer was convinced that one has to confront “falsifiers and oppressors of the critical mind in Germany”.³⁶ Such could be found, Landauer continues, as the “hereditary enemy on the teacher’s desk of the universities, in schools, and in the chairs of the editorial offices of newspapers in Germany.”³⁷

Mauthner, on the other hand, maintained that one should not engage in philosophical debates at all in times of war. In an article for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, he attacked the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) harshly, and with anti-Semitic insinuations – as a “little tailor” who did not create authentic philosophy but just imitated philosophical fashion.³⁸ In this article, Mauthner also suggests that in times of war philosophizing will not be appreciated by the society at large and will not benefit its members.³⁹

Bergson, who was the president of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, had given a speech on August 8, 1914, in which he declared that “The fight against Germany is the fight of civilization against barbarism.”⁴⁰ Bergson also traveled at the request of President of France Aristide Briand to the U.S. to garner public support for the French cause. In his philosophy, Bergson focused on the immediate experience and intuition rather than on rationalism and the science of understanding. Mauthner disputed on two levels the validity of Bergson’s criticism of Germany’s actions during the war in Belgium as “barbaric.” First, Mauthner perceived Bergson as a hostile French writer, not merely a philosopher. Second, Mauthner impugned Bergson’s critical abilities when he referred to him by a term “little tailor” that evoked the latter’s Eastern

³⁵ Landauer to Hugo Warnsted (*Ibid.*, 67-68); Landauer to Fritz Mauthner, November 2nd, 1914 (*Ibid.*, 8).

³⁶ Landauer to Hugo Warnsted, November 18th, 1915 (*Ibid.*, 102-104).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

³⁸ “Das Schneiderlein der philosophischen Mode, hat uns Deutsche Barbaren genannt. [...] Der große Krieg wird uns weiterhin vor der Lächerlichkeit schützen, dass federgewandte deutsche Schriftsteller den glatten Lack von Bergson ernst nehmen, dass sie dem Lande eines Kant und eines Schopenhauer die Stilübungen Bergsons, als eine bedeutende Philosophie anpreisen.” (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 456; originally printed in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, September 13th, 1914).

³⁹ “Ich weiß, daß in diesen Tagen ein Aufsatz über solche philosophischen Dinge kaum lesbar sein wird. [...] Heute ist jedem von uns vorläufig [...] das Mittagsbrot jedes deutschen Soldaten wichtiger als die ganze Philosophie.” (Fritz Mauthner, “Wer ist Henri Bergson?” *Ibid.*, no page number).

⁴⁰ Quoted in Christophe Prochasson, “Intellectuals and writers,” *A Companion to World War I*, ed. Horne, 323-337; 333.

European Jewish heritage.⁴¹ Bergson was the son of Polish-Jewish composer Michal Berekson (Bergson) (1820-1898) and Catherine Lewisohn (1830-1928).

Mauthner's patriotic feelings also gave rise to a "deadly fear" (*Todesangst*) about Germany's future.⁴² He viewed Germany as under attack. Landauer, on the contrary, had spoken about European soldiers in the war, which made them universal in their experience of suffering and as a consequence called for an immediate ceasefire. Addressing the idea of universal suffering, Mauthner puts a question to Landauer in a letter from November 15th, 1914: "I am not sure, whether you still have inclinations to Zionism. I would like to know from you if you would still talk about peace if your Zionist state would have been attacked by European soldiers?"⁴³ To this question Landauer did not respond. It is, however, worth mentioning that neither Landauer nor Mauthner commented in their correspondence on Jews shooting at each other at the frontlines. The debate between Landauer and Mauthner progressed while the two discussed the possible immigration of Eastern European Jews to Germany.⁴⁴

The notion that Germans were engaged in a war of culture gained support from the comparison that German soldiers and the German public made between Eastern Prussia under Prussian rule and the occupied territories across the border. The German military tried to find alliances among the civilian population, including the Jews, when they advanced into the formerly Russian territory in Poland. For these soldiers, the latter regions were clearly marked as uncultured. This conception, of course, was much older than the actual outbreak

⁴¹ See Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle*, 71. Hermann Cohen also disputed Bergson's ability to criticize Germany for the same reasons. See Hermann Cohen, *Deutschtum und Judentum. Mit grundlegenden Überlegungen über Staat und Internationalismus* (Gießen 1915), 44.

⁴² Mauthner to Landauer on November 15th, 1914 (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 294).

⁴³ "Bei mir ist Todesangst um Deutschland das beherrschende Gefühl, bei Dir offenbar nicht, da Du das mindestens unglückliche Wort von dem 'europäischen' Soldaten gebrauchst. [...] Ich weiß nicht, ob Du noch zionistische Neigungen hast; möchte aber wissen, ob Du zum Frieden reden wolltest wenn es so wäre und Dein zionistischer Staat von europäischen Soldaten angegriffen würde" (*Ibid.*). On Landauer's Zionism see also Michael Löwy, "Romantic Prophets of Utopia. Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber," (*Gustav Landauer. Anarchist and Jew*, ed. Mendes-Flohr, 64- 81, 78).

⁴⁴ See Brief Landauer to Hedwig Mauthner on December 29th, 1914 (*Landauer-Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 299-301).

of the war. It is also arguable that the ethnic diversity of these regions did not help to establish a more nuanced notion of the East.⁴⁵

German-Jewish institutions viewed the idea of cultural supremacy mainly as a tool against the tyranny of Czarism. As a consequence, German-Jewish Zionists, such as Max Bodenheimer (1865-1940) and Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943), founded the *Deutsche Komitee zur Befreiung der russischen Juden* in August 1914, which was succeeded by the *Komitee für den Osten*. The liberal, non-Zionist C.V. as well as various Zionist organizations all supported these agencies.⁴⁶

Neither the German government nor the military administration of the territories occupied in 1915, which was formerly Congress-Poland, had a clear idea of how to deal with the Jewish population. Over on the other side, the Russian government evacuated Jews as well as Poles, Lithuanians, and Latvians from the territories occupied by the Central Powers to Russia between 1915 and 1917.⁴⁷ However, from the German administrative perspective, it was clear that Eastern European Jews or *Ostjuden* in the terminology of the period should, in particular, be prevented from immigrating to Germany.⁴⁸

Closing the border on the Eastern Front so that Eastern European Jews would not enter Germany had already been debated before the war beginning with the *Antisemiten Petition* of 1880, and continuing with the *Reichshammerbund* (founded by Theodor Fritsch), the *Pan Germans*, the *Farmers League*, and of course the *Alldeutsche Verband* under the leadership of Heinrich Claß—who in 1914, for racist reasons, argued against any further immigration to Germany,

⁴⁵ Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, “German occupied Eastern Europe,” *A Companion to World War I*, ed. Horne, 447-463; 450.

⁴⁶ Some Zionist intellectuals like Gershom Scholem, although a tiny minority among the Zionists, opposed the War as did his Marxist brother Werner who in 1916 in full uniform protested against the ongoing war (see Peter Pulzer, “Der Erste Weltkrieg,” in *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, eds. Michael Meyer et al. (München: CH Beck, 2000), vol. 3, 363.

⁴⁷ Alan Kramer, “Combatants and Noncombatants: Atrocities, massacres, and war crimes,” in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. Horne, 188-201; 192. On German administration in the occupied territories and the Jews see Gabriel Liulevicius, “German occupied Eastern Europe” (*Ibid.*, 447-463; 453-454).

⁴⁸ See also Leo Winz, “Die Ostjudenfrage,” *Ost und West*, XIV/2-3 (1916): 73-112. Steven Aschheim, “Jews and Germany’s Ostpolitik,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 28 (1983): 351-365; 365.

while supporting the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine instead.⁴⁹ The *Reichshammerbund* in particular questioned the role of German Jews in the military already by the beginning of the war.

Additionally, liberal politicians such as Friedrich Naumann, who had in his 1915 book *Mitteleuropa* called for the cooperation of Germany and the Habsburg Empire with other Central European nations in political and economic matters, now pleaded for German domination over Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ A public debate on the immigration of Eastern European Jews to Germany and Austria had already taken place when Russian troops had occupied Galicia in late summer of 1914.⁵¹ The subject came up again after German and Habsburg troops had advanced into the Russian Empire in 1915, and it persisted for the rest of the war. In late August of 1914 Mauthner had himself already begun to turn his attention to the Habsburg Empire.⁵²

Particularly during 1916, Mauthner and Landauer developed contrary positions on immigration. It was Mauthner who called for a cessation of Eastern European Jewish immigration to Germany because the situation of German Jews would be endangered. In contrast, Landauer felt this immigration would lead to class struggle and the “outbreak of hostilities against the new and old Jewish bourgeoisie,”⁵³ something that Landauer favored.

During this time a variety of discriminatory actions against Eastern European Jews came into being. This anti-Semitic atmosphere also reached German Jews, as Erich Mühsam had, for instance, described in his diary for the year 1915.⁵⁴ Mauthner supported the closure of the Eastern borders to Eastern European Jews as decreed by the Prussian Ministry for the Interior on April 23rd, 1918. Landauer firmly describes Mauthner’s assessment as *lästerlich*, or malicious, in his letter of December 18th, 1918.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Johannes Leicht, *Heinrich Claß 1868-1953. Die politische Biographie eines Alldeutschen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012), 221-225.

⁵⁰ Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: Reimer, 1915).

⁵¹ Pulzer, “Der Erste Weltkrieg,” 375.

⁵² Kosuch, *Missratene Söhne*, 310.

⁵³ See Gustav Landauer, “Ostjuden und das Deutsche Reich,” *Der Jude*, October 1916, 433-439; 437.

⁵⁴ Erich Mühsam, *Tagebücher*, November 23rd, 1915.

⁵⁵ Landauer to Mauthner on December 18th, 1918 (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 355).

Landauer was convinced that both Western and Eastern European Jews would need a spiritual renewal after the war. However, it would be much harder for the Western Jew to accomplish such a renewal.⁵⁶ In contrast, the dignity and grace needed for this renewal already existed at this point among the Eastern European Jews.⁵⁷ This notion clearly reflects how Landauer had been influenced by Martin Buber's writings in the periodical *Der Jude* since 1916, among other writings – which clearly was not the case with Mauthner.

At the end of the war it was Landauer who, in a letter to Mauthner dated November 28, 1918, held the German people responsible for the war because they did nothing early on to stop the preparations for war.⁵⁸ But now, Landauer argued, with reference to the new situation in Bavaria, a democratic government based on the will of the people was in place.

And suddenly Germany is at the center for a struggle of all people for justice and reason [...]. A man who lived a miserable, pure, and honorable life as a starving writer, Kurt Eisner, stands there, a man of the spirit, this brave Jew, as the moral head of Germany [...] Why do you not thank destiny for the mercy that you are allowed to live through these times? Let that go down, which must perish, and let that take shape, which has the ability to do so. Help or stand aside, but have we not learnt Spinoza for life and not for school?⁵⁹

One of Landauer's main criticisms of Mauthner in 1918 was Mauthner's reliance on the "great men" of the past like Bismarck and Hindenburg.⁶⁰ Instead, he urges Mauthner to look up to men of deed like Kurt Eisner, not least because he was also a Jew. For Mauthner, however, the passing of the old order did not symbolize a new optimistic and morally renewed beginning. Mauthner obviously did not share the vision espoused by Landauer, according to which the new German state and its revolutionary upheavals would bring about the unity of the German people with all humankind. Only when the old order was destroyed could this happen, in the view of Landauer,⁶¹ who perceived this

⁵⁶ Gustav Landauer, "Ostjuden und das Deutsche Reich," 437.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁵⁸ Landauer to Mauthner on November 28th, 1918 (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 351-353; 352).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ "Sie [die Revolution, C.S.] wird vielleicht auf dem ganz richtigen Wege des anfänglichen Auseinanderreißen, die Einheit des deutschen Volkes sicherer herstellen, als es Dein Bismarck zuwege gebracht hat; sie wird uns weiter führen, wieder einmal führen auf den Weg, den unser

change to a new kind of government – embodied in chaos – as a true and authentic movement.⁶²

Mauthner instead wondered whether “Germany was not sentenced to death.”⁶³ This perception, that the end of the old order would also bring about a loss in security, can be seen in Mauthner’s unwillingness to consider the extradition of the former Kaiser Wilhelm II to the victorious forces, as in his article for the *Berliner Tageblatt* from February 6, 1919 entitled *Die Auslieferung des Kaisers*. Mauthner had, however, called for the emperor to abdicate.⁶⁴ Landauer himself pleaded for the extradition of Wilhelm II from The Netherlands to the German public authorities where the former emperor would be questioned concerning the advancement of the war. After having questioned him, Landauer suggested, ironically, that they would agree to pay him a pension and let him go on his way.⁶⁵

While Mauthner continued to live in Meersburg on Lake Constance, where he finished writing the *History of Atheism*, Landauer played an active role in the Bavarian Soviet Republic and was later murdered for it in Stadelheim in April of 1919. Landauer tried to combine his writings with his political agenda and hoped to bring about a kind of universal salvation. In his last work, *The History of Atheism*, Mauthner refers explicitly to “my friend” Gustav Landauer who was “among the spiritual superior leaders of the Revolution in Munich.”⁶⁶ Mauthner, although agreeing in theory with Landauer on many issues, feared the changes that were about to come over Germany; this included apprehensions about his decision to become a German and whether that could ever be

Buddha und unser Jesus gewiesen hat: Zur Einheit der Menschheit. Und so will ich, auch um der Einheit des deutschen Volkes willen, gegen die noch bestehenden Reste des Bismarckreiches loshämmern helfen, so viel ich nur Kräfte habe.” (Landauer to Mauthner on November 30th, 1918, *ibid.*, 353).

⁶² “Und auch jetzt: die Erschütterung ist da – der Fluss und die Bewegung – das beginnende Chaos – und der Sprachkritiker klammert sich an ‘Deutschland.’ Ich kann da nicht Größe des Ziels sehen, sondern Sentimentalität.” (Landauer to Mauthner on December 26th, 1918, in Landauer, *Lebensgang in Briefen*, vol. 2, 343).

⁶³ Mauthner to Landauer on December 3rd, 1918 (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 354).

⁶⁴ Kosuch, *Missratene Söhne*, 310. Kosuch refers to Leo Baeck Institute, Digitale Sammlungen, Fritz Mauthner: Tagebücher 1870-1916, Folder 9, Kriegstagebuch, Abhandlung.

⁶⁵ Landauer to Mauthner February 22nd, 1919 (*Gustav Landauer – Fritz Mauthner Briefwechsel 1890-1919*, eds. Delf and Schoeps, 361).

⁶⁶ See Kosuch, *Missratene Söhne*, 336; also Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1920), 210; 392.

questioned in the future. Consequently, in his remaining years, Mauthner resolved this apprehension, by choosing not to associate with either Weimar Germany or Jewish nationalism, but to remain a skeptic who continued to believe himself to be a German.

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German Jewish Intellectuals and the German Occupation of Belgium

by Ulrich Wyrwa

Abstract

In August 1914 the majority of German Jews expressed their patriotic approval of the war and their loyalty to the German state. They identified with Germany, and a large number signed up voluntarily for military service at the front. The Jewish population in Germany affirmed the war not least because it was directed against Russia, the harshest adversary of the Jews. This paper concentrates on the first acts of war conducted by the German military forces during the German occupation of Belgium; it examines whether and in what way German-Jewish Intellectuals perceived Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality and the new feature of war as a war against a civilian population. The first part examines autobiographical sources to reconstruct the experiences and the perception of German Jewish soldiers, German military rabbis, and other German Jewish witnesses to the war. The second part then analyzes the coverage of German Jewish newspapers regarding the warfare against Belgium; and, finally, the third and last part scrutinizes the commentaries of German Jewish intellectuals and Jewish socialists regarding the German war against Belgium.

Introduction

Excursus: Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975)

German-Jewish perceptions of the German occupation of Belgium

German-Jewish Contemporary Witnesses

The coverage by the German Jewish press

The perception of German Jewish intellectuals and German Jewish socialists

Conclusion

Introduction

For European Jewish history, the First World War marked the end of the long tradition of transnational exchange of European Jewry; the Great War even

implied a “Jewish fratricidal war of the greatest magnitude.”¹ According to Shulamit Volkov, European Jewry during/as a result of the war seemed irrevocably divided into Jews of different nationalities. “The legendary unity of the Jews seemed destroyed for ever.”² Coincidentally the First World War was a turning point for both German-Jewish and general German history, marking the beginning of the short 20th century.³ In both cases, to come to terms with the implications and meanings of war one needs to take into account the specific features of the very first acts of war by the German army, and that, in turn, means to study the German occupation of Belgium in August and September 1914.

In August 1914 the majority of German Jews identified with Germany, and a large number signed up voluntarily for military service at the front.⁴ The

* A first draft of this paper has been presented at the 16th World Congress of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2013.

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¹ Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 94.

² Shulamit Volkov, “Juden und Judentum im Zeitalter der Emanzipation. Einheit und Vielheit,” *Juden in der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Beck, (München: C.H. Beck, 1992), 86-108; Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military. A History* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 152-160.

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994).

⁴ After the influential opening up of historical research on Jews and the First World War with the monumental study of Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg*, in 1969, the topic received increased scholarly impetus with the publication of the volume in the series of the Leo Baeck Institute: *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, ed. Werner E. Mosse, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971). Werner T. Angress, a contributor to this volume, subsequently published Werner T. Angress, “Das deutsche Militär und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg,” *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 19/1 (1976): 98-105, in which he touched also one of the most widely discussed subjects, the Jewish census of 1916: Werner T. Angress, “The German Army’s ‘Juden-zählung’ of 1916: Genesis - Consequences - Significance,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23 (1978): 117-138. The unpublished dissertation of Stephen Magill, *Defense and Introspection. The First World War as a Pivotal Crisis in the German Jewish Experience*, (Phil. Diss. Los Angeles 1977), however has widely been left out of consideration. Nevertheless, on the basis of the current state of research, Peter Pulzer has given a dense and inspiring overall presentation for the series on German-Jewish History in Modern Times, published in its German version as: Peter Pulzer, “Der Erste Weltkrieg,” *Umstrittene Integration 1871-1918, Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Neuzeit*, eds. Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, Monika Richarz, vol. 3, (München: C. H. Beck, 1997), 356-380. Published also

patriotic feelings were by no means restricted to the established Jewish middle classes - even the Zionist movement and the Orthodox minority became attuned to German jingoism. Only a few Jewish intellectuals or converts, who nonetheless still bonded with their Jewish heritage, and some socialist Jews were able to resist the suggestive impact of this historical moment. Only some outsiders warned of the horror of a war in an age of technologically advanced killing machinery.

The vast majority of German Jews expressed their patriotic approval of the war and their loyalty to the German state and culture. In view of Emperor Wilhelm II's solemn declaration to no longer recognize any political or confessional boundaries but only Germans, they enthusiastically hoped to overcome the last obstacles blocking their full civil and political recognition while also bringing their struggle against anti-Semitism to a successful conclusion.⁵ The German political class had effectively spread the rumour that Germany together with its ally, the Habsburg Empire, had been attacked.⁶ During the War Germany made extensive use of pictures and photographs for propaganda purposes, and the weekly *Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier* (Illustrated War Courier) published by the Berlin-based *Illustrierter Kurier Verlagsgesellschaft* (Illustrated Courier

in English in *Integration in dispute 1871 - 1918*, eds. Steven M. Lowenstein, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Peter Pulzer, Monika Richarz, (New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), 366-384. In 2001, Ulrich Sieg published a landmark study on German Jewish Intellectuals in the First World War: Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg. Kriegserfahrung, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001). And in 2007 Jacob Rosenthal presented a volume on the Jewish census of 1916: Jacob Rosenthal, *Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten.* *Die Judenzählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*, (Frankfurt/M - New York: Campus, 2007). Recent scholarship has scrutinized the overwhelming importance of the Jewish census: David J. Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012). Most recently, Sarah Panter has published a comprehensive comparative study on Jewish experiences in the First World War, comparing Germany, Austria, Great Britain, and the United States: Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). See the review of this volume by Elisabeth Weber in this issue of *Quest*. For a discussion of new studies of the First World War at its 100th anniversary, including studies in Jewish History, see: Ulrich Wyrwa, "Zum Hundertsten nichts Neues. Deutschsprachige Neuerscheinungen zum Ersten Weltkrieg (Part I)," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 62/11 (2014): 921-40; Ulrich Wyrwa, "Zum Hundertsten nichts Neues. Deutschsprachige Neuerscheinungen zum Ersten Weltkrieg (Part II)," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 64/7-8 (2016): 683-702.

⁵ Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State. The Political history of a Minority. 1848-1933*, (Oxford-Cambridge/ Mass: Blackwell, 1992), 194-207.

⁶ Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora. Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*, (München: Beck, 2014); Anne Lipp, *Meinungslenkung im Krieg. Kriegserfahrungen deutscher Soldaten und ihre Deutung 1914-1918*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

Publishing House) provided images showing the harm wrought by the war while also giving the impression of the virtuous German mission in the world. This weekly appeared simultaneously in a German-Italian-French edition (*Corriere della Guerra = Courrier de la Guerre*), a German-Dutch-French edition (*Oorlogs Koerier = Courrier de guerre*), and a German-Russian-French edition (*Illjustrirovannyi kur'er voiny = Courrier de guerre*), and last but not least in a German-Yiddish edition. [Fig. 1] The Yiddish edition included a picture meant to illustrate the equal treatment of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious services in the German armed forces [Fig. 2], another issue showed peaceful images of Belgian cities during the German occupation [Fig. 3]. In a clear attempt to demonstrate the vital cultural activities of Germans in Belgium, the magazine printed a photograph of Germans attending a performance of Richard Wagner's opera *The Ring of the Nibelungen* at the *Theater de la Monnaie* in Brussels [Fig. 4], another photograph presented the warm welcome that Russian Jewish refugees received in a Berlin synagogue [Fig. 5]. The German-Dutch-French edition (*Oorlogs Koerier = Courrier de guerre*) of April 1917 on the other hand printed a picture of the photography agency 'Photo-Samson,' depicting German Jewish soldiers at the Pesach ceremony in Brussels [Fig. 6]. Another picture produced by the same photographic agency and depicting German Jewish soldiers in Brussels observing *Yom Kippur* in 1915, was used for postcards, too, and entered in private photographic albums as well. [Fig. 7]



Fig. 1: The weekly *Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier* (Universitätsbibliothek Potsdam)



Fig. 2: Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier Jiddische Ausgabe n. 18, 1916, p. 277.

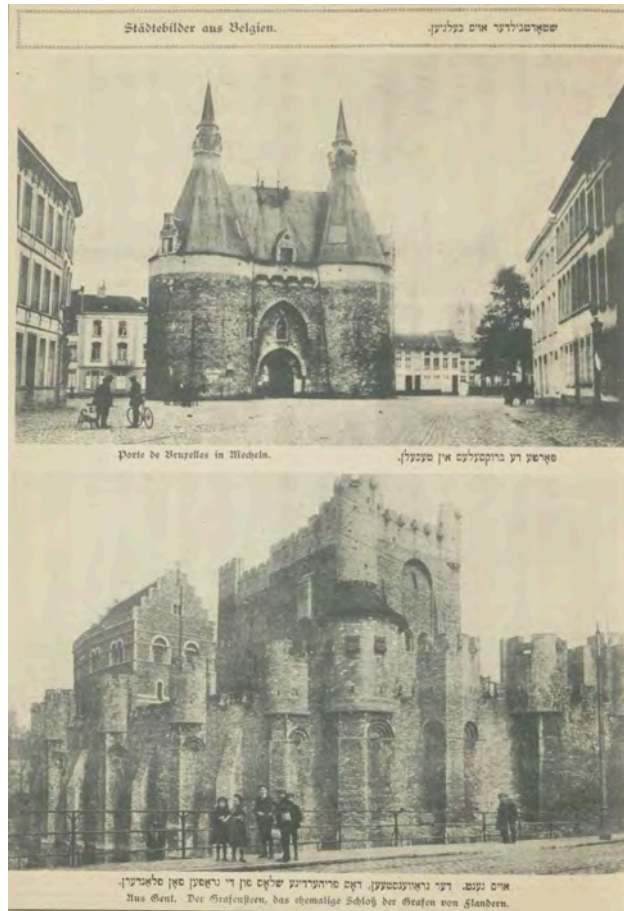


Fig. 3: Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier Jiddische Ausgabe, n. 9, 1916, p. 143.



Fig. 4: Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier Jiddische Ausgabe, n. 7, 1916, p. III



Fig. 5: Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier Jiddische Ausgabe N. 5, 1916, p. 80.



Fig. 6: Illustrierter Kriegs-Kurier - Oorlogs Koerier - Courrier de guerre, April 1917, p. 369. ((Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf).



Fig. 7: Bernhard Bardach Collection, Archive Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Jews as well as other Germans were convinced that their country had been forced to fight a defensive war. The Jewish population in Germany was all the more keen to affirm the war because it was directed against Russia, the harshest adversary of the Jews, and the country in Europe where the Jews' situation had been most traumatic, where Jews as well as non-Jews had no political rights, and where the greatest acts of violence against Jews had broken out only a few years earlier. German as well as Habsburg Jews were extremely patriotic; additionally, they viewed Russia as the archenemy of the Jews.⁷ In this vein, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* wrote at the end of August that Russia is still ruled by an "asiatic barbarism."⁸ Again and again German-Jewish public opinion denounced the Czar's despotism, and the journal *Der jüdische Student*, organ of the organization of Jewish students' fraternities, insisted in its first issue after the war began, that they would support this German war unconditionally, because it is directed against Russia. Here, the author underlined, a bit of decidedly Jewish work has to be done: "Finally, our hate, bottled up for centuries, against this bestial country finds satisfaction."⁹ In the same way, the journal *Im deutschen*

⁷ For the patriotism of Habsburg Jews see: Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity. The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*, (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, (Oxford-Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 2001).

⁸ "Als Deutsche und als Juden," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* [= AZJ], August, 28th, 1914.

⁹ "Die deutschen Juden und der Krieg," *Der jüdische Student*, November 1st, 1914.

Reich, organ of the of the *Centralverbandes der deutschen Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, spoke of the bestiality of the Cossack mob and underlined the huge impact of the horrendous treatment of the Jews in Russia on the struggle of the Jews against the Russian “Moskowitzertum.”¹⁰ The journal of the Zionist movement in Germany, the *Jüdische Rundschau*, likewise, proclaimed: “we as Jews have still to settle a special bill with the barbarians in the East.”¹¹ Like most other Germans, German Jews believed as well that a short military campaign would be sufficient to win the war.

Technological progress, however, had drastically changed the features of any future war. Peace activists had warned of this dangerous development. The converted Jew Jan Gotlieb Bloch from Poland, for example, had published a huge six-volume book about the future of war, describing all the atrocities to come.¹² The public, though, largely ignored these warnings. One of the few Jewish contemporary observers to note the horrifying consequences of technological progress for war was the historian Martin Philippson. In his end-of-year review for the year 5674, published in the *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, he wrote that we now know how to send to their death thousands of people “from the depths of the sea and from the height of the heavens.”¹³ Nevertheless, Philippson, too, emphasized that German Jews should go to war even more zealously and boldly, since this war was aimed at Russian Czarism, which threatened all culture, justice, tolerance, and freedom.

It was more difficult for German Jews, however, to legitimize the war against France and England, those countries that had been seen in the German-Jewish public sphere as shining examples of modern civility because of their successful history of emancipation. Liberal as well as orthodox and Zionist German Jews now condemned France and England for having entered into an alliance with Russia. The *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* proclaimed that these civilised states had capitulated in the face of Russian barbarism.¹⁴ In the same way the

¹⁰ “Unter den Waffen,” *Im Deutschen Reich. Zeitschrift des Central-Vereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, September 9th, 1914.

¹¹ Heinrich Loewe, “Ringsum Feinde,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 7th, 1914.

¹² Jan Gotlib Bloch, Ivan Stanislavovich Bloch, *The Future of the War in Its Technical, Economic, and Political Relations*, translation from Russian (Boston: Ginn, 1899). Published also in a German (Johann von Bloch, *Der Krieg*, 6 voll., (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899) and French translations (Jean de Bloch, *La guerre*, (Paris: Guillaumin, 1899).

¹³ Martin Philippson, “Rückblick auf das Jahr 5674,” *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, 18/1 (Berlin 1915): 1-14.

¹⁴ “Als Deutsche und als Juden,” *AZJ*, August 28th, 1914.

newspaper of the CV, *Im deutschen Reich*, wrote: “By forming an alliance with this state, France and England have made themselves guilty of the same lack of culture.”¹⁵ Even Martin Philippon proclaimed England and France to be the true creators and the most unscrupulous and deceitful operators of the global conflagration.¹⁶ The *Jüdische Rundschau*, too, accused France of defending Russia and of dragging our people – and here the Zionist author did not mean Jews but Germans – with outrageous blindness into war.¹⁷ Liberal, orthodox, and Zionist German Jews alike condemned France and Great Britain for this alliance with Russia. Again and again they underscored the legitimacy of the defensive war that Germany was forced to conduct. In this way, the first issue under the title “The War and Us Jews” of a small series of pamphlets published for Jewish soldiers, Lamm’s *Jüdische Feldebücherei*,¹⁸ remarked: “Wars of conquest – this is what Jewry teaches – are reprehensible from an ethical point of view; defensive wars, however, are not only allowed but also imperative.”¹⁹

Since contemporary observers did not have complete access to the plans of the military command, they could not recognize how the German Supreme Army Command, in direct coordination with the Habsburg Army, had already transformed the war into one of conquest, establishing far-reaching war aims,²⁰ or even the downright conquest of world power.²¹ Neither could they foresee the war dynamics. They could have discerned, however, even by official statements in August 1914 how the conduct of the war violated international law and their own humanistic convictions. Still, in the early days of the war, contemporary Jewish and non-Jewish observers alike were not willing, in the excitement of the historical moment and with the emphatic declaration of German patriotism, to recognize these discrepancies, although they could have been discerned from the published speech given by Chancellor of the German Reich, Theobald von

¹⁵ “Unter den Waffen,” *Im Deutschen Reich. Zeitschrift des Central-Vereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, September 9th, 1914.

¹⁶ Martin Philippon, “Rückblick auf das Jahr 5674,” *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, 18/1 (Berlin, 1915): 1-14.

¹⁷ Heinrich Loewe, “Ringsum Feinde,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 7th, 1914.

¹⁸ Eva Edelman-Ohler, “Frontlektüre – Poetische Mobilmachung in Lamm’s ‘Jüdischer Feldebücherei’ (1915/16),” *Europäisch-jüdische Literaturen und Erster Weltkrieg/European-Jewish Literatures and World War One*, ed. Petra Ernst (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton 2014), 100-115.

¹⁹ “Der Krieg in der Auffassung des Judentums,” *Der Krieg und wir Juden. Gesammelte Aufsätze von einem deutschen Juden*, (Berlin: Lamm, 1915), 20-55; 28.

²⁰ Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus*, (London: Longman, 2002); Annika Mombauer, *Die Julikrise*, (München: Beck, 2014).

²¹ Fritz Fischer, *Der Griff nach der Weltmacht*, (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1961).

Bethmann Hollweg, in the August 4th session of the German parliament.²² There he conceded that Germany had opened this war with a violation of international law by invading neutral Belgium.²³ Moreover, attentive contemporary witnesses could also perceive the fact that this war – in sharp contrast to the few wars of the 19th century – developed into a war against the civilian population from the very outset.²⁴ Again, Belgium was one of the first theatres of the war where this new characteristic of warfare had emerged.²⁵

Contemporary German observers – Jews and non-Jews alike – were, therefore, compelled to find subtle strategies to legitimize Germany’s violation of Belgian neutrality and to repress this new feature of war against a civilian population. This article therefore examines how Jewish contemporaries – involving some voices of Habsburg Jews as well as of some converts, who had been afflicted by anti-Semitic prejudices – perceived the violation of international law and whether they had discerned this new quality of warfare.²⁶ After considering the testimonies of German-Jewish eye-witnesses, whether they served as soldiers in the German army or as rabbis for the soldiers in Belgium, this article will then scrutinize the ways that the German-Jewish press covered the German occupation of Belgium. It aims by these means to ultimately examine the ways in which German-Jewish intellectuals, including certain converted Jews, and Jewish socialists perceived the Belgian war.

²² *Verhandlungen des Reichstags. XIII. Legislaturperiode. II. Session, Band 306. Stenographische Berichte. Von der Eröffnungssitzung am 4. August 1914 bis zur 34. Sitzung am 16. März 1916*, (Berlin: Norddeutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1916).

²³ John Horne, Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

²⁴ Anton Holzer, *Das Lächeln der Henker: Der unbekannte Krieg gegen die Zivilbevölkerung 1914-1918*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008).

²⁵ Jeff Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, August 1914*. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007); Belgian eyewitnesses had documented extensively the German atrocities in published diaries and memorandums. For a brief presentation, see: Wilhelm Alff, “Die Deutschen aus unbekannter Sicht: Belgische Aufzeichnungen von 1914 bis 1918,” *Materialien zum Kontinuitätsproblem der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Wilhelm Alff, (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1976), 109-126; see also the contemporary report of the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, *The German Terror in Belgium: An Historical Record*, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917).

²⁶ Ulrich Sieg in his monumental study on German Jewish intellectuals in the First World War provides helpful comments at several points on the Jewish perception of the German warfare in Belgium: Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg: Kriegserfahrungen, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 69-71; 147; 178.

The study focuses on the very first moment of the war. The question of how these initial attitudes changed over the course of the war will not be taken into consideration. Necessary, however, is a brief overview of the German occupation of Belgium.

The German occupation of Belgium

According to the plan devised by the chief of the Prussian general staff in 1905, the way to defeat France in the case of a war on two fronts was through a surprise attack from the north, through Belgium.²⁷ On August 4th, German troops did just this, invading in four formations. In doing so, they not only broke international law by violating Belgian neutrality,²⁸ but also by conducting a war against Belgian civilians, they paved the way for German war crimes.²⁹ The very same day, they arrived near the strategically important town of Liege. To the great surprise of the German military commanders, the Belgian people did not accept the violation of their neutrality.³⁰ Only twelve days later, the German army succeeded in conquering Liege.³¹

From the outset rumours spread among German soldiers that Belgian civilians carried out cunning ambush attacks.³² In this context, old myths dating back to the Franco-German war of 1870/71 about so-called *Franc-tireurs*, or civilian

²⁷ *Der Schlieffenplan: Analysen und Dokumente*, eds. Hans Ehlert, Michael Epkenhans, Gerhard P. Groß, 3rd ed. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2007).

²⁸ See therefore chapter 2 in Isabel Hull, *A Scrap of Paper. Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2014), 16-50.

²⁹ Christoph Jahr, "Verbrechen," *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Der deutsche Aufmarsch in ein kriegerisches Jahrhundert*, eds. Markus Pöhlmann, Harald Fritz Potempa, Thomas Vogel, (München: Bucher-Verlag, 2013), 301-319.

³⁰ Ernst Piper, *Nacht über Europa: Kulturgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*, (Berlin: Propyläen, 2013), 151-212.

³¹ Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium*.

³² Lothar Wieland, *Belgien 1914: Die Frage des belgischen 'Franktireurkrieges' und die deutsche öffentliche Meinung von 1914 bis 1936* (Bern and Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984). For the long and difficult path to Belgian-German rapprochement, see: Winfried Dolderer, "Der schwierige Weg zum 'moralischen Frieden': Der Disput um den angeblichen belgischen Franktireurkrieg 1927-1958," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 64/7-8 (2016): 661-682. Here is no place to repulse the revisionist theses of Gunter Spraul, *Der Franktireurkrieg 1914. Untersuchungen zum Verfall einer Wissenschaft und zum Umgang mit nationalen Mythen*, (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016) who replicates the old German legends, that in fact Belgian people had undertaken a franc-tireur war against German soldiers.

snipers, emerged once more among Germans.³³ Time and again German newspapers published articles about Belgian civilian attacks on German soldiers.³⁴ Numerous pamphlets and novels circulated at the time, some with illustrations of the cruel assaults of the *Franc-tireurs*; [Fig. 8, Fig. 9] likewise, picture postcards and, significantly, posters of a similar nature circulated widely.³⁵



Fig. 8 and 9: Title pages of two widely circulating German pamphlets and novels depicting the alleged violent assaults by Belgian Franc-tireurs.

The drawing “From the Belgian theater of war: Assault by Franktireurs” by Felix Schwormstädt for example signed on August, 21, 1914, was first printed in the *Illustrierte Zeitung* in Leipzig, [Fig. 10] reprinted in the *Illustrierte Weltkriegschronik der Leipziger Illustrierten Zeitung*,³⁶ and then widely used for

³³ Friedrich Engels at that time sharply repudiated the legends of the Franc-tireurs: Friedrich Engels, “Preußische Franktireurs,” in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. 17 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1962), 203-207.

³⁴ Wieland, *Belgien 1914*, 17-22.

³⁵ See for example: Felix Renker, *Der Franktireur: Dramatische Scene* (Mühlhausen i. Thür.: Danner, 1914); Robert Hillmann, *Der Franktireur: Episode aus dem Kriege 1914 in einem Aufzug*, (Warendorf: Wulff, 1914); Victor Martin Otto Denk, *Die Franktireurs von Diest. Erzählung aus Belgien*, (München: Manz, 1915); Peter Saget, *Der Franktireur: Trauerspiel in 1 Akt*, (Recklinghausen: Vollmer, 1915).

³⁶ *Illustrierte Weltkriegschronik der Leipziger Illustrierten Zeitung*, 3 voll., ed. Paul Schreckenbach, (Leipzig: J. J. Weber, 1914/15 – 1916/18), vol. 1, 31.

propaganda postcards. Even a satirical journal like *Simplicissimus*, formerly known for its anti-militaristic position, felt obliged to publish a sinister story and drawing of Belgian *Franc-tireurs*, complete with a poem titled “Belgian infamy” seething with hatred against Belgians.³⁷ [Fig. 11]



Fig. 10 Felix Schormstädt, “From the Belgian theater of war. Assault by Franktireurs”, *Illustrierte Zeitung*, Leipzig n. 3714, September, 3, 1914, p. 385.

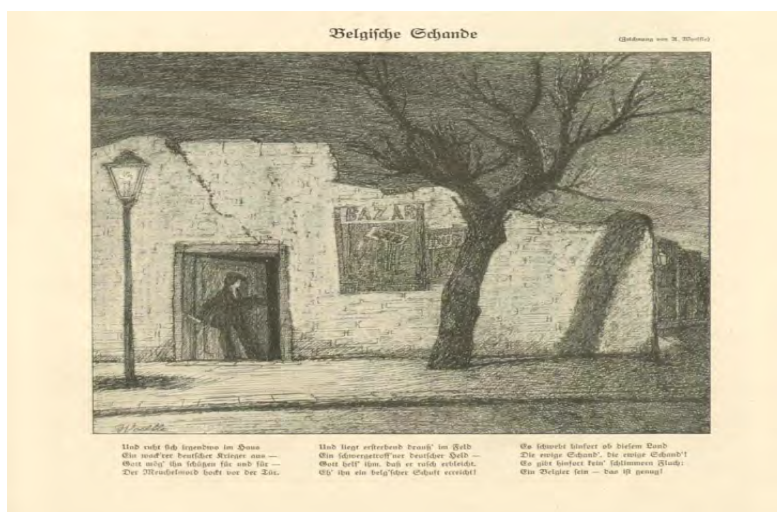


Fig. 11: Alphonse Woelfle, *Belgische Schande*, (*Belgian Infamy*), *Simplicissimus*, n. 21, 25 August 1914.

Some German intellectuals tried at the time to legitimize this obsession with academic arguments. The Königsberg art historian Berthold Haendcke, for

³⁷ Alphonse Woelfle, “Belgische Schande,” *Simplicissimus*, August 25th, 1914.

example, published in the first issue of the 1914/15 volume of the journal *Nationale Rundschau: Zeitschrift für deutsches Geistesleben* a scholarly article about Belgian art history, in which he purported that the behaviour of Belgian *Franc-tireurs* during the war had already been anticipated in the Flemish art of the 17th century.³⁸

In addition to the legend of the *Franc-tireurs*, rumours of Belgian mutilating the wounded and desecrating fallen soldiers spread both among German soldiers and the general public in Germany. As early as 1916 the Belgian sociologist Fernand van Langenhove published a study, based on German sources, testimonial evidence of soldiers, newspaper coverage, and official documents, of the origin, logic, and dynamics of these rumours. He showed how they had arisen from military letters sent by ordinary German soldiers and from accounts given by wounded soldiers. Taken up by the newspapers and revised in their accounts, the rumours contributed widely to the shaping of German public opinion.³⁹ Relying heavily on van Langenhove's study, the French historian Marc Bloch published an article in 1921 regarding false reports in war times, in which he underscored the fact that rumours emerging on the basis of collective imaginations arise from feelings of exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and moral unease. Soldiers, in this situation, had repeated as truth the stories they had heard. And these rumours, Marc Bloch explained, in turn prompted German soldiers to exercise extreme violence and brutality against Belgian civilians.⁴⁰

Hence, during the struggle for Liège, German soldiers destroyed a large part of the nearby small village of Soumagne killing 165 civilians, including children and the elderly.⁴¹ After the conquest of Liège, German troops moved on toward Brussels, continuing their terror against civilians in the small village of Aarschot where they killed more than 150 people.⁴² Three days later they carried out a massacre in the small town Dinant, killing nearly seven hundred civilians, while

³⁸ Berthold Haendcke, "Die belgischen Franktireurs und die Kunst Belgiens," in *Nationale Rundschau: Zeitschrift für deutsches Geistesleben* 1/1 (1914-15): 5-8.

³⁹ Fernand van Langenhove, *Comment nait un cycle de légendes: Franc-Tireurs et atrocités en Belgique*, (Paris: Payot, 1916); translated into German as: *Fernand van Langenhove, Wie Legenden entstehen! Franktireur-Krieg und Greuelthaten in Belgien*, (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1917).

⁴⁰ Marc Bloch, "Reflexions d'un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre," in *Revue de synthèse historique*, 1921, republished in *Ecrits de guerre 1914-1918*, ed. Etienne Bloch, (Paris: Colin, 1997) 169-184. Alff, "Die Deutschen aus unbekannter Sicht," 109-126.

⁴¹ Toynbee, *The German Terror in Belgium*, 35-36.

⁴² Horne, *Kramer, German Atrocities* 1914; Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium*.

also destroying a large part of the city by burning down virtually all the houses.⁴³ German troops subsequently conquered the town of Namur. In the meantime, the northern line of the German army invaded the town of Leuven killing two hundred citizens and destroying a large part of the historical city centre. During this attack the library of Leuven was burned down.⁴⁴ In other places like Ardennes, Tamines, or Rossignol, German soldiers continued to inflict terror on the civilian population in the form of executions, mutilations, looting, and the burning of houses.⁴⁵ The Belgian army had to pull back, and at the beginning of October it was forced to leave the fortress of Antwerp. Within a period of only a few weeks German soldiers killed more than six thousand Belgian civilians.⁴⁶

While some Belgian Jews collaborated with the German occupation forces – 0.6 per cent of the Belgian population in 1914, that is 46,300, were Jewish – many others joined the resistance.⁴⁷ The chief Rabbi of Brussels, Armand Bloch, who became “the soul of the moral resistance” against the German occupation,⁴⁸ refused to sign the declaration of obedience toward the German General Government of Belgium. On Yom Kippur he expressed his patriotism and held a prayer for the Belgian King Albert. It was two German-Jewish officials who accused Bloch of insults, and he was imprisoned in May 1916.⁴⁹

The later global historian and British citizen Arnold J. Toynbee, as a young scholar, had joined the Foreign Office, and in 1917 he published a broad “historical record” of *The German Terror in Belgium*.⁵⁰ To the written and oral

⁴³ See the eyewitness testimonies in: *The Martyrdom of Belgium: Official Report of Massacres of Peaceable Citizens, Women and Children by the German army*, ed. Gérard François Marie Cooreman (Baltimore Md.: W. Stewart Brown, 1915), 13-15.

⁴⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Eine Ruine im Krieg der Geister: Die Bibliothek von Löwen, August 1914 bis Mai 1914* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Verlag, 1993).

⁴⁵ Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*; Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium*.

⁴⁶ According to the report presented in the Belgian parliament and which was passed on to German offices: Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, Politische Nachrichten des Generalkommandos des XIV. Armeekorps / Abteilung Ic no. 1479.

⁴⁷ Daniel Dratwa, “The Chief Rabbi of Belgium Confronting the Germans in the First World War,” in *European Judaism* 48/1 (2015): 100–109; 101.

⁴⁸ Willy Bok, “Vie juive et communauté, une esquisse de leur histoire au vingtième siècle,” in *La Grande Synagogue de Bruxelles, Contributions à l’histoire des Juifs de Bruxelles, 1878-1978*, eds. Jean Bloch, Marc Kahlenberg, Willy Bok (Bruxelles: Communauté Israélite de Bruxelles, 1978), 151-168, 154.

⁴⁹ Dratwa, “The Chief Rabbi of Belgium,” 104-105.

⁵⁰ Arnold J. Toynbee, *The German Terror in Belgium. An Historical Record*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917).

sources Toynbee had added a series of photographs by unknown photographers to document the destruction of Belgian villages and towns. [Fig. 12-23].



Fig. 12, Liège. Farm House



Fig. 13, Haelen



Fig. 14, Aerschot



Fig. 15, Malines



Fig. 16, Malines



Fig. 17, Capelle au bois



Fig. 18, Louvain. Near the church of St. Pierre



Fig. 19, Louvain. Station Square

*Fig. 12-19: Selected photographs document the destruction of Belgian villages and towns by unknown photographers. Published by Arnold J. Toynbee in his *The German Terror in Belgium. An Historical Record*, London, 1917.*

Some of these photographs are presented above. Because Toynbee was once a famous personality with international reputation a brief excursus should be inserted here.

Excursus: Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975)

The British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, who would become renowned as a world historian owing to his twelve volume *A Study of History*, published from 1934 to 1961,⁵¹ an indisputable precursor of global history,⁵² was in spring 1914 employed as a tutor in Oxford following his university education in Oxford and Athens in ancient history.⁵³ The outbreak of the war was a shock for the young scholar who felt wrenched from his secluded scholarly life and studies of ancient Greek. At this momentous time, he found himself compelled to engage in current problems and global politics.⁵⁴ “Throughout his later life, Toynbee referred to this catastrophe as the decisive turning point in his thinking.”⁵⁵ Remarkably, Toynbee opened his voluminous study on nationalism and war, in which he tried to come to terms with the current political conflicts, with the words: “For the first time in our lives, we find ourselves in complete uncertainty as to the future.”⁵⁶ Exempted from military service for health reasons, he worked from May 1915 for the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, publishing propaganda material opposing the war waged by the Central Powers and their allies. Among his publications were comprehensive documentations of the Armenian genocide and of German warfare in Poland.⁵⁷ He then turned his

⁵¹ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, voll. I-XII, (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1934-1961).

⁵² Here is not the place to discuss the ambiguities of Toynbee’s concept of world history; for a good overview, see: Michael Lang, “Globalization and Global History in Toynbee,” in *Journal of World History* 22/4 (2011): 747–783, nor is it the place to treat the philosophical issues around universal history and the philosophy of history; on that subject, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1966), 295-353; on the problem of the principally religious-Christian foundation of the term “world history,” and Toynbee’s position toward Zionism; see Hedva Ben-Israel, “Debates With Toynbee: Herzog, Talmon, Friedman,” in *Israel Studies* 11/1 (2006): 79–90; Isaiah Friedman, “Arnold Toynbee: Pro-Arab or Pro-Zionist?” in *Israel Studies* 4/1 (1999): 73-95.

⁵³ William H. McNeill, *Arnold J. Toynbee. A Life*, (London/New York: Oxford University Press York, 1989).

⁵⁴ Peter Hablützel, *Bürgerliches Krisenbewußtsein und historische Perspektive. Zur Dialektik von Geschichtsbild und politischer Erfahrung bei Arnold Joseph Toynbee*, (Diss. 1978, Universität Zürich, Philosophische Fakultät), 33-36.

⁵⁵ Lang, “Globalization and Global History in Toynbee,” 760.

⁵⁶ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Nationality and the War*, (London-Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1915), 1.

⁵⁷ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities. The Murder of a Nation with a Speech delivered by Lord Bryce* (London-New York-Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915); Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916. Documents* (London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916); Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Destruction of Poland. A Study in German Efficiency*, (London: Fisher Unwin, 1916).

attention to the German occupation of Belgium, publishing first in 1916 a documentation of the deportation and forced labor of the Belgian people.⁵⁸ In the following year he published documentation of the German occupation, which was translated immediately into French, German, and Danish.⁵⁹ “The subject of this book,” Toynebee declared in his preface, “is the treatment of the civil population.” Relying on the methodological experience he had gathered as a historian, he based his narrative of the war in Belgium on documentary evidence. “Th[is] evidence,” he emphasized, “consists of first-hand statements – some delivered on oath before a court, others taken down from the witnesses without oath by competent legal examiners, others written and published on the witnesses’ own initiative as books or pamphlets.” In concluding his preface, he nonetheless added that “the final critical assessment will [...] necessarily be postponed” till the end of the war.⁶⁰

German-Jewish perceptions of the German occupation of Belgium

In light of the German atrocities in Belgium in summer and autumn 1914, the question remains: what was the perception of German Jews in Belgium, some of whom served as soldiers in the German army, others as rabbis for those same soldiers stationed there? How, that is, did German Jews perceive this violence against Belgian civilians and this new quality of war, which was now directed against the civilian population? And how did the German-Jewish public sphere, as well as Jewish intellectuals in Germany, become aware of the violation of Belgian neutrality and German atrocities there?

German-Jewish Contemporary Witnesses

Among the German-Jewish contemporary witnesses who served as soldiers in the occupation of Belgium were the young Werner H. and his brother. The war letters of German and Austrian Jews collected and published in 1915 by the

⁵⁸ Arnold J. Toynebee, *The Belgian Deportations* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1916).

⁵⁹ Arnold J. Toynebee, *Le terrorisme allemand en Belgique* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1917); *Der deutsche Anmarsch in Belgien* (London: R. Clay and sons 1917); *Tyskernes Raedselsherredømme i Belgien* (København: Branner, 1917).

⁶⁰ Toynebee, *The German Terror in Belgium*, V. Later on, in a dialogue with his son, Toynebee explained that he was glad to have gotten rid of these services: Arnold J. Toynebee, *Comparing Notes. A Dialogue across a Generation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 116-117.

journalist Eugen Tannenbaum include one from Werner H., who had by then been wounded, in which he informs his family that his brother had fallen during the battle near Dinant.⁶¹ He felt obliged, Werner H. noted, to report the death of his brother, while also mentioning his own injury: “Under terrible artillery fire,” he wrote, his military unit moved forward against a village, adding that the battle of Dinant raged on the entire day and spread throughout the whole region. Werner H. did not, however, refer to the mass execution of Belgian civilians by the German occupying forces; he only reported soberly that the whole village was completely on fire. His report conveyed in mundane terms his sense of a successful campaign: “Our artillery has merely paved the way.”

Another German-Jewish soldier serving in Belgium was Kurt Levy, born in 1898.⁶² Immediately after gaining his high school diploma, Levy, together with his elder brother, enlisted as a war volunteer. Levy kept a diary of his wartime deployment.⁶³ According to his diary entries, Levy had been conscripted on August 2nd. On the next day he left his town by railroad, crossed the Rhine on August 4th, and by midday he entered Belgium together with his company. Already on this very first day in Belgium he made note of an attack by *Franc-tireurs*, which left five soldiers dead and fifteen wounded. On August 7th, his troop moved to Liege, where he examined the coffins at the cemetery for hidden weapons. On the next day, the soldiers marched to Fort de Fléron, near Soumagne, where Levy described the forming of barricades.⁶⁴ On August 20th, his company set off for Leuven, where they entered - as Levy wrote - to the playing of music. Soberly, Levy wrote of burning houses, fleeing citizens, and many dead Belgians. In the marketplace of Leuven the soldiers took a break, and Levy told of a concert and a “dance with Belgian girls.” On August 21st, the soldiers moved on to Drogenbos in Flanders, reaching Mons two days later. On August 25th, he marched into France.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Kriegsbriefe deutscher und österreichischer Juden*, ed. Eugen Tannenbaum (Berlin: Neuer Verlag, 1915), 8-10. For general information about fallen German Jewish soldiers in Belgium, see: *Deutsche jüdische Kriegstote des Ersten Weltkrieges auf Kriegsgräberstätten in Belgien und Frankreich* (Kassel: Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge, 2009).

⁶² For Kurt Levy see the biographical outline in: *Bewährung im Untergang: Ein Gedenkbuch*, ed. Ernst G. Lowenthal (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1965), 199.

⁶³ Centrum Judaicum Archiv [CJA], Das Kriegstagebuch von Kurt Levy.

⁶⁴ Toynbee, *The German Terror in Belgium*, 31-32.

⁶⁵ Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*, 236.

After Werner H. and Kurt Levy, a third contemporary Jewish eyewitness was Felix A. Theilhaber, a Zionist physician and author of several social-science studies on Judaism. In Belgium he served as an army doctor and in 1916 he published a short autobiographical book, or pamphlet really, with the title “Simple wartime experiences.”⁶⁶ In the pamphlet Theilhaber told of his first impressions of the Belgian people upon his arrival in Brussels. The Belgian people were quite haughty, he wrote, adding reproachfully that - in their own minds - they were envisioning the Belgian army returning to their own capital. Hate and emotion had suppressed every conversation. Nevertheless, while buying some cigars, Theilhaber reports of a remarkable encounter he had with a Belgian-Jewish shopkeeper: “ ‘Poor Belgium. Germany will destroy us. And all for what?’ The Belgian then added: ‘Tout le monde est meschuggas [sic].’” Addressing Theilhaber directly the shopkeeper asked: „You are a Jew, aren’t you?’ I only nodded,” Theilhaber wrote. He concluded his memory of that encounter with the words: “I lighted the exclusive cigar my fellow Jews had treated me to, and I went on my way.” After a while, Theilhaber returned to Brussels and he complained that no one had spoken a single word to him or his comrades. They themselves were so haggard, that they hadn’t taken notice of the civilians. Entering the destroyed city of Leuven some days later, Theilhaber noted simply that the spooky collapsing ruins had made little impression on him. Noting that since he had entered Belgium he had seen enough destroyed houses, “One gets used to it,”⁶⁷ he remarked.

A further German-Jewish eyewitness to the German occupation of Belgium was the military rabbi serving in Belgium, Bruno Italiener.⁶⁸ On September 24th, 1914, he gave a report to the Association of German Jews (*Verband der deutschen Juden*) about his stay in Belgium. Arriving at the station of Liege he noticed German soldiers with machine-guns, but he remarked that the town is by and large quiet. In his report he then wrote about how he attended, together with several German-Jewish soldiers, the service in the Brussels main synagogue during a religious holiday. With approval he noted that the Jewish community of Brussels had offered seats in the front rows to the German Jews. Explicitly the German rabbi Italiener emphasized that he was extremely impressed by the well-known melodies: “Particularly in this year and at this place,” and he concluded

⁶⁶ Felix A. Theilhaber, *Schlichte Kriegserlebnisse* (Berlin: Louis Lamm, 1916).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

⁶⁸ *Feldrabbiner in den deutschen Streitkräften des Ersten Weltkrieges*, eds. Sabine Hank, Hermann Simon, Uwe Hank, (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2013), 265-268. For biographical information on Italiener; see *ibid.*, 79-83.

this observation with the remarkable expression: “In spite of being away from home I feel at home – in the House of God.” What had made such a strong impression on Italiener was the emotional bond the Belgian Jews felt with their state. The most heart-rending moment, Italiener wrote, came immediately after the prayer for the Belgian king, when the organ softly played the Belgian national anthem. “Many shed tears,” Italiener remarked, and then added an observation that shows that he felt deep empathy not only with the Belgian Jews but also with their Belgian patriotism: “It’s really remarkable how the Jew loves the country in which he is born. There is no House of God in Belgium where sorrow for the poor country is felt more deeply.”⁶⁹

In sharp contrast to Italiener’s empathy with the fate of the Belgian people, a converted German lawyer Fritz Norden,⁷⁰ though having served in Belgium, felt obliged to legitimize the German occupation and the violation of neutrality with juridical arguments.⁷¹ In the introduction to his pamphlet on the subject, he urged the Belgians not to become weak through humanistic ideas, and to avoid seeing only the excesses and cruelties of the war. “Only cowardly and degenerate people,” Norden emphasized, “see in a war a vision of dread.” For others, “it is a thunderstorm that cleans the air of poisonous substance.”⁷² He then, in his presentation, not only claimed that Belgians themselves were responsible for their not having been spared the German invasion, but also asserted that the reports of horrors are tainted by exaggerations and lies. In conclusion, he maintained rather that Belgium had many reasons to criticize itself.⁷³ This pamphlet had caused a broad public debate and provoked one of the few Belgian anti-Semitic reactions in the newspaper *La Libre Belgique*.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 266. Dratwa, “The Chief Rabbi of Belgium Confronting the Germans in the First World War,” 104.

⁷⁰ In the biographical handbook of the German Foreign Office Norden was registered as Protestant: *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes* (1871 - 1945), eds. Peter Grupp, Maria Keipert, voll. 5 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2008), vol. 3 (L-R), 379-380. His father Philipp Norden was, however, mentioned as one of the Jewish entrepreneurs in Leipzig: Wilhem Harmelin, “Jews in the Leipzig Fur Industry,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 9 (1964): 239-266; 266. It is not documented when Fritz Norden converted.

⁷¹ Fritz Norden, *La Belgique neutre et l’Allemagne d’après les hommes d’Etat et les juristes belges*, (Bruxelles: Richard, 1915); translated into German as Fritz Norden, *Das neutrale Belgien und Deutschland im Urteil belgischer Staatsmänner und Juristen*, (München: Bruckmann, 1916).

⁷² Norden, “Das neutrale Belgien”, 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁴ Fidelis, “Une saleté,” *Libre Belgique*, October 1915; Yasmina Zian, “La Libre Belgique en 1915. Quand l’antisémitisme est un argument de souveraineté nationale face à l’occupation allemande,” bildungsblog [2013]: <http://bildungsblog.hypotheses.org/97>.

To conclude, one can observe from these accounts that the German Jews serving in Belgium had no notion of the atrocities of German warfare in Belgium; indeed, many other documents provide accounts that substantiate this view. The German Jew Alice Fabian, for example, working for the German central purchasing company in Brussels, wrote soberly in a letter from November 6th, 1915, that the Belgians are extremely anti-German, so that one should be wary of them.⁷⁵ Another German Jewish soldier serving in Belgium, Kurt Stern, however, wrote in a letter dated October 5th, 1918, that the Belgians are quite friendly, and that they think highly of the Germans.⁷⁶ In his letter of October 21st, however, Stern too remarked that not all the Belgians are well-disposed toward the Germans.⁷⁷ A particular strategy for coming to terms with the war was to apply irony to the experiences, as did a certain Wilhelm in his letter of April 8th, 1915. He described his march through Belgium as a summer trip, during which he experienced a grand display of pyrotechnics, and before entering Liege he told of different kinds of amusements, for instance, with firecrackers. They experienced much joy, he wrote, adding that they passed Leuven on their journey but that the town had made a squalid and highly weather-beaten impression; “we only thought of Belgian sloppiness,” he added.⁷⁸

The coverage by the German Jewish press

At the beginning of August 1914, declaring that Germany is at war and still warning that Europe is on the eve of terrible and momentous events - on the eve of a global conflagration - the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* still pointed to Belgian neutrality.⁷⁹ Soon thereafter, however, the newspaper informed its readers soberly that according to the declaration of the German Chancellor the army was forced to occupy Belgium.⁸⁰ In the same issue, the paper noted that the fortress of Liege had been conquered by Prussian troops, a conquest achieved in a blitzkrieg attack, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* added plainly. The

⁷⁵ *Feldpostbriefe jüdischer Soldaten 1914 - 1918. Briefe ehemaliger Zöglinge an Sigmund Feist, Direktor des Reichenheimischen Waisenhauses in Berlin*, 2 voll., eds. Sabine Hank, Hermann Simon (Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2002), n. 184, vol. 1, 213.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 629, vol. 2, 612-613.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 630, vol. 2, 614.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 188, vol. 2, 716-719.

⁷⁹ “Die Woche,” *AZJ*, August 7th, 1914.

⁸⁰ “Die Woche,” *AZJ*, August 14th, 1914.

paper noted as well that 4000 Belgian prisoners of war, captured near Liege, were on their way to Germany.⁸¹

A few days later, the historian and chief editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, Ludwig Geiger, published a lead article, "The War and the Jews," in which he wrote that the Jews had all enthusiastically answered the call to arms, adding as well that French troops had marched into Belgium.⁸² A consequence of the war, Geiger noted, was that Germans in Belgium as well as in other countries were subject to much suffering, and the problem is compounded by the fact that many German Jews were living Belgium as well as the other countries. In the very next issue, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* assured its readers that its suspicions about the great suffering of German Jews fleeing Belgium were confirmed.⁸³ The editor of the weekly report referred in this regard to the coverage by the Catholic newspaper *Germania*, which had reported the outbreak of a bloody persecution of the Jews in Belgium. The *Germania*, too, had picked up the rumours about the behaviour of Belgian *Franc-tireurs*, reporting that they had committed unspeakable cruelties against infants and old people alike. In the same issue, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* informed its readers that German soldiers had entered Brussels.⁸⁴

One week later, immediately after the devastation of the town of Leuven and destruction of its library in the night from August 25th to August 26th, Ludwig Geiger published a lead article, "The War and Culture," in which he explained that there are circumstances under which a war is inevitable.⁸⁵ And even if a splendid town like Leuven might be destroyed, even if some splendid buildings and some irreplaceable works of art are destroyed, and even if many innocent people lose their property or their life, "we should not," according to Geiger, "allow ourselves to become confused about this conviction." Referring to the rumours of the *Franc-tireurs*, Geiger argued that the citizens of Leuven brought these sad and deplorable events upon themselves. The soldiers, Geiger emphasized, were not to blame but rather the citizens who had fired with nefarious blindness at the German soldiers. The weekly war report of this issue made overt use of the term *Franc-tireur*, again accusing Belgian civilians of having taken part in the fighting, and the report in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Ludwig Geiger, "Der Krieg und die Juden," *AZJ*, August 21st, 1914.

⁸³ "Die Woche," *AZJ*, 35, August 28th, 1914.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Ludwig Geiger, "Der Krieg und die Kultur," *AZJ*, September 4th, 1914.

additionally declared that the advance into Belgium is one of those enormous and admirable acts that are very rare in world history.⁸⁶

The same weekly report informed prosaically about the bombardment of Antwerp by a Zeppelin, quoting here another article of the Berlin *Vossische Zeitung*: “The high explosive bombs released by the airships have done their work.”⁸⁷ On October 9th, the newspaper wrote laconically that the attack on Antwerp is proceeding well,⁸⁸ and the weekly report of October 16th opened triumphantly with the “joyful message” that “Antwerp is ours.”⁸⁹ One week later, however, the journalists changed the personal pronoun “ours” into the more dissociated pronoun “their”: “The German Army is penetrating unstopably into Belgium,” and after the occupation of Flanders by German troops the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* wrote: “The whole of Belgium is in their possession.”⁹⁰

In its coverage, *Die Jüdische Rundschau*, organ of the Zionist Association in Germany, concentrated primarily on the eastern front and on Russia, but as early as August 7th, only three days after the German invasion of Belgium, the Zionist librarian and journalist Heinrich Loewe wrote in an article titled, “All around enemies” that France in its “wicked blindness dragged our people into war.”⁹¹ It is worth noting that with “our people” the Zionist Loewe meant here not the *Jewish* but rather the *German* people. One week later the *Jüdische Rundschau* commented on the flight of Galician Jews from Belgium, reproducing false reports from other German newspapers about the maltreatment of foreign Jews in Belgium.⁹² Similarly, the next issue repeated news from other journals about the maltreatment of immigrant Jews.⁹³ In early September the *Jüdische Rundschau* reported that a smear campaign against Germans and Jews had begun in Antwerp.⁹⁴ The same paper, however, did not take note of the terror

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ “Die Woche,” *AZJ*, 41, October 9th, 1914.

⁸⁹ “Die Woche,” *AZJ*, 42, October 16th, 1914.

⁹⁰ “Die Woche,” *AZJ*, 43, November 23rd, 1914.

⁹¹ Heinrich Loewe, “Ringsum Feinde,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 7th, 1914.

⁹² R., “Galizische Juden in Berlin auf der Flucht aus Belgien,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 14th 1914.

⁹³ “Aus aller Welt. Jüdische Flüchtlinge aus Belgien in Prag,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, August 22nd, 1914.

⁹⁴ H. L., “Die Juden im Krieg,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, September, 4th, 1914.

perpetrated by the German army against Belgian civilians or the violation of Belgian neutrality.

The reflections of the Orthodox newspaper *Jeschurun* were different. In October 1915, the rabbi and journal editor Joseph Wohlgemuth wrote in a lead article that at a historical moment in which the vital interests of its people are in danger every nation will violate international law.⁹⁵ All acts, Wohlgemuth maintained, that are not aimed at self-defence or at rendering the enemy harmless are criminal and immoral acts, a category that for Wohlgemuth, covers all the alleged actions of the Belgian *Franc-tireurs* such as mutilation of the enemy or desecration of their corpses.

Another German Jewish journal, the *Israelitische Familienblatt* from Hamburg even used biblical arguments to try and legitimize the violation of the Belgian neutrality, citing an episode from the Book of Moses.⁹⁶ During their migration to Palestine the Hebrews had asked for free passage through a country, and when the ruler refused, they proceeded to conquer the country by force. Therefore, the *Israelitische Familienblatt* wrote, Germany has the right to make its way through Belgium according to the spirit of the Bible.

Even the journal *Ost und West* in the summer of 1914 added its voice to the chorus of enthusiasm for the war.⁹⁷ The journal supported German patriotism despite the fact that at the beginning of the year the journal still had the subtitle “Organ der *Alliance Israélite Universelle*” on its masthead and in August 1914 still published the column “Mitteilungen” of the German office of the A.I.U.⁹⁸ Most surprising for its authors was the hatred toward Germany. The first extensive paragraph of the lead article of the December 1914 issue, “The War as Master Teacher,” was subtitled: “About Unfounded Hate,” and this chapter lamented the tidal wave of blood red, wild withering hate, shot through with fire

⁹⁵ Joseph Wohlgemuth, “Der Krieg und die Moral,” *Jeschurun*, October 1914.

⁹⁶ “Die Neutralität Belgiens im Lichte der Bibel,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, August 20th, 1914; see in this regard, Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle*, 69.

⁹⁷ For the journal *Ost und West* see: Madleen Podewski, *Komplexe Medienordnungen. Zur Rolle der Literatur in der deutsch-jüdischen Zeitschrift “Ost und West” (1901 - 1923)*, (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014). Madleen Podewski, “Krieg in ‘kleinen Archiven’: Überlegungen zum Umgang mit der Medienspezifik der Zeitschrift,” *Jüdische Publizistik und Literatur im Zeichen des Ersten Weltkriegs*, eds. Petra Ernst, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, (Graz: Studienverlag 2016), 11-25.

⁹⁸ “Mitteilungen des Central-Comités der Alliance Israélite Universelle,” *Ost und West*, August 1914, col. 602-608. The relationship of the journal to the A. I. U. had caused several troubles, see therefore the editorial statement in: *Ost und West*, January 1914.

that was sweeping around the world.⁹⁹ In general, the author remarks, hate can be a natural human emotion, but it becomes pathological if unfounded and without valid reasons. And just such an “unfounded hate,” *Ost und West* wrote, is now pouring out over Germany. Most surprising for its authors was the hatred toward Germany in the neutral countries and those countries that were like Germany. Here, the article proclaimed, the hatred appears masked but is nonetheless present, and hence the German-Jewish journalists decidedly condemned the *Franc-tireurs*.

Furthermore this article from the journal *Ost und West* drew an analogy between the hatred directed toward Germany and hatred directed toward the Jews. “The hate toward Germany,” the author asserts, “has deep kindred with anti-Semitism,” and this analogy extends “up to the unconscious psychological motifs.”

In 1915 the historian Martin Philippson published an end-of-year review in the journal *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*.¹⁰⁰ The journal followed liberal and educated middle-class principles and promoted the ideal of the Bildungsbürgertum. Philippson was very familiar with public opinion in Belgium, thanks to his own longstanding activities at the University of Brussels.¹⁰¹ In 1879 he was offered a professorship in history at the University of Brussels, and was, in 1886, appointed member of the Belgian academy of sciences, shortly thereafter becoming president of the University of Brussels. In 1890, however, he returned to Germany for reasons that remain unclear, but the move was conceivably motivated by anti-German attitudes among Belgian students. Other voices speak of a democratic opposition on the part of students against authoritarian attitudes among the professoriate. Whatever his reasons, Martin Philippson must have been very aware of Belgian attitudes and that the violation of Belgian neutrality by German troops would trigger broad resistance within Belgian society. In his article, however, Philippson complained about the deep mendacity and immoral insidiousness with which the enemies of Germany had

⁹⁹ “Der Krieg als Lehrmeister,” *Ost und West*, September-December 1914.

¹⁰⁰ Martin Philippson, “Rückblick auf das Jahr 5674,” *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, 18 (1915): 1-14; 1.

¹⁰¹ For Philippson see: Ulrich Wyrwa, “Die europäischen Seiten der jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Einführung,” *Judentum und Historismus. Zur Entstehung der jüdischen Geschichtswissenschaft in Europa*, ed. Ulrich Wyrwa, (Frankfurt /M.- New York: Campus-Verlag, 2003), 9-36; 28-30. The Belgian historian Geneviève Warland is currently working on a project regarding Philippson’s experiences in Belgium.

over the years prepared for this war. He also attacked the dreadful atrocities and murderous deeds that the Belgians now ostensibly carried out. Responding to the rumours about the *Franc-tireurs*, Philippson in a bizarre twist condemned the malicious attacks by civilians.¹⁰²

The perception of German Jewish intellectuals and German Jewish socialists

The rumours of the *Franc-tireur* atrocities had exerted so great an influence on the German public sphere that even an author like Arnold Zweig, later known as a convinced pacifist, was unable at this historical moment to evade their mass psychological impact.¹⁰³ In December 1914, Zweig published his novel *The Beast* in the journal *Die Schaubühne*, precursor of the journal *Die Weltbühne*, both edited by Siegfried Jacobsohn. In *The Beast* Zweig tells the story of the brutal and sadistic murder of three innocent German soldiers committed by a Belgian peasant.¹⁰⁴ After being warned, this story tells, of the approaching German troops, the peasant moved his family and animals away from his farm. Shortly thereafter, the three German soldiers arrived, asking for quartering. The peasant offered them accommodation and gave them alcohol to drink. After having gotten them drunk he murdered them in bestial fashion.

A few years later, converted into a pacifist activist, Arnold Zweig criticized himself indirectly in his volume *The Face of Eastern European Jewry* for having succumbed to the German wartime lies and becoming, with his earlier novel, an accessory to Germany's war crimes.¹⁰⁵ He then confessed that this novel had become a thorn in his side.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Philippson, "Rückblick auf das Jahr 5674," 1-14.

¹⁰³ Jost Hermand, "Arnold Zweig und die Weimarer Republik," *Carl von Ossietzky und die politische Kultur der Weimarer Republik. Symposium zum 100. Geburtstag*, eds. Gerhard Kraiker, Dirk Grathoff, (Oldenburg: BIS, 1999), 257-277.

¹⁰⁴ Arnold Zweig, "Die Bestie," *Die Schaubühne*, December 17th, 1914; together with other novels published as a book: *Die Bestie. Erzählungen* (München: Langen, 1914); Robert Cohen, "Arnold Zweig's War Novellas of 1914 and Their Versions: Literature, Modernity and the Demands of the Day," *War, Violence, and the Modern Condition*, ed. Bernd Rüdiger Hüppauf, (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1997), 277-289.

¹⁰⁵ Arnold Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz. Zu 50 Steinzeichnungen von Hermann Struck*, 2nd ed., (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1922), 166.

¹⁰⁶ Arnold Zweig, "Nachbericht," id., *Westlandsaga. Erzählung* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening 1952), 132-134.

In the summer of 1914 the vast majority of German Jews believed these rumours, and Arnold Zweig was by no means the only one to harbour this kind of a belligerent attitude. Even Martin Buber succumbed to German war mania and internalized the rumours.¹⁰⁷ In a letter to the Dutch author and psychologist Frederik van Eeden he complained about the Belgian *Franc-tireurs* and defended not only the German occupation of Belgium but also the devastation of Leuven.¹⁰⁸ Buber's letter was a response to an article that van Eeden had published in a Dutch newspaper, criticizing the jingoistic patriotism of his German friends;¹⁰⁹ yet, before the war, Eeden and Buber had been associated with a circle of elitist intellectuals, the Forte-Kreis, and all the members had felt themselves to share in the same aristocracy of the spirit. Van Eeden's open letter, Buber now countered, consisted of partial truths only, and he again defended the German terror in Belgium: "One cannot simply speak in platitudes about Leuven without having proved the facts, reporting what really had happened." And Buber continued repeating the rumours, "one cannot speak of *Franc-tireurs*, as if they only wanted to defend the freedom of their country," revealing to the reader the fact that a Belgian woman had taken pleasure in gouging out the eyes of wounded German soldiers and pressing in the buttons torn from their uniforms. Parenthetically, Buber noted in the same sentence that he knew very well about the behaviour of the Belgian *Franc-tireurs* "not from the newspapers, but on the basis of personal knowledge."¹¹⁰

Martin Buber shared his belief in these rumours with such a sensitive philosopher and sociologist as the baptized Georg Simmel.¹¹¹ He, too, had internalized the German enthusiasm for the war, and only five days after the invasion of Belgium Simmel described in a letter to his friend Hugo Liepmann, a philosopher like himself as well as a psychologist, his patriotism and his war fever: "I have the impression, that the German people will display a power which

¹⁰⁷ For Buber's attitudes regarding the war see: Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle*, 40-50; 139-149; 210-213; 241-254; 303-314.

¹⁰⁸ Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, vol. 1, 1897-1918, (Heidelberg: Lambert und Schneider, 1972), 374-380.

¹⁰⁹ Frederik van Eeden, "Offener Brief an unsere deutschen Freunde," *Der Neue Merkur*, January/February 1915, 489-491; first published in Dutch: *De Amsterdammer Weekblad voor Nederland*, September 6th, 1914.

¹¹⁰ Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 375.

¹¹¹ On Simmel's sociology see *Georg Simmels große Soziologie: Eine kritische Sichtung nach hundert Jahren*, eds. Hartmann Tyrell, Otthein Rammstedt, Ingo Meyer, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011).

has never appeared in world history before.”¹¹² Two weeks later, on August 22nd, the day of the battle of the Ardennes, he suggested in a letter to the author Margarete von Bendemann that all the infamy of mankind is surfacing in the behaviour of Germany’s enemies.¹¹³ On October 2nd, just one week after the devastation of Leuven and its library by German troops, Simmel lamented in a letter to the philosopher Harald Höffding “the ridiculous accusations with which the enemies had turned the neutral foreign countries against us.”¹¹⁴ To begin with, Simmel resisted the reproach that Germans are barbarians, a reproach, which has been raised, Simmel wrote in an apologetic and downplaying style, solely “because we have damaged (though by no means destroyed) some old buildings in an act of utter self-defence.” In contrast, Simmel accused France and England “of preparing to relinquish the old cultural ground of Germany to Russian hordes”: “In the towns of Kant and Goethe, Humboldt and Hegel, now the Cossacks would govern if things had gone according to the will of Frenchmen and Englishmen.”¹¹⁵

Even if Stefan Zweig was an Austrian and not a German Jewish writer, it might be helpful to reflect on his experiences here, too, first because of his former friendship with Belgian authors, second because his biography illustrates sharply the emotional confusion and personal discord caused by the German occupation of Belgium, and third because he contributed definitively to the German public sphere and to the German Jewish audience. Finally, he impressively described in retrospect the fundamental break brought about by the First World War, for both general European history and European Jewish history.¹¹⁶ In July 1914 he was in Belgium, visiting, among others, the Belgian writer Emil Verhaeren. Verhaeren was an intimate friend, whose poems Zweig had translated into German and whom he had portrayed sensitively in the German journal *Das literarische Echo* in 1904.¹¹⁷ Then in 1910, Zweig published a biography of

¹¹² Georg Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe, Band 23: Briefe 1912-1918. Jugendbriefe*, ed. Otthein Rammstedt (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2008), 365.

¹¹³ Simmel, *Briefe 1912-1918*, 372.

¹¹⁴ Simmel, *Briefe 1912-1918*, 399-400.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*; in November 1914, Simmel had given a public talk in Straßburg on Germany’s inner transition, in which he declared that only with this war “had our people finally become a unity and integrity.” Georg Simmel, “Deutschlands innere Wandlung,” *Der Krieg und die geistigen Entscheidungen*, ed. George Simmel (München-Leipzig: Ducker & Humblot, 1917), 9-29; 29 .

¹¹⁶ Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers*, (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1942).

¹¹⁷ Stefan Zweig, *Emile Verhaeren (1904)*, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, ed. Knut Beck (Frankfurt/M.: S. Fischer, 1984), 7-22.

Verhaeren, with a second edition appearing just one year before the war.¹¹⁸ Two days after the Habsburg declaration of war against Serbia, Zweig left Belgium.¹¹⁹ Back in Vienna he wrote in his diary on August 4th that he had been shocked by the news that Germany had violated Belgium's neutrality.¹²⁰ Only three days later however he welcomed the successful conquest of Liege, calling it a "heroic deed."¹²¹ In these days, Stefan Zweig presented himself as a war volunteer. On August 11th, he published a brief article in the *Neue Freie Presse* about Liege, declaring its university a "stronghold of French spirit," so that "the town despite the geographical closeness to Germany has become a fortress of Frenchness."¹²² Consequently, Zweig wrote, the strong push of the German army towards Liege was a real incursion into enemy territory. Some days later Zweig must have read in Austrian newspapers about the legends of the *Franc-tireurs*, and he confessed in his diary to be shocked by the news from Belgium. "There is everywhere a mob," he wrote, "that looks only for an occasion to cry, to destroy, and patriotism is for this occasion the easiest mask." Then he confessed: "Between me and my friend something has been broken for years, perhaps forever."¹²³ After the German army's entry into Brussels Zweig called the event a success.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, he was frightened some days later when he saw some guests in a Vienna coffeehouse dividing up Belgium: "I was shuddered by this hubris and asked them to keep quiet."¹²⁵

On September 19th, Zweig published an open letter in the German newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt* to his friend abroad. There he publicly broke with his Belgian friends.¹²⁶ Regarding the rumours of the *Franc-tireurs* he declared, appealing directly to his friends: "You cannot expect that I will speak today for you, that I will say the Belgian people are no assassins or desecrators of wounded soldiers." As soon as Zweig heard that his former friend Verhaeren had fled to London and

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 23-250.

¹¹⁹ Knut Beck, "Jeder hat seinen Geist des Bösen und der Verneinung. Stefan Zweigs Verhalten im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Stefan Zweig und das Dämonische*, eds. Matjaž Birk, Thomas Eicher, (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 78-89.

¹²⁰ Stefan Zweig, *Tagebücher. Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, (Frankfurt/M. S. Fischer 1984), 84.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹²² Stefan Zweig, "Lüttich," *Neue Freie Presse*, August 11th, 1914.

¹²³ Zweig, *Tagebücher*, 87.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²⁶ Stefan Zweig, "An die Freunde im Fremdland," *Berliner Tageblatt*, September 19th, 1914, (Abendausgabe).

had published a poem about the destruction of Belgium, he noted with shock in his diary: “A small catastrophe of my existence. Verhaeren has published a poem that is nearly the most stupid and infamous thing that can be thought.”¹²⁷ Some days later Stefan Zweig began his military service in the archive of the ministry of war.¹²⁸

A kind of intellectual confusion had overcome the German Jewish writer and journalist Heinrich Eduard Jacob.¹²⁹ As a young artist Jacob was in touch with the early expressionists in Berlin and first published theatre critiques in the liberal weekly *Deutsche Montagszeitung*. In September 1914 he travelled as war correspondent through Belgium and the following year published his diary “Travel through the Belgian war.”¹³⁰ Jacob wrote in an excessively subjectivist-individualist language, but he was averse to German patriotism, even criticizing the hysterical expressions of Germanness in the German public sphere.¹³¹ In his diaries of the Belgian war he lamented the millions of perpetrators who have been set off, furious and yelling Germans, but in the very same sentence he blustered likewise about Russians, Frenchmen and Englishmen.¹³² He had some empathy for the fate of the Belgians, and described the situation in the occupied country in expressionist tones, conveying words of misery, tears and tragedy. It is sad to be beaten, he wrote,¹³³ but on the other hand he accused Belgium of having brought this fate upon itself, because it hadn’t given German troops permission to march through the country.¹³⁴

Despite his expressionistic descriptions of the horror of war and occupation mixed with references from the German educational canon, even Jacob had succumbed to the fascination of the war and its “gloomy frenzy.”¹³⁵ He was confused in his subjectivist perception, and he himself declared that his book might have left the impression of “a prism of contradictions.”¹³⁶

¹²⁷ Zweig, *Tagebücher*, 115, see also the note 524.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹²⁹ Anja Clarenbach, *Finis libri. Der Schriftsteller und Journalist Heinrich Eduard Jacob* (1889-1967), Diss. Universität Hamburg 2003 [<http://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/volltexte/2002/948/pdf/dissertation.pdf>].

¹³⁰ Heinrich Eduard Jacob, *Reise durch den belgischen Krieg. Ein Tagebuch*, (Berlin: Reiß, 1915).

¹³¹ Heinrich Eduard Jacob, “Würdelose Verse,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, December 9th, 1914.

¹³² Jacob, *Reise durch den belgischen Krieg*, 9.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

Among the few German Jewish intellectuals who resisted the mass psychological suggestion of war fever in summer 1914 was the utopian messianic writer and political philosopher Ernst Bloch.¹³⁷ The converted and stubborn observer Viktor Klemperer was also sceptical and reserved toward the enthusiasm for the war.¹³⁸ Ernst Bloch, who once had taken part in the private seminar offered by Georg Simmel in Berlin and who, after moving to Heidelberg, belonged to the intellectual circle around Max Weber, fiercely opposed the ramped up patriotism of August 1914 and its new affirmation of German-Prussian militarism. He broke his friendship with Simmel precisely because of Simmel's German patriotism and approval of the war. Bloch went into exile in Switzerland during the conflict, publishing from there sharp critiques in the Bern newspaper *Freie Zeitung*.¹³⁹ Germany, he wrote, has lost its good name on account of Belgium alone.¹⁴⁰ Bloch wrote ironically in another article that since the invasion of Belgium, Germany is famously destined to provide authoritative expertise in the field of constitutional and international law.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, he noted that official German publications had ceased to treat Belgium as a sovereign state.¹⁴² In his weekly report of February, 23rd, 1918 for the *Freie Zeitung* under the title "Flemish plans," Bloch condemned Germany's aim of smashing Belgium, concluding with the observation that Germany has enriched its history since 1914 through a spectacular breach of international law and it has caused a wound to human sensibility.¹⁴³ Bloch sharply criticized Prussian Germany for having burned down the library of Leuven, asserting that the rough and uneducated Prussian squirearchy has rampaged through this gothic land in a way that had not occurred even in the bloodiest and cruellest times.¹⁴⁴ Under the title "Three Sins" Bloch then raised the question: if the German people in August 1914 had really succumbed a kind of a rapid spiritual illness in a war of self-defence and the nefarious lies of William II, then would not the invasion of Belgium alone have

¹³⁷ Arno Münster, *Ernst Bloch. Eine politische Biographie*, (Berlin-Wien: Philo & Philo Fine Arts, 2004).

¹³⁸ Walter Nowojski, *Victor Klemperer (1881–1960). Romanist – Chronist der Vorhölle*, (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2004).

¹³⁹ Ernst Bloch, *Kampf, nicht Krieg. Politische Schriften 1917-1919*, ed. Martin Korol, (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1985). For the newspaper *Freie Zeitung*, see the introduction of the editor, 37-44.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

been enough to sober them up?¹⁴⁵ In June 1918, Bloch spoke of “moral damage,” noting that the invasion of Belgium cannot be increased by any other catastrophe.¹⁴⁶

Victor Klemperer, by contrast, believed at the very outset of the war that Germany might be innocent, as he noted on August 5th in his diary.¹⁴⁷ Yet, the very same day he felt troubled about how to judge the German army’s violation of Belgian neutrality, and asked himself: “Are we marching peacefully through Belgium or are we at war with Belgium?”¹⁴⁸ Once he read in the newspapers, however, a “dispatch about a failed surprise attack against Liege,” Klemperer noted: “War in Belgium after all.”¹⁴⁹ After the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had labelled the conquest of Liege a marvellous success, Klemperer wrote disconcertingly: “How can we stand this in the long run?”¹⁵⁰ Some days later, on August 15th, he wrote in his diary that the war, with all its cruelties and all its heroism, was horrible and stupid.¹⁵¹ Klemperer was indignant about the way intellectuals distanced themselves from the idea of progress and now made an effort to feel as if they belonged to the masses, to immerse themselves in them completely, to cheer them on and rush forward, in order to die together with them. The rumours of the Belgian *Franc-tireurs* had reached Klemperer, too, and the same day he wrote in his diary: “in Belgium mutilated wounded!” Around two weeks later he expressed his horror at the “terrible retaliatory measures in Belgium.” Returning to the rumours, he noted that the behaviour of the *Franc-tireurs* might be horrible.¹⁵² Yet, in marked contrast to most Jewish and non-Jewish contemporaries, Klemperer interpreted the *Franc-tireurs* as a legitimate form of resistance by the Belgians against the German occupation, and he asked whether an East-Prussian peasant would be friendlier towards Russian soldiers than a Belgian one towards a German one? And would one not, he continued, declare those actions as natural and brave that in the case of Belgium are seen as a symptom of lust for murder? In the entry of the same day Klemperer denounced

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 424.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 460.

¹⁴⁷ Victor Klemperer, *Curriculum Vitae. Jugend um 1900, 2. Buch, 1912-1918*, (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1989), 182. In 1914/15 Klemperer taught at the University of Naples, but in July and August 1914 he was in Munich. In winter 1915, he was inducted into the army where he served first at the Western front and later as a censor at the Eastern front.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 197.

the bombardment of the town of Antwerp by German Zeppelins. For this kind of cruelty there is still no paragraph in international law, he noted with resignation, but the international law in this case would in any event have been eluded.¹⁵³

Among the few other German Jews who condemned the terror of the German army in Belgium were the Jewish socialists Kurt Eisner und Eduard Bernstein.¹⁵⁴

On August 8th, Kurt Eisner wrote in a letter that a Belgian worker is more appealing to him than a Prussian Junker.¹⁵⁵ At the time, Eisner worked for the socialist newspaper *Volksstimme*, and when the editor tried to defend the violation of Belgian neutrality Eisner contradicted him sharply. He also condemned the military forces for their cruel handling of Belgian civilians. In a letter from February 1915, he wrote: “I am not sentimental, but this German system [...] has created unprecedented war terrorism, which [...] will be our political ruin.”¹⁵⁶

Like Eisner, Eduard Bernstein also sharply criticized German belligerence.¹⁵⁷ In September 1914 he declared that he would not have agreed to the war credits had he known at the time that the war was to be conducted in such a cruel way. In 1917 Bernstein published the book *The Mission of the Jews in the World War*, in which he called attention to the contradictory arguments in the pro-German attitudes of Russian Jewish delegates at a recent conference of socialists from neutral countries.¹⁵⁸ Their position was such, Bernstein declared, that they would have to accept the violation of Belgian neutrality, too.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth noting that none of the evidence suggests that the German atrocities in Belgium were directed in any way against Jews or that the

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁵⁴ Bernhard Grau, *Kurt Eisner 1868-1919. Eine Biographie*, (München: Beck, 2001); Francis L. Carsten, *Eduard Bernstein 1850-1932. Eine politische Biographie*, (München: Beck, 1993); Robert S. Wistrich, “Bernstein und das Judentum,” in *Bernstein und der demokratische Sozialismus*, eds. Horst Heimann, Thomas Meyer, (Berlin, Bonn: Dietz 1978), 149-165.

¹⁵⁵ Letter to Adolf Müller, quoted in: Grau, *Kurt Eisner*, 310.

¹⁵⁶ Horn, Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*, 266.

¹⁵⁷ Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle*, 260-264.

¹⁵⁸ Eduard Bernstein, *Die Aufgaben der Juden im Weltkriege*, (Berlin: Erich Reiß, 1917), 38.

occupation policy had a specific anti-Semitic character. On the contrary, there is a document telling of a German soldier who saved a Belgian citizen because the person was Jewish.¹⁵⁹ Even the German war rabbis in Belgium mentioned only once the question of anti-Semitism in their conferences in Brussels, when they complained about the depositing of German anti-Semitic brochures in the Belgian railway stations.¹⁶⁰

In August 1914, the majority of German Jews shared the attitudes and opinions of the vast majority of other Germans. They did not criticize the German occupation of Belgium or the violation of the neutrality of this small country. They did not discern the new quality of warfare as a war against the civilian population, which it became during the German fighting in Belgium. The war, in this way, had rather created in its very first moment a complicated or peculiar kind of Christian-Jewish cohabitation in Germany. Even if this social coexistence ultimately broke down over the course of the war, it was so strong at the beginning that German patriotism even superseded the well-known intra-Jewish conflicts between liberal, orthodox, and Zionist Jews in Germany. They all shared, at the moment of the declaration of war, the same German patriotic attitude and the same belligerent dispositions.¹⁶¹ Like Georg Czarlinski, author of a report about Flanders published in the War Chronology of the 'Berlin Tourist Club,' Jews and non-Jews alike celebrated the German soldiers fighting in Flanders as war heroes.¹⁶² Jewish and non-Jewish contemporary observers also also the negative image of a small country like Belgium as had been expressed by Werner Sombart. In an article in the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* he declared Belgium to be a "miscarriage of politics," adding that Belgian nationalism had for him "a certain quiet touch of comedy."¹⁶³ In the very same way, the Jewish member of the Berlin tourist-club, Hans Zweig, described the Belgian people in his portrait of the atmosphere in Belgium as childish, characterized by a stupid stubbornness and mulishness.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Lipkes, *Rehearsals. The German Army in Belgium*, 311-313.

¹⁶⁰ *Feldrabbiner in den deutschen Streitkräften*, eds. Hank, Simon, Hank, 514.

¹⁶¹ Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen*, 39-46.

¹⁶² CJA, Z2004/13: Georg Czarlinski, "In Flandern," *Kriegs-Chronik des Berliner Touristen-Club von 1902*, November 20th, 1917.

¹⁶³ Werner Sombart, "Unsere Feinde," *Berliner Tageblatt*, November 2nd, 1914; see therefore: Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle*, 177.

¹⁶⁴ CJA, Z2004/13: Hans Zweig, "Die Stimmung in Belgien," *Kriegs-Chronik des Berliner Touristen-Club von 1902*, May 5th, 1915.

There were some German Jews who did not succumb to the militaristic view and did not support the German invasion of Belgium, but they were more the exception than the rule, and their attitude occasionally led to the end of old friendships like that between Ernst Bloch und Georg Simmel. Even friends like Albert Ballin and Theodor Wolff disagreed with respect to German policy towards Belgium as Wolff noted in his diaries. Ballin, the general director of the Hamburg-American Shipping Company (*Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft*), the world's largest shipping company, had tried before August 1914 to mediate an agreement between Germany and Great Britain, but even he declared in August 1914 that the invasion of Belgium might be necessary. In contrast, Wolff, as editor of the most important liberal newspaper in Germany at the time, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, expressed serious reservations about this policy.¹⁶⁵ Other Jewish intellectuals, too, were disturbed by their own contradictions like the writer Heinrich Eduard Jacob.

Despite these exceptions and these individual atonements, the Great War in one sense unified German Jewry in the way it evoked an ambivalent unity of the previously contested German Jewish public sphere. On the other hand, the war seemed to have destroyed the former transnational bond that linked European Jewry and the intellectual exchange of Jews in Europe.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore it had deeply damaged the bonds of Jewish families whose branches lived in different countries, like those of the Philipppsons. Whereas Martin chose to support Germany after his stay in Belgium, taking part in German patriotism and promoting the militaristic line, his brother Franz, who had moved to Belgium just before Martin, remained strongly integrated into Belgian society as well as the Belgian Jewish establishment before 1914. He was a member of the *Consistoire Israelite de Belgique* and temporarily president of the Jewish community. He then lost his youngest son in the war, who died as a Belgian soldier in 1918.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Theodor Wolff, *Tagebücher 1914-1919. Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Entstehung der Weimarer Republik*, vol. 1, ed. Bernd Sösemann, (Boppard am Rhein: Bold, 1984), 72.

¹⁶⁶ Volkov, "Juden und Judentum im Zeitalter der Emanzipation," 86.

¹⁶⁷ Johanna Philipppson, "The Philipppsons, a German-Jewish Family 1775-1933," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 7 (1962): 95-118.

The situation was most problematic for those German Jews who had lived in Belgium and were expelled from the country in August 1914,¹⁶⁸ as happened to a young Jew named Wagner from Siegburg. His situation was exacerbated by the fact that he was conscripted to serve as a foot soldier near the Belgian border. As the German military rabbi serving in Rethel wrote to the association of German Jews, Wagner chose to defect when the opportunity arose.¹⁶⁹

The transnational exchange of European Jewry had broken down. Only in some fleeting moments of some contemporary witnesses, such as the episode of Felix Theilhaber in the cigar shop or the participation of the rabbi Bruno Italiener in the ceremony of the Synagogue in Brussels, can one still see some remnants of these former experiences.

Paradoxically, and in contrast to the research of Fernand van Langenhove, only one of the contemporary witnesses who served as a German soldier in Belgium, Kurt Levy, mentioned the rumours of the Belgian *Franc-tireurs*.¹⁷⁰ The German Jewish newspapers however, cited these rumours extensively, and even contemporary Jewish intellectuals in Germany like Buber and Simmel picked them up, with Buber even claiming to know about this behaviour of the Belgian people “on the basis of personal knowledge.” Not one of them had taken notice of the German atrocities in Belgium, and even those who witnessed the German occupation policy directly ignored the terror of the German army against Belgian civilians. At most, they described the horror of the war and German belligerence, while offering ironic images of Germans in Belgium, as did Kurt Stern or Hans Zweig, the member of the Berlin Tourist Club, who, in his account of the mood in Belgium, commented acerbically that the Belgian people had grown accustomed to the “German barbarians.” They partly “even concede that the image of the Germans as Huns is based on canards only.”¹⁷¹ None of the witnesses, however, scrutinized the violation of Belgian neutrality or the German army’s acts of terror against the Belgian civilians.

In contrast to those German Jews present in Belgium at the time of the invasion, the Jewish press in Germany not only circulated the rumours of the Belgian

¹⁶⁸ To the immigration of German Jews to Belgium in the 18th and 19th century see: Cilli Kasper-Holtkotte, *Im Westen Neues: Migration und ihre Folgen. Deutsche Juden als Pioniere jüdischen Lebens in Belgien, 18. / 19. Jahrhundert*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003).

¹⁶⁹ *Feldrabbiner in den deutschen Streitkräften*, eds. Hank, Simon, Hank, 349.

¹⁷⁰ Van Langenhove, *Comment nait un cycle de légendes*.

¹⁷¹ Hans Zweig, “Die Stimmung in Belgien.”

Franc-tireurs; the journalists also rarely addressed the violation of international law. Some of the journals even legitimized the occupation of the country. They avoided, however, dealing with the terror of the German army against Belgian civilians.

It is only among Jewish as well as non-Jewish intellectuals in Germany that one can observe some early cases of extreme personal disturbance and intellectual bewilderment at this early point in the war. In contrast to those German-Jewish defenders of the German occupation, only a small number acknowledged or criticized the German occupation policy. Together with German-Jewish socialists, only some of the intellectuals, like Ernst Bloch or Viktor Klemperer, were able to acknowledge the German military actions as war crimes. Needless to say, it was impossible to criticize the German army publicly because of censorship during the war.¹⁷² But even in diaries and autobiographical notes, critical remarks can be detected only rarely. The majority of German Jews in 1914 – like other Germans, including most liberals and many socialists – were deluded by their own German patriotism.

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¹⁷² Wilhelm Deist, “Zensur und Propaganda in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges,” *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft. Studien zur preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichte*, ed. Wilhelm Deist (München: Oldenbourg, 1991), 153-163; Anne Lipp, *Meinunglenkung im Krieg. Kriegserfahrungen deutscher Soldaten und ihre Deutung 1914–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

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Aspects of Anti-Semitism in Hungary, 1915-1918

by Péter Bihari

Abstract

Before 1914 the vocabulary of anti-Semitism was already present in public discourses in Hungary, but it did not yet represent the central problem of a still 'liberal Hungary.' With the First World War, the Hungarian middle classes became the main losers in the social disruption of Hungarian society. 1916 must be seen as the turning point of the social splits and divisions. The former policy of the "Burgfrieden," or party truce, was undermined by the profound psychological experiences of the war. In this context, old anti-Semitic stereotypes prejudices were reactivated while new ones emerged. Jews, in general, came to be treated as internal enemies, earning huge profits from the war at the expense of Christian Hungarian society that was being ruined.

*This paper analyzes three stages of growing anti-Semitic agitation in Hungarian society during the war: First, the attacks against the banks around 1916; second, the public debate on the Jewish question in 1917, opened by the publication of the book *A zsidók útja* [The Path of the Jews] by the sociologist Péter Ágoston and intensified by the "inquiry into the Jewish question" of the journal *Huszadik Század* [Twentieth Century]; third, the surge of anti-Semitism that began with anti-Semitic speeches in the Hungarian Diet in 1917, leading to a broad anti-Semitic campaign by predominantly Catholic newspapers, in which Otto Prohaszka and Bela Bangha were the leading figures.*

The thesis is that Hungarian anti-Semitism was far from being a spontaneous outburst of popular feelings. It was fairly well organized and coordinated, mainly by ecclesiastical circles. It was the First World War that proved to be the catalyst, contributing to an extreme anti-Semitism and thereby sealing the fate of "liberal Hungary."

Introduction

Attacks against the Banks

The Debate on the "Jewish Question"

The Surge of Anti-Semitism

Introduction

The First World War dramatically changed Hungarian Jews' whole way of life. Before the First World War Hungarian political culture, as well as the attitudes of the population, were dominated by liberal classes who steadfastly opposed anti-Semitism. This is true notwithstanding the fact that at the beginning of the anti-Semitic wave that hit late 19th century Europe an active anti-Semitic movement arose in Hungary, and that prominent agitators like Győző Istóczy or Géza Ónody took action to spread blood libel accusation in the Tiszaeszlár case of 1882 as part of a broader anti-Semitic campaign. The creation in 1895 of the anti-Semitic Catholic People's Party, which enjoyed firm support from the Hungarian Catholic Church, which sincerely feared the rise in laicism and consequent loss of its prerogatives. The anti-Jewish campaign launched by some Hungarian students at the University of Budapest in 1901 was also an alarming development yet none could truly challenge the attitude of the institutions.¹ Hungarian Jews experienced remarkable social advancement in this period, and the Jewish communities in Hungary were able to develop a lively social and intellectual life. In politics and public services anti-Semitism did not play a significant role at the time: as of 1910 22 % of the Members of Parliament were Jews, and even higher ranks in government, state, and public service were open to Jews. János Teleszky, for example, served from 1912 to 1917 as finance minister; in 1913 Ferenc Heltai was chosen as mayor of Budapest; and the ministry of war was held from 1910 to 1917 by Samu Hazai, who had converted to Christianity.² In the struggle against anti-Semitism, Jews were firmly supported by the nationalist prime minister István Tisza who was convinced that anti-Semitism was a German phenomenon.³ This overall positive scenario for Hungarian Jews

Thanks are due to Henri Zukier for his final linguistic revision and to Tamas Kohut for his completion of some footnotes.

¹ Rolf Fischer, *Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn 1867-1939: Die Zerstörung der magyarisch-jüdischen Symbiose* (München: Oldenbourg, 1988).

² Miklós Konrád, "Jews and Politics in Hungary in the Dualist Era, 1867-1914," in *East European Jewish Affairs* 39/2 (2009): 167-18; Kati Vörös, "A Unique Contract: Interpretations of Modern Hungarian Jewish History," in *CEU Jewish Studies Yearbook* 3 (2002-2003): 229-255; Vera Ranki, *The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Jews and Nationalism in Hungary* (New York, London: Holmes & Meier, 1999); János Gabányi, "Hazai Samu báró," in *Magyar Katonai Közlöny* 10/1 (1922): 1-13.

³ See, for example, his letter from April 3rd, 1915: Tisza István, *Összes Munkái*, vol. 4 (Budapest: Franklin, 1926), 210-211.

collapsed with the First World War and the subsequent years of revolutions and counterrevolutions.

This study aims to cast light on a rather neglected field, the history of the home front in Hungary during World War I.⁴ It is easy to recognize that the middle classes – mainly civil servants, private employees and freelance intellectuals – were the main losers within the changing social stratification that developed between 1914 and 1918, both economically and in terms of prestige. Much the same process took place in Imperial Germany and Austria, though perhaps less dramatically than in Hungary. In Hungary inflation was higher than in almost any other belligerent country, with the result that the fall of real wages hit the middle classes harder than anywhere else. Thus the degradation of this middle class was more conspicuous, the complaints and despair more embittered than even in Germany or Austria – not to speak of the Entente powers. The second half of 1916 became a turning point in every sense: under the strains of total war powerful economic, social, political, and spiritual tensions came to the surface, making the already existing splits and divisions of Hungarian society irreconcilable.

It is a commonplace that the Great War was fought under the slogan of national unity. In Hungary – as in Imperial Germany and Austria – the notion of a “*Volksgemeinschaft*” [people’s community] was ruined for good by the inequalities of the home front, while that of a “*Burgfrieden*” [party truce] was undermined by the profound psychological experiences of the war. In Hungary this process accelerated in 1916, at which point one can observe three main tendencies. First: poor food supply and sharp inflation reached a critical point by this period. Second: the fighting dragged on hopelessly, while the Rumanian attack awakened the fears of an imminent collapse of Saint Stephens’s Kingdom. Third: internal political struggles became embittered again, and after the death of Franz Joseph, the position of prime minister István Tisza looked more shaky than in the previous months of the world war.⁵

⁴ Péter Bihari, *Lövészárkok a hátszágban: középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországon*, (Budapest: Napvilág, 2008); *Bangha Béla Sj emlékezete*, eds. Antal Molnár, Ferenc Szabó (Budapest, JTMR – Távlatok, 2010); István Mílotay, *Egy élet Magyarorszáért. Ami Horthy emlékirataiból kimarad* (Budapest: Gede testvérek, 2001).

⁵ Ferenc Pölöskei, *István Tisza, ein ungarischer Staatsmann in Krisenzeiten*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994); Gabor Vermes, *István Tisza. The Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of A Magyar Nationalist*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Norman

In this framework we must consider the so-called Jewish question. By 1916–1918 many old stereotypes against the (more or less assimilated) Hungarian Jewry had ossified, while a number of new charges were brought forward against them. In no other belligerent country did Jews play such a prominent role in running the war economy as in Hungary. Several industrial and banking companies were owned by Jewish Hungarians; the *Haditermény Rt.*, the central office for war production,⁶ and other committees of this kind were led by Jews and functioned as quasi organs of the warring state. And the Jews of Budapest apparently strengthened their “special position,” the “most bourgeois position” during the war years. This situation reinforced not only the old anti-Semitic motifs; rather, anti-Semites created new stereotypes linked to these new roles. Old motifs of Jews as worthless soldiers – even shirkers–, usurers and profiteers, disseminators of immoral ideas and an alien mass-culture had been renewed.⁷ Jewish entrepreneurs like Manfréd Weiss⁸ or Vilmos Vázsonyi,⁹ or intellectuals like Oszkár Jászi¹⁰ reached the peak of their fame during the war years. Old accusations – like that of the Galician influx or the Jewish over-representation in the educational system – were revived, and new ones – the occupation of Hungarian land and grabbing of political power – were born. Jews in general began to be treated as internal enemies, accused of making huge profits out of the war, while Christian Hungarian society was falling into ruin and going bankrupt. For an ever greater number of anti-Semitic authors the World War merely completed the process by which a triumphant Jewry came to usurp the place of the declining Hungarian middle class. Thus, during the war years, the problem of the middle classes and that of the Jews became increasingly intertwined.

Stone, “Hungary and the Crises of July 1914,” in *The Journal of Contemporary History* 1/3 (1966): 153-170.

⁶ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918*, (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), 592-593.

⁷ Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military. A History*, (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013).

⁸ István Reményi Gyenes, *Ismerjük őket? Zsidó származású nevezetes magyarok* (Budapest: Ex Libris Kiadó, 2000). For the importance of the Manfréd-Weiss-Factories for the Habsburg war production see: Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 216; 592.

⁹ *Magyar nagylexikon XVIII* (Unh-Z), ed. Bárányi Lászlón (Budapest: Magyar Nagylexikon, 2003), 288–289.

¹⁰ György Litván, *A twentieth-century prophet: Oszkár Jászi, 1875–1957*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006).

Attacks against the Banks

The first act of the surge of Hungarian anti-Semitism was a series of concentrated attacks against banks around 1916. Such attacks can be taken for a coded and hidden form of anti-Semitism, and were well understood as such by contemporaries. But the prologue to the first act was represented by the scandals related to army contractors in 1915 (accused of selling paper-sole boots and poor clothing to the army), which provided the opportunity for an attack against the Jews. The press alarmed the public, and succeeded in revealing some interwoven interests – but insinuated mainly that the local army contractors were Jews from Máramaros county.¹¹ The consequences of this first scandal are easy to calculate: loss of faith in the military and non-military authorities, demands to stop inflation and profiteering, demands to introduce “strong fists” against fraud – as in Germany.¹² One editorial of the popular newspaper “*Az Est*” [Evening] confronted “German heroism” with the “betrayal of the cloth-swindlers.” The author called for “unmerciful revenge against all villains,” no matter, whether with “earlock or high medals.”¹³ The Lower House of Parliament began to discuss two bills, one on the reprisal against abuses in army contracts, the other on the financial responsibility of culprits.¹⁴ Parliamentary debates in 1915 gave ample opportunity for attacks against Jews. The usual argument was to contrast brave soldiers with harmful shirkers or honest farmers and petty traders with swindler army contractors.¹⁵

Two points of the debates are worth mentioning. One is the first appearance of the condemnation of banks expressed by Károly Huszár of the anti-Semitic Catholic People’s Party, who proclaimed that the banks owned by Jews stood behind many dubious transactions.¹⁶ After the suppression of the Republic of Councils Huszár had taken part of the anti-Communist government in Szeged,

¹¹ “A papíroszizmaszállítók előzetes letartóztatásában,” *Az Est*, March 15th, 1915.

¹² “Marha, disznó,” *Az Est*, March 16th, 1915.

¹³ “Fantasztikus,” *Az Est*, March 20th, 1915.

¹⁴ *Képviselőházi Irományok* [Documents of the House of Representatives]. Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Részvénytársaság, 1915, Tc. XVIII; 1915, Tc. XIX; *Képviselőházi Napló* [Diaries of the House of Representatives], Budapest: Atheneum, 1915, vol. 46, n. 1148, 90-111 and vol. 49, n. 1149, 112-116. Already the latter document stated an “unfortunate identity of races” concerning the traitors and army-contractors (113).

¹⁵ Károly Huszár, *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1915, vol. 26, session 573, 385-390.

¹⁶ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1915, vol. 26, session 573, 390.

and from November 1919 to March 1920 he was appointed Prime Minister.¹⁷ The other is of a more philosophical nature, but indicates a final break with liberalism. The publisher, sociologist and member of parliament Pál Farkas declared (with unanimous approval from both sides of the House) that “now it is not the individual who ought to be protected against an absolutist state, but rather state and society have to be protected against the excesses of individuals.”¹⁸

Some papers and periodicals quickly took up the issue. The magazine of the author and journalist István Milotay, “*Új Nemzedék*” [New Generation] – initially close to Mihály Károlyi’s Independence Party – , simply began to refer to the “tribe of army contractors” already in 1915, and linked them to “our heroes.”¹⁹ This witticism was also applied to the Jews somewhat earlier by the magazine “*Magyar Kultúra*” [Hungarian Culture] of the Jesuit Béla Bangha,²⁰ a central figure of Hungarian Anti-Semitism.²¹ In this periodical the prolific Károly Burján – a high school teacher – condemned the Jewish social scientist, historian, and politician Oszkár Jászi and the radicals for their paper-sole boots and referred to them as “hyenas of the nation.”²² The satirical “*Bolond Istók*” usually spelled the word “*hadimilliomos*” [“war millionaire”] as “*hadi-millimosch*” – not because of the German but because of the Yiddish connotation of the spelling.

The aforementioned scandals were largely forgotten with the new strains of the war, though they could easily be brought to the surface of public memory. A more constant and more dangerous enemy was found by rightist circles (in and out of Parliament): the most important banks of Budapest. This issue had a role in most of the parliamentary debates taking place in 1916, under the guise of bills on new taxes or new financial institutions, and these discussions were intertwined with all possible themes of the World War. One of the first attacks – in February 1916 – was launched by Géza Polónyi, a jurist and politician of the Independence Party, who had served as Minister of Justice between 1906 and 1907 and who had repeatedly criticized the government after his resignation. The

¹⁷ Sándor Szilassy, “Hungary at the Brink of the Cliff 1918–1919,” in *East European Quarterly* 3/1 (1969): 95-109.

¹⁸ Pál Farkas, *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 27, session 581, 62; but Károly Huszár and Dezső Ábrahám (both reprimand the role of banks), *Képviselőházi Napló* 1916, vol. 27, session 581, 71-72.

¹⁹ Orlando, “Új honfoglalás,” *Új Nemzedék*, November 28th, 1915.

²⁰ “Rövid feljegyzések,” *Magyar Kultúra*, 3/23 (1915): 495.

²¹ Later Bela Bangha published in German the volume: *Klärung der Judenfrage* [Clarification of the Jewish Question], (Wien-Leipzig: Reinhold, 1934).

²² “A nemzet hiénái és a progresszió,” in *Magyar Kultúra*, 3/8 (1915): 384.

eternal trouble-maker's speech was a sharp criticism of the liberal municipal council of Budapest as well as of the banks. He simply stated that he came to the following conclusion: inflation is due to the "profiteering and speculations of the larger banking houses of Budapest." And he went further yet, putting most of the blame on *Hitelbank* – that being a "money house [!] of international significance," owned by the Rothschilds with its "true head in London and Paris."²³ Deputy Polónyi openly charged the largest Hungarian bank and its leader, Adolf Ullmann, a member of the Upper House, with high treason – "a terrible consequence," so he said.

A longer line of attacks was linked to the rejection of the law on a new Banking Center, proposed by the government. The opposition –i.e the Independence Party and the Catholic People's Party – demanded lawful limits to the accumulation of financial capital. The politicians István Rakovszky, co-founder of the Catholic People's Party, deputy and from 1905 to 1910 vice president of the parliament, Elemér Preszly and Endre Ráth, lawyers and deputies from the Catholic People's Party claimed that the main concern of large banks was army contracts – and hence they could increase their incomes enormously during the war.²⁴ Even prelate Sándor Giesswein – a quiet pacifist and (practically alone in his People's Party) not an anti-Semite – called the prevailing "bankocracy" the gravest tyranny, adding that those who use this word should not be charged with anti-Semitism.²⁵ Later he came to the very "materialistic" idea that the World War was the result of the contest between the Creusot-, Schneider- and Krupp-companies.²⁶ The discussions were renewed when a bill on the taxation of war profits came to the fore, producing some new allegations. Rakovszky continued to refer to the activities of *Hitelbank* and the Rothschilds, this time claiming that "banks determine the whole legislation."²⁷ "We have a huge capitalistic oligarchy here, weighing the country down and pursuing a financial policy that is not aimed at the prosperity but at the decay of its industry, agriculture, and commerce."²⁸ Rakovszky aptly used the obvious dichotomy here, as he did earlier by contrasting the old and the new middle classes. This stress on the existence of two antagonistic middle classes – in connection with the question of banks – was too much even for Tisza. The Prime Minister felt obliged to state that though

²³ Géza Polónyi, *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 29, session 631, 363.

²⁴ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 28, session 604, 74.

²⁵ *Ibid.* vol. 28, session 606, 144–145.

²⁶ *Ibid.* vol. 30, session 642, 313.

²⁷ *Ibid.* vol. 30, session 643, 338–340.

²⁸ *Ibid.* vol. 30, session 640, 208.

there were indeed two middle classes, both proved to be worthy of esteem, with much to learn from each other. But Tisza also said that he understood the indignant reactions in the House over the tone of the debates on banks.²⁹

The Christian politician István Haller – who later served as Minister of Religion and Education after the suppression of the Republic of Councils between 1919 and 1920 and prepared in this function the law of *Numerus clausus*, the first Anti-Jewish Act of 20th-century Europe³⁰ – did not charge commerce as a whole, only evil “Galician” capital.³¹ The lawyer and Christian politician György Szmrecsányi also delivered his ideas on usury, profiteering and the banks and he did not refrain from explicitly speaking of the power of Jewish banks. He was the most bellicose and threatening in the debate, saying: “we will keep a record of this problem, and time will come when we will enlighten those hundreds and thousands of families about the causes of their famine, misery and suffering at a time when their head is at the front to shed blood for king and country (Hear! hear!) [...] We will enlighten the country about those heartless profiteers who are able to collect capital from tears and misery.”³² Szmrecsányi also used the same dichotomy of a few rich capitalists versus the bulk of the honest Hungarian people. By 1916 this was a widespread, even commonplace view, both on the political left and political right.

To be sure, some MPs warned of too much bias against trade or the banks in general, also warning against the renewal of heated political antagonisms. Pál Sándor listed the aristocrats sitting on the boards of trustees of banks, while the politician Gusztáv Gratz, in 1917 chief of the trade section in the common Foreign Office and from June to September 1917 Hungarian Finance Minister,³³ refuted the wide-spread idea that army contracts were themselves illegal

²⁹ *Ibid.* vol. 29, session 621, 64.

³⁰ Mária M. Kovács, “The Numerus Clausus in Hungary 1920-1945,” *Alma Mater Antisemitica. Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939* [Academic Milieu, Jews and Anti-Semitism at European Universities between 1918 and 1939], (Wien: New Academic Press, 2016), 85-111.

³¹ *Képviseelőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 29, session 628, 278–279.

³² *Ibid.*, vol. 29, session 623, 137.

³³ Günter Schödl, “Ungarische Politik jenseits von Nationalstaat und Nationalismus: Gustav Gratz (1875–1946),” Id., *Formen und Grenzen des Nationalen. Beiträge zu internationaler Integration und Nationalismus im östlichen Europa*, (Erlangen: Deutsche Gesellschaft für zeitgeschichtliche Fragen, 1990), 137-188; Vince Paál, Gerhard Seewann “Einleitung,” Gustav Gratz, *Augenzeuge dreier Epochen. Die Memoiren des ungarischen Außenministers Gustav Gratz 1875–1945*, eds. Vince Paál, Gerhard Seewann, (München: Oldenbourg, 2009), 1-18.

business.³⁴ Count Tivadar Batthyány, who was Vice-President of the Independence Party in 1910, Minister of Labor and Social Care and Member of the National Council in 1918,³⁵ said that the old struggle of “merkantiles and agrarians” was back again.³⁶ The only Slovak deputy in the Hungarian parliament, Nándor Juriga,³⁷ simply asked the Hungarian deputies not to discuss the Jewish question now.³⁸ Vilmos Vázsonyi now asked for sober-mindedness: “Because it is an all too complicated society showing complete unity, even brotherly cooperation among the fighters on the one hand [...], while there is no sign of unity here, in the civil society [on the other hand], the class conflicts are hard to conceal, and old hatreds are with us again.”³⁹ One leading banker and member of the Parliament, Baron Gyula Madarassy-Beck, had an interesting and characteristic remark in the debate on the taxation of war profits. It was no secret, he noted, that behind any bank one could always find “the Jew.” Banks are persons, he added, “with feet to trample down the whole economy around them, with hands to reach far and grasp all, with faces that truly resemble Leó Lánczy or Adolf Ullmann” [“General laughter from the right”].⁴⁰ A suitable ground was provided for cartoonists to translate the general charges into quite concrete images for the public.

These debates thus provided an opportunity for the opposition to attack Tisza's government and the banks with one stroke – even before the political “truce” collapsed for good in August 1916. They did it partly out of diletantism – Finance Minister János Teleszky delicately remarked that not all speakers knew much about taxes and finances –,⁴¹ partly for obvious political motives, and partly because of deep convictions. These discussions continued in the press. A

³⁴ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 29, session 621, 50–57; *Ibid.*, vol. 30, session 641, 253. Adolf Ullmann in the Upper House: “Especially since the beginning of this war it has become a fashion to reprimand commerce, mostly from a so-called moral viewpoint” *Főrendiházi Irományok*, 1917 session 76, protocols IV, 176.

³⁵ Lukežić Irvin, *Riječke glose: opaske o davnim danima*, (Rijeka: Izdavački centar, 2004).

³⁶ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 30, session 643, 336.

³⁷ For Juriga see: Miloslav Szabó, ‘Von Worten zu Taten.’ *Die slowakische Nationalbewegung und der Antisemitismus 1875-1922* (Berlin: Metropol, 2014), 282-286

³⁸ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 29, session 627, 152.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1916, vol. 29, session 622, 105.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1916, vol. 31, session 651, 174. The Jewish Hungarian deputy and financier Leó Lánczy, director-general of the Hungarian Bank of Commerce, had converted to Christianity. The Jewish political economist Adolf Ullmann was a member of the Hungarian Upper House and President of the National Industrial Union.

⁴¹ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 30, session 643, 358.

few agrarian periodicals took up the issue again, like “*A Barázda*” [Furrow] and “*Magyar Gazdák Szemléje*” [Review of Hungarian Farmers]. The latter reflected on “War and the Rule of Banks,” saying that “plutocracy” occupied politics, press, culture and even sciences, and now is about to devour large estates.⁴² The article referred to the widespread belief of the banks’ buying up lands. The periodical of the Hungarian Association of Farmers, “*A Barázda*,” began the year 1917 by warning against the effects of the “alliance of mercantile bank capital and the revolutionary group of internationalists,” who sought/acted “to force millions of farmers and agrarian workers off their rightful place.”⁴³ It is not the content of the article that is surprising, nor the familiar conspiracy theory, but rather the adoption of such a tone in a periodical that had been moderate and upstanding up to that point.

The Debate on the “Jewish Question”

The “great debate” on the Jewish question in 1917 has been so exhaustively researched and analyzed that a few remarks might be sufficient here. Early in that crucial year the radical sociologist Péter Ágoston published a 300-page book under the title: “*A zsidók útja*” (The Path of the Jews) which led to widespread reactions.⁴⁴ According to the historian János Gyurgyák, the sociologist began to work on this theme because of his experiences on the front and in the rear, having also felt the “rapid transformation of public opinion.”⁴⁵ Of course Ágoston, as a good Marxist thinker, wanted to study the real situation of the Jews, to understand their own share in the negative turn of public opinion, and to recommend some remedies. His intentions, however, do not look so benevolent in hindsight: his diaries reveal him to be an anti-Semite even before 1914.⁴⁶ His war-time experiences and the largely negative reviews of his book helped to deepen his anti-Jewish opinions.

⁴² N.Á., “Háború és bankuralom,” in *Magyar Gazdák Szemléje* 22/5-6 (1917): 136–142.

⁴³ “Háborúban előre – békében hátra,” *A Barázda*, (preliminary issue) May 20th, 1917.

⁴⁴ János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish Question in Hungary], (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 89; 478-482 (with the reflections and literature cited there).

⁴⁵ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 89.

⁴⁶ Péter Ágoston, *Visszaemlékezései - Memoárja* (Péter Ágoston’s recollections), Politikatörténeti és Szakszervezeti Levéltár, Budapest [The Archives of Political History and of Trade Unions].

Already during the political crisis of 1905–1906, Péter Ágoston attributed the weakness of the Social Democrats to the disproportionately high share of “officials and Jews” in their ranks.⁴⁷ During the war years his anti-Jewish remarks multiplied and turned more bitter: he accused Jews of walking around cowardly in the rear, claiming that they withdrew support for the progressive camp, that they earned too much and that their women showed off in their rich dresses, while failing to take part in public charity.⁴⁸ The purported Jewish clannishness/cohesiveness was another constant reproach of the diary.⁴⁹ In fact, Ágoston seemed to share all the well-known stereotypes against modern cities, against banks and commerce, against “cosmopolitan culture” and against Jews; he himself was well aware of his own preconceptions or even prejudices.⁵⁰ On the other hand, he frequently hid his opinions behind “public opinion” or found “objective” causes for the Jewish behavior” he criticized: “The public’s view is that the Jews evade service at the front at any price, which corresponds to the facts. Of course, non-Jews also try to evade it, but these have fewer means to achieve their aims.”⁵¹ Ágoston thought the war proved that Jews were an alien element. Furthermore he declared that Jews are false democrats and false patriots.⁵² Even the war, Ágoston noted, “failed to assimilate the Jews to us – bad enough, as national states will succeed the present empires, with much less room for Jews than up to now.”⁵³ As a solution of the Jewish question he imagined a mass exodus to Syria and Palestine after the war.⁵⁴

The question of a left wing anti-Semitism can certainly be raised here. It existed even if it was relatively weak in Hungary, and Ágoston himself was hardly a typical representative. He seems to have been an “unintentional” anti-Semite before the war, one who became aware of his views during the cataclysm and tried to “rationalise” them in pseudo-scholarly fashion. Despite the rather moderate tone of the views expressed in his book – far more moderate than in his diaries –, its publication caused an uproar in Jewish circles, all the more so as he proved to be ignorant of many aspects of Jewish life. But his main sin was that he stirred up the backwater – or rather that he touched very delicate nerves exactly

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 3, II. ő.e, 453.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 34, 450.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 10, 73.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 3. IV. ő.e, 28-29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 263, 283, 413.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 15, 30, 430, 637.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 33, 497.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 689. f. 4. I. ő.e, 564.

at a time when the tensions were high already, and did so – completely unexpectedly – as a representative of the radical left.⁵⁵

The anti-Semitic press, of course, responded to Ágoston's book with great approval, criticizing him only for not going far enough in his conclusions.⁵⁶ The neolog-Jewish journal *Egyenlőség* [Equality] found itself in a difficult position with the unexpected turnabout, and decided to turn severely against the new enemy.⁵⁷ The Hungarian Jewish poet, author and editor Lajos Szabolcsi, since 1915 editor of the journal *Egyenlőség*, pursued a bellicose strategy against Ágoston and launched a counter-offensive. He enlisted some Jewish and non-Jewish authorities (such as the Calvinist bishop of Debrecen, Dezső Baltazár) to oppose Ágoston, and published a whole volume to refute "the notorious anti-Semite."⁵⁸ That, however, was only the beginning or, rather, the pretext for a new public debate. The Jewish social scientist and politician Oszkár Jászi and his radical circle felt that Szabolcsi's attacks hindered any serious debate about a real and important social problem, and went ahead with what became the famous "inquiry into the Jewish question" in their journal "*Huszedik Század*" [Twentieth Century]. They put three questions to nearly 150 prominent personalities: "Is there a Jewish question in Hungary, and, if so, what is its essence? What are the causes of the Jewish question? What is the solution to the Jewish question?" Alas, the editors received only 50 useful answers, and it is impossible to know now who were the men in the other two-thirds who received the questions but chose not to reply. The result of the inquiry proved rather distressing to liberal Jewry: 37 of those polled replied that there was a Jewish question, only 13 with "nay," while ten replied too briefly to be interpreted.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 476-483.

⁵⁶ Károly Burján, "A zsidókérdés," in *Magyar Kultúra* 5 (1917): 337-346; Zoltán Farkas, "A zsidókérdés. Levél Jászi Oszkár úrhoz," *A Cél*, 8/9 (1917): 521-528; István Milotay, "Egy bátor könyvről," *Új Nemzedék*, April 25th, 1917; "A zsidók útja. Dr. Ágoston Péter könyve," *Új Nemzedék*, April 25th, 1917.

⁵⁷ For the journal *Egyenlőség* [Equality] in World War One see: Katalin Fenyves, "Im Kreuzfuer der Fremdwahrnehmung: Die jüdische Presse in Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg" *Jüdische Publizistik und Literatur im Zeichen des Ersten Weltkriegs*, eds. Petra Ernst, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, (Innsbruck-Wien-Bozen: Studienverlag, 2016), 289-305.

⁵⁸ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 233.

⁵⁹ "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. Körkérdés," in *Huszedik Század*, 18/36 (1917, July-December): 1-164. Péter Hanák, *Zsidókérdés, asszimiláció, antiszemizmus* [Jewish Question, Anti-Semitism, Assimilation], (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 5-117; For this survey see also: Ferenc Laczó, "Assimilation und Nation: Das 'jüdische Thema' in Ungarn. Eine interpretierende Geschichte des langen 19. Jahrhunderts," *Die 'Judenfrage' in Ostmitteleuropa. Historische Pfade*

This is hardly the place to dwell on the details of the debate, which occupied 159 densely-set pages in the sociological journal “*Huszadik Század*,” but some new features of the “Jewish question” are perhaps worth mentioning. Not surprisingly some (but not all) of those authorities who admitted the existence of the problem attributed its intensity to the effects of the war. The orthodox journalist and Zionist Sámuel Bettelheim suggested that “anti-Semitism is a necessary consequence of war just like inflation or famine,” and added: “we are facing the advent of an anti-Semitic period in Hungary.”⁶⁰ Leó Lukács, editor of the Zionist *Zsidó Szemle* [Jewish Review] was no less ominous: “The real Jewish question in Hungary, in its entire brutality will appear only in the coming decades.”⁶¹ Nathaniel Katzburg is right in pointing out that this debate was the first one to give voice to Zionist opinions – even if it remains uncertain whether at that time these represented a wider stratum than before the war.⁶² One more approach deserves brief mention, the language of “eliminationist anti-Semitism” (Daniel Goldhagen) used by the author and sociologist Károly Méray-Horváth against the Galician immigrants. “Against them there is no appropriate mercifulness. These ought to be wiped out, just as we wipe out every sort of infection.”⁶³ The ominous words probably went unheard or were taken only metaphorically at the time.

Not surprisingly, Szabolcsi and *Egyenlőség* were scandalised by the inquiry. Szabolcsi felt betrayed by Jászi and his radical comrades – right at a time when his idol, Vilmos Vázsonyi, had become cabinet minister, which Szabolcsi mistakenly took as a sign of a subsiding of the Jewish question. Jászi “put the stigma on Jewry in the fourth year of the world war. [...] *He raised and scientifically constructed the Jewish question, which hitherto existed only in vague clerical slogans* – this one thing is certain.”⁶⁴ At this one point Szabolcsi unintentionally agreed with anti-Semitic publicists who mockingly pointed out that the “Jewish question,” in reality, was produced by the Jews themselves.⁶⁵ According to

und politisch-soziale Konstellationen, eds. Andreas Reinke, Kateřina Čapkova, Michal Frankl, Piotr Kendziorok, Ferenc Laczó, (Berlin: Metropol, 2015), 150-165.

⁶⁰ Samu Bettelheim, in *Huszadik Század*, 18/36 (1917, July–December): 52.

⁶¹ Leó Lukács, in *Huszadik Század*, 18/36 (1917, July–December): 111.

⁶² Nathaniel Katzburg, *Fejezetek az újkori zsidó történelemből Magyarországon*, (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó 1999), 161.

⁶³ Károly Méray-Horváth, in *Huszadik Század*, 18/36 (1917, July–December): 113.

⁶⁴ Lajos Szabolcsi, “Hitvita a Huszadik Században,” *Egyenlőség*, August 4th, 1917 (Italics in the original).

⁶⁵ “Te is fiam, Jászi?,” *Új Nemzedék*, August 12th, 1917.

Szabolcsi's simplistic accusations, Jászi's motives with the inquiry had been twofold. On the one hand, he merely wanted to whitewash his dilettante comrade, Ágoston. On the other hand – and more importantly – he was driven by the notorious self-hatred (*Selbsthass*) of the converted Jew working inside him. “I was beside myself” – remembered Szabolcsi – “only a converted Jew could do something so outrageous as that, only a proselyte can hate his old confession that much.”⁶⁶ In his rage in the pages of *Egyenlőség*, Szabolcsi crossed all existing boundaries when he claimed that the whole “Jewish question” would not have existed without Jászi who, he continued, “lives in a state of mental bigamy.”⁶⁷ He “revives old, anti-Semitic methods, like those of Istóczy, in sociological guise.”⁶⁸

Nevertheless, one question remains – for what reason did Jászi and his “*Huszadik Század*” launch the inquiry “in the fourth year of the world war”? The answer is not easy to determine, and I deliberately want to disregard here Jászi's complex – and changing – views on the Hungarian-Jewish problem.⁶⁹ One has to consider that the debate on the “Jewish question” was not the only one organized by “*Huszadik Század*”; they arranged an earlier one on “*Mitteleuropa*” and one on the problem of national minorities in 1918. This is not so surprising for a scholarly periodical (which dealt with several other issues of public life as well). The main explanation was probably Jászi's and his friends' liberal belief in science and rational thinking – they certainly were of the opinion that an inquiry like that would help solve even the most difficult social problems, including the “Jewish question.”⁷⁰ Or to put in another way: partial irrationalities will lead towards an eventual rationality – if the problems are openly discussed. (Some discussants recommended that representatives of Jews and anti-Semites be seated at the same table to negotiate their problems, and even expected positive results). Péter Hanák wrote a fine book on Jászi, in which he demonstrated how Jászi tried to “rationalize” the world war, which he – from the first day on – considered “the greatest catastrophe in world history.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Lajos Szabolcsi, “Hitvita a Huszadik Században III,” *Egyenlőség* August 18th, 1917; Lajos Szabolcsi, “Hitvita a Huszadik Században IV,” *Egyenlőség*, August 25th, 1917.

⁶⁷ Dániel Pogány, “Nyílt levél Jászi Oszkárhoz,” *Egyenlőség*, August 25th, 1917.

⁶⁸ Lajos Szabolcsi, “Hitvita a Huszadik Században III.,” *Egyenlőség*, August 18th, 1917. *Magyar Kultúra, Új Nemzedék* or *A Cél* accused Jászi in the same way.

⁶⁹ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 482-508;

⁷⁰ Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa* [The Danubian Patriotism of Oszkár Jászi], (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1985).

⁷¹ Postcard of Jászi to Endre Ady from Italy, March 8th 1914, Ady Endre Művei, *Levelei* [Complete Works, Correspondance], (Budapest: Szépirodalmi könyvkiadó, 1983), 316.

Of course, it remains questionable whether Jászi's decision to organize an inquiry in such difficult times was a wise one.⁷² (I do not refer to the conditions of the world war in general, but mainly to censorship in concrete terms, which unavoidably distorted information and to the state of public opinion as well). Jászi and his circle, as well as the majority of the discussants were men still brought up in the values of the liberal 19th century. There is another interesting evidence which seems to support my view. Most authors of Jászi's "*Huszdik Század*" were convinced that the advent of mass-media would increase the mobilizing potential of the left. So an article written in 1917 greeted even the rightist Catholic press movement with satisfaction, claiming that it might bring new groups "into political organization and the reading of press," thus "disseminating both education and democracy."⁷³

The Surge of Anti-Semitism

The first open attack on Jews took place on the very same day that the political truce collapsed – on August 23rd 1916. This assault arose in connection with the war contractors: the deputy of the Independence Party, Endre Ráth, questioned Prime Minister Tisza on the abuses of *Haditermény Rt.*, the central office for war production and other institutions. The new feature of this political attack – which, in my opinion, formed part of the all-round offensive against Tisza – consisted in Ráth's reading of a long list of grain merchants of the central offices. His list contained many names like Weiss, Löwy, Spitzer, Stern – names of Hungarian Jewish entrepreneurs – and the speaker even added: "I would be more pleased with Hungarian names."⁷⁴ Some deputies joined forces with Ráth, while Premier Tisza rejected the charges and asked the questioner to "refrain

⁷² For a further analysis of this inquiry see: Ferenc Laczó, "Das Problem nationaler Heterogenität. Die Diskussion über die 'Judenfrage' in der Zeitschrift 'Huszdik Század' im Jahr 1917," *Die 'Judenfrage'- ein europäisches Phänomen?* eds. Manfred Hettling, Michael G. Müller, Guido Hausmann, (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 145-177.

⁷³ Rita Mária Kiss, "A hatodik nagyhatalom" [The Sixth Great Power], *Századvég*, 20/1 (2001): 90.

⁷⁴ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 31, session 652, 256-257.; Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 96.; Lajos Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő* [Two Generations], (Budapest: MTA Judaisztikai Kutatócsoport, 1993), 184.

from false generalizations.”⁷⁵ From that time on no more hidden hints were necessary in the attacks against the banks and the centrals; the “Jewish question” of the war came openly into daylight, and remained in the foreground at least until 1920.

We must remember that *Krisenjahr* [Crisis Year] 1916 was also the year of the collapse of the *Burgfrieden* in Germany. By that period “hatred against war profiteers of all sorts had become explosive. Anti-Semitism in Germany made its first creeping breakthrough in the terrible home-front crisis of the central years of the Great War.”⁷⁶ “The reproaches concerning the present food situation are directed primarily against the producers and the middlemen, the latter being without exception identified as speculators and war-profiteers and assumed to be mainly Jews.”⁷⁷ In 1916, the year of the notorious *Judenzählung* [Jewish census] in the German army, the German *Reichstag* set up a special multi-party committee to investigate profit-making from the war. By and large, the committee succeeded in demonstrating that some large enterprises had made enormous profits out of the war, but it proved helpless concerning practical measures. Nevertheless the committee helped keep the subject of war profiteering alive “as a theme of anti-Semitic agitation.”⁷⁸ As the German historian Wolfram Wette noted in his study on the parliamentary arms control, the new orientation of public interest in the Jewish scapegoat contributed greatly to divert attention from its own misconduct.⁷⁹

Some on the political right demanded harsh actions and revenge. But it seems more important that – due to the overall situation and the intellectual “conceptualization” of the problem – “the anti-Semitic pack is once again in full cry in all the streets.”⁸⁰ A report issued by the Berlin police headquarters about

⁷⁵ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1916, vol. 31, session 652, 259; Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 96 (Remarkably this session alone – on August 23rd, 1916 – occupies 96 pages in the protocols of the Lower House.)

⁷⁶ Immanuel Geiss, “The Civilian Dimension of the War,” *Facing Armageddon*, eds. Hugh Cecil, Peter Liddle, (London: Cooper, 1996), 20-21.

⁷⁷ Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1993), 61.

⁷⁸ Wolfram Wette, “Reichstag und ‘Kriegsgewinnlerei’ (1916-1918). Die Anfänge parlamentarischer Rüstungskontrolle in Deutschland,” *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 36/2 (1984): 31-56; 49.

⁷⁹ Wolfram Wette, *Reichstag und ‘Kriegsgewinnlerei’*, 50-51.

⁸⁰ Cited in *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933. The Problematic Symbiosis*, ed. David Bronsen, (Heidelberg: Winter, 1979), 52.

the attitudes and the situation of the population in the city notes that even among those circles who had not previously held anti-Semitic attitudes a strong hostility against the Jews had emerged, and, the report added – in words with their own clear anti-Semitic undertone –, that the Jews had used the war situation to their own advantage.⁸¹ The outcome was that, by 1917-1918, anti-Semitism reappeared as a “political factor” in Germany.⁸² Just one more point is worth mentioning – the role of the churches, more specifically of the Catholic Church. According to a recent study by Olaf Blaschke, an “inherent” anti-Semitism had several functions for the Catholic mind: it was primarily a phenomenon indigenous to the Catholic mentality, belonging as a matter of course to the foundational knowledge and emotional disposition of your “average Catholic” [*des Durchschnittskatholiken*], and embedded in the *ressentiments* of the clergy.⁸³ In October 1916, a respected leader of the German Catholic Centre Party, Matthias Erzberger proposed during the debate in the German parliament on food supply and war profiteering to publicly reveal the entire personnel of war-centrals “according to age, income, and *denomination*” [emphasis added]. The mighty General Ludendorff was probably pleased to hear the proposal, but the Social-Democrats rejected it. Their leader, Friedrich Ebert, warned not to ask for the religious affiliation of people (just like the Hungarian Tisza before him), because this question establishes a tendency that must be avoided.⁸⁴

Exactly two years passed between the skirmish caused by Endre Ráth’s interpellation on the abuses of the central office for war production, defaming Jews as their profiteers, and the other parliamentary debate about anti-Semitic manifestations, in August 1918. In these two years the “Jewish question” turned up almost daily, in connection with every possible topic in the House, like war centrals, war contractors, food distribution, war heroes and villains, unbearable shifts in incomes or just the policies of any governments. These debates are largely unknown up to now.

⁸¹ Cited in *Berichte der Berliner Polizeipräsidenten zur Stimmung und Lage der Bevölkerung in Berlin 1914-1918*, eds. Ingo Materna, Hans-Joachim Schreckenbach, Bärbel Holtz, (Weimar: Böhlau, 1987), 299.

⁸² Werner Jochmann, “Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus,” *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, ed. Werner E. Mosse, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), 437.

⁸³ Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), 107.

⁸⁴ Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), 525.

On January 1st 1917, Károly Huszár of the People's Party started the year by providing typical names of profiteers in Upper Hungary – like Schwarz, Deutsch, etc. – and also condemned child labor in Manfréd Weiss' factory.⁸⁵ On February 10th, the deputy from the Independence Party Béla Kelemen attacked the Tisza government for being idle when many collect millions through profiteering and by abusing war contracts.⁸⁶ A week later, another politician from the Independence Party, Géza Bosnyák, spoke of the “food and industrial usury of the great banks.”⁸⁷ On February 20, his fellow party member István Bottlik reprimanded all large capitalist enterprises “caressed by the state against general welfare.”⁸⁸ On the same day the large landowner and politician, Margrave György Pallavicini, undersecretary of state in the government of Móric Graf Esterházy in autumn the same year, commented more harshly: Hungarian farmers – returning from the front – “will be exposed to the mercy of these banks and [...] become either slaves of the banks or take to the road.”⁸⁹ On March 2nd, Ubul Kállay – deputy of the Independence Party and publisher of the anti-Semitic periodical “*A Cél*” (The Aim) – drew a parallel that soon became a commonplace: “Those like MP Zoltán Désy die as heroes on the front; the usurers, profiteers, and the like happily continue their petty trades.” And he went on claiming “all possible ways and means to encourage not only the proliferation of our people, but also to maintain and organize [!] racial hygiene” – following the German example.⁹⁰ On March 13th, the Catholic politician János Frey from the People's Party returned to the recipe of Endre Ráth: after a few strong remarks about banks, war centrals, middlemen in commerce, and other such “beasts” he proceeded to provide a list of the contractors of *Haditermény Rt.* in Baranya county: mainly Brauns, Singers, Krausztes, etc.⁹¹ On March 19th, the politician and historian Sándor Pethő from the Democratic Party again accused the omnipotent banks with deliberately enhancing inflation for profits,

⁸⁵ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1917, vol. 33, session 692, 512–518.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 34, session 698, 172.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 34, session 699, 236.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 34, session 700, 255.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 34, session 700, 269.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 34, session 709, 562. Zoltán Désy was an Independent Party MP, who had accused Prime Minister László Lukács – in 1912 – of assigning money to the Party of Work, and called him “the greatest panamist in Europe.” In 1913 the tribunal finally acquitted Désy of the charge brought against him for slander (he was defended by Vázsonyi); the next day Lukács resigned and Tisza became Prime Minister. Désy thus turned into a hero of the national opposition. In 1915 he died a hero's death at the Eastern front.

⁹¹ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1917, vol. 35, session 712, 78–79.

thus “making terrible ransoms” on consumers.⁹² On the same day, Endre Ráth returned to his old tune, with some variations: our trains leave with worthy Hungarian peasants and “return with Polish Jews in caftans” coming to Budapest.⁹³ Later he referred to the war contractor Manfréd Weiss’ huge plants – but at that point Count Tivadar Batthyány, a leading personality of the Independence Party could not resist interrupting him: “These [plants] ought to have been nationalized on the first day [of the war]. He has acquired a bigger fortune than that of Count Esterházy! He buys a few landed estates every day! They [!] seize the land from our poor people!” The left loudly agreed.⁹⁴

Still on the same day another count, József Károlyi from the Independence Party, gave a cultural twist to the discussion and made a revealing claim that was widely commented on in the press.⁹⁵ First he stated that “a non-Christian materialist tendency has gained the upper hand [in Hungary] – this trend, with its cohesion and constant desire to cause sensation already visible before the war, [...] has just been awaiting and searching for the occasion to come into power [...] This racial materialism endangers our racial Hungarian national self and our ancient Christian self. (Very true! from the left.) Many feel this now, more than before. (Very true! from the left.)” The solution he found was “Christian concentration.”⁹⁶ This slogan – vague as it may sound – was to have a profound impact in 1918. The next day (March 20th), a third aristocrat from the Independence Party, Mihály Esterházy, returned to the land-problem, but this time with an anti-German flavour: “While the Hungarian is fighting, Hungarian land is being robbed from him! Bankers should remain at their banks! German banks lease considerable parts of our country!”⁹⁷ Others, like Tivadar Batthyány did not refrain from stating that our allies “have come to occupy the country!”⁹⁸ At that session, the agriculturalist from the Smallholder Party, János Novák, spoke against a Jewish profiteer;⁹⁹ then, on March 22nd, the deputy of the Independence Party, Aurél Förster, spoke out against the great banks.¹⁰⁰ The very active Károly Huszár attacked Tisza's “personal dictatorship” as “the reign

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 716, 185.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 716, 197.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 716, 207. (During Batthyány’s sentences “Exclamations on the left: It ought to have been requisitioned. After the war he will buy up the whole country!” – *ibid.*)

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 716, 190. Károlyi’s speech was discussed negatively in *Világ* and *Az Ujság* and positively in *Új Nemzedék* and *Magyar Kultúra*.

⁹⁶ *Képviselőházi Napló*, 1917, vol. 35, session 716, 190.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 717, 219.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 717, 219.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 717, 228.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 719, 293.

of the terror of impotence,” directed a few strong remarks at the un-Christian trends of literary and scientific life in Hungary and ended his speech with a proposal to call up Manfréd Weiss for military service.¹⁰¹ On March 31st, the Catholic politician János Bartos from the People’s Party again brought up the bleeding millions on the front and the few great banks in the rear, which were acquiring millions and, more recently, huge estates. These, he said, “squeeze the last drops of fat out of the country and, since there is no more fat, now sap the blood.” They rule the country, he continued, as “there is a secret union to spoil those social strata which, up to now, proved incorruptible.”¹⁰² Finally, as if to end war year 1917, Zoltán Meskó – a new MP of the Independence Party – devoted his maiden speech to Manfréd Weiss and his business. (October 20th was already the period of Wekerle’s government.) He charged, among other things, that Weiss’s yearly income – estimated at 400-500 million crowns – would be enough to buy up the whole country, as he would soon possess more money than the state itself. Meskó emphasized the defence of Hungarian soil: “I consider aliens all those purchasers of land who love Hungarian soil only for its yield, in contrast to those ready to spill their blood for it, in order to preserve it.”¹⁰³ Later it was Meskó who founded one of the first proto-Nazi (Arrow-Cross) parties in Hungary.¹⁰⁴

It is not difficult to discover that which connects the leading themes of the debates. The rule of the great banks and the war centrals was identified with Jewish (or occasionally with German) capital. These alien powers supported an un-Christian liberal-materialistic culture, thereby endangering Hungarian values. In this view the rule of Tisza’s “liberal-mercantile” Party of Work and the rule of the Jewish banks naturally supported each other. It is hard not to view these attacks as being conspicuously carried out by the Independence Party against Tisza, and by the People’s Party against Jewish capital (while they enthusiastically agreed with each other in condemning both). It was perhaps easy for MPs of the Catholic People’s Party – often themselves priests – to argue with black-and-white (or black-and-red) images, in a language which inevitably evoked the sufferings of Christ (Christians) and his (their) greedy and power-hungry enemies. There was but one new theme in this chain of accusations: the alleged hunger of big capital for land, and the ensuing deprivation of Hungarian farmers

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 719, 301–304.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 35, session 724, 429–431.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1917, vol. 37, session 745, 88.

¹⁰⁴ Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 692.

of their lands.¹⁰⁵ This point seems important: until the war, the battle revolved around wealth and cultural influence; now Hungarian land and – as we have seen in the case of Vázsonyi – political power were also added to the anti-Jewish agenda: everything worthy seemed to be at stake.

Not only did the parties of the opposition feel that it was time to renew their attacks against Tisza and his unpopular “regime” and to connect their charges with those against the even more unpopular war-economy. We have seen how the management of the war was intertwined with what was purported to be chiefly Jewish big capital. The Tisza-government had three members of Jewish origins (from 1913) as well as some Jewish under-secretaries.

In a rather paradoxical way the Hungarian Parliament even grew in importance during the war years, since practically all other forms of political action (e.g. through associations) were restricted. Under conditions of press censorship, the reports of parliamentary debates could go unhindered and frequently received extensive coverage in the newspapers. These reports were hardly diminished by the war (despite serious paper shortages): there were already too many delicate or censored areas anyway. Fed up with war-news, the public turned their interest to reports on parliamentary debates – mentioning each speaker by name and their main arguments. Of course, MPs were well aware of this opportunity and willingly cultivated such public relations.

The journal *Egyenlőség* rightly observed that most of these debates were generated by the parliamentary system itself: “Every time the government submits its report to parliament on the administration of exceptional power, there is an inflation of economic crimes in connection with the war.”¹⁰⁶ There were eight lengthy debates of this kind in both houses of parliament. In a still semi-liberal Hungary, it would have been impossible to use “exceptional power” without subsequent parliamentary approval and to restrict or censor the debates. But *Egyenlőség* failed to see that the only alternative would have been the closure of Parliament – under the circumstances, any pretext could well be found for a passionate debate of the kind mentioned above.

Articles on the alleged hegemony of the Jews and on the “Jewish question,” in general, began to flood the Hungarian press – first the periodicals, later the daily

¹⁰⁵ See Ullmann’s speech in the Upper House also: Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő*, 184.

¹⁰⁶ Sándor Komáromi, “A hadibűnökről,” *Egyenlőség*, February 3rd, 1917.

papers – in 1917. The most important publications in this genre were, in part, Catholic, like *Magyar Kultúra* [Hungarian Culture], *Élet* [Life], *Keresztényszocializmus* [Christian Socialism] and *A Sajtó* [The Press], in part, close to the Independent tradition, like *Új Nemzedék* [New Generation] and *A Cél* [The Aim]. By 1918 their outlooks, at least concerning the omnipresent “Jewish question,” were almost indistinguishable from each other.

The Catholic weekly and monthly magazines were very consistent and perseverant: from early 1915 on – the time of the first war contractor scandals – they never ceased to occupy themselves with Jewish problems, which they did more and more regularly, extending it to every possible field, while their tone became ever cruder. The best example is perhaps father Béla Bangha’s *Magyar Kultúra* (launched in 1913 to counter liberal-progressive influences). Bangha, himself a radical – though non-racist – anti-Semite, proved to be an apt and influential organizer of militant-Catholic forces.¹⁰⁷ One of his chief columnists was the high school teacher Károly Burján, a notorious (racial) anti-Semite, who delivered his short comments in each number of the monthly review. His main enemies were the freemasons and the radicals: Oszkár Jászi and the like, with their *Huszedik Század* and their daily paper *Világ* [World]. Burján immediately “discovered the links” between these radical circles and the sinful war-contractors. In his “The hyenas of the nation and the progressives” (1915) one finds the following statement: “That stupefyingly loathsome pus which is emanating from this furuncle [...] all sticks to progressive names”¹⁰⁸ – and so forth in the same manner, in connection with inflation, shortages, black market, national minorities, etc., and even the organized holidays for war orphans.¹⁰⁹ *Magyar Kultúra*, of course, kept its finger on educational and political issues, like the election of the (Jewish) philosopher Bernát Alexander to the deanship of the faculty of arts at the Pázmány Budapest University in 1915 or the appointment of “Weiszfeld-Vázsonyi” as Minister of Justice (in 1917).

The weekly *Élet* – edited by another high-school teacher and headmaster, József Andor, was somewhat more moderate, closer to the line of Ottokár Prohászka,

¹⁰⁷ On Bangha: Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 295-301, Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története 1867-1918*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2003), 257, 331.

¹⁰⁸ “A nemzet hiénái és a progresszió,” *Magyar Kultúra*, 3/8 (1915): 384.

¹⁰⁹ Gyula Noé, “A szabadkőműves vezetésű hadiárva-szanatórium,” *Magyar Kultúra*, 5/ 17-18 (1917): 816.

the famous reformer-bishop of Székesfehérvár.¹¹⁰ It usually dealt with literary and general cultural questions in accord with the attitudes of the Christian middle classes. It attacked, for instance, the new literary trends in Budapest (like the works of Jewish authors Sándor Bródy, Ferenc Molnár or Dezső Szomory), but avoided gutter-like anti-Semitism.¹¹¹ This was the case until 1918, at least, at which point the periodical's tone became apocalyptic, preparing for a final reckoning in the manner of a "Hungarian awakening." In that year Prohászka, as we shall see, also turned active in politics and extremely prolific as a publicist. In 1916 he wrote seven articles in *Élet*, in 1917 only six (none of which engaged with political themes), but he wrote no less than fourteen in the first ten months of 1918, including explicitly political ones. The sixty-year-old bishop seemed to become an unquestionable authority: he and his role were repeatedly compared to the "greatest of Hungarians."¹¹²

Two more new clerical publications appeared in 1916-1917: *A Sajtó* [The Press] and "*Keresztényszocializmus*" [Christian Socialism]. Both had but one theme – the Jews –, both represented a gutter-type anti-Semitism. They fitted well into the apocalyptic atmosphere of the last war-year, to be discussed later, where they will also receive treatment as part of the vanguard of the Catholic offensive of 1918.

Új Nemzedék and *A Cél* make an altogether different impression. The talented and unscrupulous publicist of the Independence Party, István Mlotay, launched his monthly *Új Nemzedék* in 1913, intending it to serve as a modern organ against Tisza's "liberal" policy:¹¹³ "The great curse of the policy of the Hungarian opposition is that in the 19th and even in the 20th century it still fights for its aims in an insurgent manner. It has no permanent standing army and enlists its insurgents recruited for the elections to confront the well-organized power of the ruling regime" – where one should again note the militant tone.¹¹⁴ Lajos Szabolcsi, the editor of *Egyenlőség* is certainly mistaken in claiming that Mlotay had launched his periodical to discuss the "Jewish question."¹¹⁵ Again, only in

¹¹⁰ Bettina Reichmann, *Bischof Ottokár Prohászka (1858-1927). Krieg und christliche Kultur in Ungarn*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014).

¹¹¹ József Andor, "Kultúránk válsága," *Élet*, February 13th, 1916.

¹¹² The whole issue of *Élet*, October 1918.

¹¹³ On the early career of Mlotay see Péter Sipos, "Mlotay István pályaképehez" [To the Career of István Mlotay], *Századok*, 105/3-4 (1971): 3-4.

¹¹⁴ István Mlotay, "Kolozsvár," *Új Nemzedék*, September 26th, 1915.

¹¹⁵ Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő*, 193.

1916–1917 did Milotay and his periodical take a definite turn to a sharp anti-liberalism and radical anti-Semitism, which then – from 1918 on – became his obsession. In 1914–1915, Milotay was – as an exception – against the war as well as against the great banks’ rule, against Budapest and also the “Galicianers,” while he still tried to organize the “insurgents” of the independents for a more radical policy and split them from the Jászi’s line.¹¹⁶ Be that is it may, in 1915 Milotay viewed it as his role, perhaps his mission, to find an “independent” middle way between clericalism and radicalism. However, from the end of 1915 onwards, Milotay broadened his attacks from their narrow focus on “Galicianers” to the Jews in general, referring to the “war contractor tribe.”¹¹⁷ In 1916 he started to report the names of Jewish *virilists*, men who hold seats in a legislative body due to their function as judges or university rectors, and of war contractors. He began at the same time to use liberalism and radicalism in quotation marks as pejorative terms.¹¹⁸ At that point, he definitively went over to the neo-conservative, right-radical camp. In 1917 he joined the campaign against the “land-hunger” of great banks¹¹⁹ and launched a general attack against “Jewish expansion.”¹²⁰ Alluding to the famous debate in 1917, his periodical accused the Jews themselves of producing the “Jewish question,”¹²¹ and went on to see the answer in coercion. Finally, in 1918, he joined Bishop Prohászka in advocating “Hungarism” which, he claimed, was not anti-Semitism: “We do not want the Jew dead [sic], but to wake up the Hungarian. It was time to declare this unyieldingly and invincibly.”¹²² No doubt: without Milotay’s engagement and his talented pen the whole anti-Semitic movement would have been much less effective.¹²³

The case of *A Cél* displays an even sharper curve. Launched in 1910 on the initiative and with the money of Baron Miklós Szemere as a social, economic, literary, and sport-review, it defined its task as the defense of “Hungarian faith,

¹¹⁶ Orlando, “Új honfoglalás,” *Új Nemzedék*, November 28th, 1915.

¹¹⁷ “A hétről. A terézvárosi “demokrácia,” *Új Nemzedék*, September 3rd, 1916; *Új Nemzedék*, December 17th, 1916; “A “feudalizmus” végnapjai,” *Új Nemzedék*, January 21st, 1917.

¹¹⁸ “A hétről. A bank-feudalizmus szervezkedése,” *Új Nemzedék*, January 14th, 1917; “A bankfeudalizmus terjeszkedése,” *Új Nemzedék*, February 4th, 1917.

¹¹⁹ István Milotay, “A Hangya,” *Új Nemzedék*, March 25th, 1917.

¹²⁰ “Te is fiam, Jászi?,” *Új Nemzedék*, August 12th, 1917.

¹²¹ István Milotay, “Egy bátor könyvről,” *Új Nemzedék*, April 25th, 1917.

¹²² Cordax, “Tollhegyről,” *Új Nemzedék*, September 14th, 1918.

¹²³ Ferenc Szálasi’s propaganda-minister, Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa called him “the greatest publicist of Hungary”: Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa, 1944, 59.

moral, honor and patriotism.”¹²⁴ In the 1914 volume the word “Jew” does not appear at all, though the problem of ethnic minorities and the “national minority question” sometimes does. It also published prominent and progressive writers like Zsigmond Móricz. Jewish “themes” began to appear incidentally in 1916, but only “indirectly,” in connection with the debates on “Pan-Turanism,”¹²⁵ or in a rough critic of “Affairs in the Capital.”¹²⁶ The definite turn to Jewish themes and anti-Semitism came in late 1916 and early 1917. Ubul Kállay (MP) remained editor in chief, but Zoltán Farkas became the executive editor (the very illustrious editorial board also remained). *A Cél* opened its columns to leading anti-Semitic publicists like Sándor Kiss and Gyula Altenburger – with topics, charges and epithets very similar to the other periodicals mentioned above.¹²⁷ At some points they even proved to be more inventive: a good example was Sándor Kiss’ article on the relationship of modern *belles-lettres* and the Jews.¹²⁸ In 1918 the periodical had hardly any themes other than the Jews, and the agenda of “Hungarian awakening” also fully predominated. Even Bishop Prohászka – who had joined the editorial board – honored *A Cél* with an article.¹²⁹

As this short survey indicates, the general anti-Semitic tide started in the press at roughly the same period as in parliament, namely, in late 1916-early 1917; from that time on Hungarian anti-Semitism became ever-increasing and inexorable. The main directions were similar to those in party politics: the Catholic People’s Party and the radical wing of the Independence Party. Some periodicals of the agrarian movement, as we have seen, also showed anti-Semitic tendencies, but their arguments generally remained within the usual anti-capitalist and anti-

¹²⁴ Gyurgyák was right in claiming that nothing of substance has been written on *A Cél* so far: Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 371.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; Reference has been made on the articles of Gyula Mészáros, István Mezey and Lajos Sassy-Nagy in Chapter V.

¹²⁶ “Animó” *A Cél*, 7 (1916): 380-386; 453-457.

¹²⁷ The editorial board (István Bernát, Count István Bethlen, Emil Dodák, Sándor Giesswein, Ákos Horváth, Baron Árpád Kemény, Gyula Mezey and Gyula Pekár) was obviously a union of various – largely conservative – political and spiritual forces.

¹²⁸ Altenburger was – atypically – director of an insurance company, who took a definite turn from liberalism to radical anti-Semitism in 1915, having returned from Germany. Kiss was – quite typically – a school-teacher, later director (Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus*, 305; Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 680.)

¹²⁹ Sándor Kiss, whom Gyurgyák called one of the first “racist anti-Semites” in Hungary, did not spare with the epithets on “Jewish” literature: *A Cél*, 8 (1917): 432-433; 562-573.

Budapest framework.¹³⁰ Of course it would be very important to know which of these periodicals sold best, which was the most influential in intellectual or middle class circles. Nevertheless it is also revealing that all of them seem to have sold well, even with more or less identical contents and style, even at a time of a growing paper shortage, though they managed amidst the general paper-misery to obtain paper of fairly good quality.

Of the two traditional satirical journals *Borsszem Jankó* [Pepper John] was pro-Tisza and philo-Semitic, *Bolond Istók* [Folly Steevie] pro-independent and hostile towards the Jews. Nevertheless they shared certain stereotypes: rich bankers and war contractors were always characteristically Jewish types,¹³¹ as Jews happened to always be the subjects of jokes about shirkers of the home-front.¹³² As cited above, war millionaires were inevitably written with an “sch” at the end (“hadimilliomosch”), which referred to their Jewish origins. *Bolond Istók* was more outspoken and harsh in this respect: the first “Jewish” war-jokes appeared early 1915 – about profiteers, usurers, and the “Galician invasion” – then expanded to every possible field: Jews were fraudsters, owners of hidden stocks, or simply parasites.¹³³ It is hard to assess the effect of these jokes and drawings, but they certainly reached more people, and thus exerted more influence, than the more refined arguments of Milotay or Prohászka. While intellectuals and the middle classes read the latter, simple people had the satirical journals – in this respect there certainly was a division of labor concerning the dissemination of anti-Semitic narratives.¹³⁴

The role of various Catholic circles in the intensification of Hungarian anti-Semitism during the war has been noted throughout. Livelier Catholic activity, in general, had much to do with the “Jewish question,” and by 1917-1918 all this looked like a very deliberate policy, even if I would refrain from calling it an

¹³⁰ *A Cél*, 9/1 (1918): 2-11. For the agitation against Budapest as a Jewish capital, see, for example: Charles Kecskemeti, “‘Judapest’ et Vienne,” *Austriaca: Cahiers Universitaires d’Information sur l’Autriche* 29/57 (2004): 35-52.

¹³¹ Like “Magyar Gazdák Szemléje” [Review of Hungarian Farmers], “Háború és bankuralom” [War and Bankocracy], 22 (1917): 136-142; or “Köztelek” [Common Lot], “A drágaság és a székesfőváros” [High Prices and the Capital], June 12th, 1915.

¹³² New stereotypes required new faces: old Jewish figures were supplemented with new ones in comic magazines – like the manipulating sergeant (in the rear) or the parvenue magnate with his fat wife.

¹³³ *Borsszem Jankó*, February 1st, 1916; July 16th 1916.

¹³⁴ *Bolond Istók* preferred profiteers and “Galicians”: January 31st, 1915; July 2nd 1915; February 14th 1915; February 2nd, 1915 – and from this time on a regular basis.

“organized conspiracy,” guided from one single center. The struggle against liberalism was fought with several weapons and on varied fronts, but the two main figures were beyond doubt -- Father Béla Bangha, the great organizer, and Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, the great ideologue. “Prohászka succeeded in taking our Catholic men’s society into the churches, while Bangha succeeded in leading them into the streets and organized them so as to regain public life. The greatest achievements of his life are linked to the struggle against the Jewish press and the creation of a Catholic one.”¹³⁵

Perhaps the most important field was the creation of a new Catholic press, the organization of the Catholic *Központi Sajtóvállalat* (KSV) [Central Press Company], on the initiative of Father Bangha, the “great press apostle.”¹³⁶ He regarded it as the most important instrument of the Catholic struggle. Bangha launched the offensive with several articles in 1917, emphasizing that the creation of effective press is a question of life and death for the future of the whole clerical movement.¹³⁷ He was, of course, far from alone in this struggle. Co-organizers like Jusztin Baranyai and Antal Buttkay helped him, while some Catholic authors also stressed the need for a “boulevard-paper like ‘*Az Est*’ in our hands in the capital city.”¹³⁸ The support of Primate János Csernoch proved most important, he promised to subscribe shares for 100 000 crowns for the foundation of the “Central Press Company” (KSV).¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Some data on numbers of copies or stocks of centrally distributed papers are available, but only for daily papers. A good recent article on the Hungarian press at the turn of the century: Rita Mária Kiss, “A hatodik nagyhatalom” [The Sixth Great Power]? *Századvég*, 20/1 (2001): 67-94.

¹³⁶ Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus*, 256-260; *Új Nemzedék*, April 29th 1940 (Obituary); Gábor Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában 1867-1918* [Church and State in Hungary in the Era of Dualism], (München: Aurora Könyvek, 1974), 202.

¹³⁷ The Catholic “press-action” had a long history, described in the biography of one of its champions: Kelemen Burka O. F. M., Antal Buttkay O. F. M., *Pápa*, 105-115. (Buttkay was the middlemen between Bangha and Prohászka.) Also: Béla Bangha S. J., *Összegyűjtött munkái* (Collected Works), vol. XXV and XXVI (Budapest, 1941); Zoltán Nyisztor, *Bangha élete és művei* [Life and Oeuvre of Béla Bangha], (Budapest: Pázmány Péter Irodalmi Társaság, 1941); Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon*, chap. XXXI; Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus*, 331-332.

¹³⁸ Bangha S. J., *Összegyűjtött munkái*, vol. XXV and XXVI. Also: Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon*, chap. XXXI.

¹³⁹ The interwar leader of rightist-clerical political forces in Budapest, Károly Wolff, also started his political career with activity for the Catholic Press Action in 1918.: *Wolff Károly élete, politikája, alkotása* [The Life, Politics and Oeuvre of K. W.], ed. Endre Szigethy (Budapest: 1943), 58.

The subscription of shares at 25 crowns each began in January 1918, and the success of the project exceeded all expectations. By June, 16,000 shareholders bought subscriptions totaling 12 million crowns, and an assembly of “five thousand people declared the foundation of KSV”:¹⁴⁰ “When our Fatherland was in danger, we rescued it with war loans. Now, when Christianity is in danger, we rescue it with a Christian press loan!” – as the monthly journal of the Catholic Maria Congregations, edited by Béla Bangha S. J., put it in 1918.¹⁴¹ Among the 25 founders of the “Central Press Company” there were five aristocrats, among them count József Károlyi, Lord Lieutenant of Fejér county (where Prohászka was the bishop), from 1917 onward, eight prelates, and eight university professors.¹⁴² In the list of the members of the supervising committee one finds the name of Zoltán Farkas, editor of *A Cél*.¹⁴³ The details of the “press action” can be followed from the rabidly anti-Semitic *A Sajtó* [The Press], launched by the “National Press Union of Catholic Ladies.” Another, more or less similar, organ, *A Keresztényszocializmus* [Christian Socialism] – “the official central paper of the Christian Socialist Unions” – managed to put some sand in the machine of a unified Christian press empire in the making. The small paper, which represented the rudest gutter anti-Semitism, was clearly dissatisfied with the leadership of prelates, aristocrats, and leading intellectuals, and announced the foundation of a more democratic Christian Socialist Press Company. Among the 17 founding members there were mainly civil servants, office-messengers, artisans, and workers.¹⁴⁴ They clearly represented a markedly different and even more radical public--so much so that the most important Catholic daily paper, *Alkotmány*, quickly dissociated itself from them –, but they do not seem to have seriously disturbed the emerging unity.¹⁴⁵

Meanwhile, Bangha’s feverish activity was not confined to the organization of the Catholic press. He had found time to visit the country. According to Ignác Romsics, the riots in Kecskemét (in May 1917) and Kiskunfélegyháza (in

¹⁴⁰ József Galántai, *Egyház és politika, 1890-1918. Katolikus egyházi körök politikai szervezkedéséi Magyarországon*, (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1960), 191; Csernoch was loyal to Tisza, but positioned himself closer to Prohászka’s and Bangha’s lines during the war.

¹⁴¹ *A Sajtó*, January 20th 1918; this racist periodical was launched in autumn 1916 as the monthly review of the “Catholic Ladies’ Press Committee;” the committee’s president, Countess György Mailáth, was greeted by Primate Csernoch on the occasion, and claimed to have ‘more than 20 000 readers’ from the very beginning.”

¹⁴² *Mária Kongregáció*, XI, 1917-1918, 149.

¹⁴³ *A Sajtó*, January 20th, 1918.

¹⁴⁴ *A Sajtó*, July, 1918.

¹⁴⁵ *Keresztényszocializmus*, September 15th, 1918.

February 1918) had a visibly anti-Jewish character, which can also be connected to Béla Bangha's tours in the region in 1916 and 1918.¹⁴⁶ The pater repeatedly talked about the need to suppress the Jewish press, as the report of the police chief of Kiskunfélegyháza "rightly remarked." Although Bangha's speech "did not give cause to any direct police intervention, it was still capable of arising strong disfavor and aversion against people of non-Christian denomination in the feelings and behaviors of those simple women who gathered at the assembly in large numbers."¹⁴⁷

A second important field of Catholic activity was party politics.¹⁴⁸ On February 3rd, 1918, the three existing Christian parties merged into the united "Christian Socialist People's Party" [*Keresztényszocialista Néppárt*], and published a truly modern party program. This demanded universal suffrage, the protection of workers, the reform of landed property, and the regulation of the conditions of civil servants. Last but not least, for the first time, the program did not call for the withdrawal of the laws on ecclesiastical policy of 1894–1895. It ended with a significant statement: "We will support any government that sets itself against subversive elements."¹⁴⁹ Thus the party came closer than ever to becoming a real people's party. No wonder that the Social Democratic Party vehemently attacked the new party and its program.¹⁵⁰

Meanwhile, political Catholicism made conscious attempts to widen its scope and bring new social groups into the movement, like workers, "godless Budapest" in general, and women in even larger numbers. "Maria Congregations" gained a stronger impetus; so did the *Kisegítő Kápolna Egyesület* [Association of Auxiliary Chapels] – organized largely on the initiative of pater Bangha in 1917 – which "had a large share in the spiritual renaissance of

¹⁴⁶ Yet it is remarkable how the hitherto more moderate *Alkotmány* took a radical turn in the Jewish question by 1918. As we will see, the radicalization meant a quantitative change, indicated by the number of such articles, as well as a qualitative one—not only did Prohászka write for *A Cél*, but also the gutter-anti-Semite Károly Burján for *Alkotmány* (June 10th, 1918; December 10th, 1918.)

¹⁴⁷ Ignác Romsics, *Duna-Tisza köze hatalmi-politikai viszonyai 1918–1919-ben* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 31.

¹⁴⁸ Romsics, *Duna-Tisza*, 31.

¹⁴⁹ Galántai, *Egyház és politika*; Dániel Szabó, "The Crisis Of Dualism and the 'New Compromise,'" *Hungary: Government and Politics 1848–2000*, eds. Mária Ormos, Béla K. Király, (Boulder: Atlantic Research Publications, 2001), 104–138.

¹⁵⁰ Galántai, *Egyház és politika*, 188; Jenő Gergely, *A keresztényszocializmus Magyarországon, 1903–1923* [Christian Socialism in Hungary], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 58–80.

Budapest.”¹⁵¹ Another important step was the foundation of *Szent István Akadémia* [Saint Stephens’s Academy] – to replace the previous literary and scientific department of *Szent István Társulat* [Saint Stephen Society], in 1916. “It obtained a complete academic organization, with four departments,” under the leadership of the pacifist prelate, Sándor Giesswein.¹⁵² The most significant – or at least most large-scale – organization, though, was *Katolikus Népszövetség* [Catholic People’s Association], founded in 1908. This association reached a membership of about 300,000 by 1916–1917, and operated a number of filiations like the *Katolikus Karitás* [Catholic Charity] movement or the union of Catholic Schoolmistresses, which “grew constantly stronger” during the war.¹⁵³ The Catholic leadership found it much easier to support these organizations than any Catholic party – at least openly. Some of these associations had their own bulletins, etc.

The Catholic People’s Association celebrated its tenth anniversary in March 1918. The festivities lasted for a whole week – with very prominent speakers –, and the jubilee assembly was used chiefly to propagate the program of the newly united Christian Socialist People’s Party. MP István Rakovszky, who would later be designated Prime Minister, called for the fight against “a destructive trend” that operates with “well organized forces from behind.” István Haller (MP, Minister of Culture in 1919–1920) noted: “We must organize youngsters and women, we have to care about the problems of petty farmers and workers.” The mayor of Esztergom added: “let us work on the creation of a strong and independent Hungarian middle class.” Finally MP Károly Huszár explained the essence of the party program: “We want a new Hungary, a Christian one, not the Hungary of the new Hungarians, but that of the people of Saint Stephen [...] We do not want to touch established rights, but we can also not be idle when the intellectuals of this nation are being replaced with a material [!] that is neither Christian nor Hungarian. While our heroes fight gloriously on the front, at home we can see frightening pictures of the decay in war morale, which can be attributed to the harmful influence of alien elements. There is regular agitation

¹⁵¹ Béla Somogyi, *A Keresztény Szocialista Néppárt programja az igazság megvilágításában*, (Budapest: Népszava-Könyvkereskedés, 1918). The author was an important victim of the Hungarian white terror in 1920.

¹⁵² “A Szent István Akadémia,” in *Huszedik Század*, 17/34 (1916, July–December): 320.

¹⁵³ Ignác Hauser, *A budapesti római katolikus egyházközségek első tíz éve* [The First Ten Years of the Roman Catholic Congregations], (Budapest: Pallas, 1930), 15–21; 90–94.

to kill and exterminate the Christian faith and its morals. These machinations spoil the soul of our future generation.”¹⁵⁴

Huszár was, moreover, the third most important member of the Catholic triad. He ran as a candidate for parliament at the age of only 24, and was elected four years later, in 1910. According to the otherwise impartial parliamentary almanac, he was “the most energetic organizer of the Catholic People’s Association. The number of his speeches, delivered at mass meetings at every part of the country makes tens of thousands [!]. An indefatigable organizer, a talent in organization, his election proved to be a great gain to his party.”¹⁵⁵

In 1917, the Jesuit Sándor Martinovich wrote a pamphlet on the Jewish question (*A zsidókérdés*) as volume 8 of the series *Vallás és műveltség* [Religion and education]. The fact that it belonged to a well-established series was one reason for its popularity; its short length and simplistic arguments were another.¹⁵⁶ Three types of Jews existed according to the pater: the usurer “kazar,” the international Jew and the Hungarian Jew, but because of increasing immigration, the last group has become less and less numerous.¹⁵⁷ Summing up all the well-known stereotypes found in *A Cél*, *Magyar Kultúra*, and *Alkotmány*, the author came to the conclusion that a “thousand experiences” of the world war helped to strengthen the essence of the Jewish question: “Jewish ascendancy endangers our national existence,” and the “Hungarian race is defenceless.”¹⁵⁸ He discovered one more recent tendency: Jews made an alliance with the national minorities against the Hungarian hegemony – “Jews, democrats and nationalities in one camp! – this is the latest triple alliance.”¹⁵⁹ Yet, Martinovich did not present any solution to the Jewish problem, leaving that instead to Bangha and Prohászka.

Finally, mention must be made of yet another new feature: the concentration of hitherto rival Catholic forces and the conscious drive for a Catholic-Protestant rapprochement. Bangha tried to join forces with Prohászka, acknowledging the

¹⁵⁴ *A Katolikus Népszövetség tíz éve, 1908-1918*, (Budapest: Kiadja a Katolikus Népszövetség, 1918), 68.

¹⁵⁵ “A Kath. Népszövetség jubiláris közgyűlése,” *Alkotmány*, March 12th, 1918.

¹⁵⁶ *Magyar Országgyűlési Almanach 1910-1915*, ed. Ferenc Vásárhelyi [Almanac of the Hungarian Parliament], (Budapest: Kapható a kiadóhivatalban, 1910), 200.

¹⁵⁷ Sándor Martinovich, *A zsidókérdés* [The Jewish Question], (Pécs: Pius-Kollégium, 1918).

¹⁵⁸ Martinovich, *A zsidókérdés*, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Martinovich, *A zsidókérdés*, 35 (According to *Egyenlőség* the book of Martinovich was distributed freely in the army, which, however, is hardly believable.)

bishop as the only person “capable of rallying around large masses of our Christian middle classes: men, women, soldiers, civilians, everybody.”¹⁶⁰ The tendency of such a cooperation was clear from at least József Károlyi’s notorious speech on Christian concentration. It appeared in the reshuffled editorial board of *A Cél*, where – from 1917 on – the Catholic Prohászka was counterbalanced by the entry of the Calvinist professor Elemér Császár and the Lutheran bishop Sándor Raffay.¹⁶¹ Raffay’s autobiographical notes show him to be a tough anti-Semite, to whom “the Jewish question was not a religious, but a racial issue.”¹⁶² He had studied Minister Stoecker’s “social concepts” in Jena and Leipzig, and came to the conclusion that “one of the most difficult social questions is the Jewish problem [...] Nobody should object against anti-Semitism as a matter of principle. The [Jewish] race is simply disagreeable.”¹⁶³ The solution would be a complete stop of immigration and the expulsion of those who came after 1914 – “the rest could possibly be endured by the Hungarians.”¹⁶⁴

By 1918 Bishop Ottokár Prohászka presented himself as the leading ideologue of anti-Semitism in Hungary.¹⁶⁵ In his earlier study, Jenő Gergely still only conceded the bishop’s “clear turn to the far right” at the beginning of 1918.¹⁶⁶ In my opinion, the turn characterized only the realization of his role, as Prohászka’s strong anti-Semitism throughout his career is beyond any doubt. He launched crude attacks against Jewish acceptance even before 1895, “lining up all the arguments of Christian anti-Judaism.”¹⁶⁷ Later, his articles in *Esztergom* invariably referred to Jews in negative connotations “joining liberalism,

¹⁶⁰ Béla Bangha’s letter to Ottokár Prohászka, December 8th 1918, Püspöki Levéltár Székesfehérvár [Episcopal Archives], Prohászka Ottokár levelezése, 1918. From the tone of the letter it is obvious that the two priests had hardly any contact before this letter.

¹⁶¹ Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus*, 329; Jenő Gergely, *Prohászka Ottokár. A napbaöltözött ember* [O. P. the Man Dressed in Sunshine], (Budapest: Gondolat, 1994), 162.

¹⁶² *Raffay Sándor püspök önéletrajzi feljegyzései* [Autobiographical Notes of Bishop Sándor Raffay], Evangélikus Országos Levéltár [Lutheran National Archives], Budapest, 39.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ He was also in contact with extreme German anti-Semites, and in 1920 the Deutschvölkische Schutz- und Trutzbund published a German translation of his brochure on the Jewish question in Hungary: Ottokár Prohászka, *Die Judenfrage in Ungarn*, (Hamburg: Deutschvölkische Verlagsanstalt, 1920).

¹⁶⁶ Gergely, *A keresztényszocializmus Magyarországon*, 66-76.

¹⁶⁷ Cited by Anikó Prepuk, “Miért éppen recepció – Az izraelita vallás egyenjogúsítása az 1890-es években” [Why just Reception – the Emancipation of Israelite Religion in the 1890s], *Emlékkönyv L. Nagy Zsuzsa 70. születésnapjára* [Festschrift for 70th Birthday], (Debrecen: Multiplex Media, 2000), 275-276.

freemasonry and Jewry, postulating one common resultant.”¹⁶⁸ I do not doubt that Prohászka’s unusual activity in 1918 was due as much to ideological as to practical reasons. He probably did not have to convince himself to revive his anti-Semitism and present it as an all-embracing remedy against those evil forces that endanger “Christian Hungary.” In 1917–1918, he must have sensed extreme peril and wanted to prepare for the coming “Armageddon” – just as some other ideologues did. But he also had to feel what Bangha confirmed in his letter: to be the only Catholic person of real authority, consequently accepting the task or rather the mission to “awaken” Christian society, render the theoretical weapons, and hold his army together for the coming battle.

A Jewish author, Miklós Hajdu, stated already in 1916 that “Hungarian Catholicism has stirred up the inner war against ‘freemasons, radicals, sociologists and other such dangerous enemies’ of the public;” and “Hungarian Catholicism hit back and fabricated a second declaration of war. Or a blood libel if you wish.”¹⁶⁹ Two years later the radical *Világ* was perfectly right in complaining of “The new front of clericalism” “from Sárospatak to Székesfehérvár.” In the first of these two towns, the local “*Sárospataki Református Lapok*” [Calvinist Papers of Sárospatak] spoke for “uniting the adherents of the Christian world view into one camp against the enemies of faith and churches.”¹⁷⁰ Primate János Csernoch was a strong supporter of Christian cooperation, and furthermore seemed to have been on good terms with both Bangha and Prohászka.¹⁷¹ Of course, in this nascent cooperation there was no room for philo-Semitic or even neutral priests

¹⁶⁸ Gizella Tauber, “Ottokár Prohászka és az Esztergom című havilap 1896-1905 között” [O. P. and the periodical “Esztergom,” 1896-1905], *Ottokár Prohászka, Magyarország apostola és tanítója* [O. P. Apostle and Teacher of Hungary], eds. Szabó Ferenc, Mózessy Gergely, (Szeged: Agapé, 2002), 65-84.

¹⁶⁹ Miklós Hajdu, “Világnézetek csatája” [A Clash of World-views], *A magyar zsidó hadi archívum almanchja* [Almanac of the Hungarian Jewish War Archives], eds. Simon Hevesi, Jeno Polnay, Josef Patai, (Budapest: Magyar Zsidó Hádí Archivum Es Az Országos Magyar Izr. Kozmuvelodesi Egyesulet, 1916), 36.

¹⁷⁰ *Világ*, September 26th, 1918.

¹⁷¹ According to Jenő Gergely, Primate János Csernoch was also an adherent of a Catholic-Protestant compromise and a concentration of forces “for the defence of faith, morals and Motherland” (Gergely, *A keresztényszocializmus Magyarországon*, 56.) In the Archives of the Primate in Esztergom, I have found an interesting – private and confidential – letter from Prohászka to Csernoch (August 9th, 1918). In the letter, Prohászka asked for the Primate’s help to avoid the nomination of “a certain Jewish Hahn” in place of the retiring tax-supervisor (Pál Gassner). This, according to Prohászka, would be “highly undesirable for well-known reasons.” (Private Papers, box 20. 7/515.) How interesting it would be to know these well-known reasons!

– like the Calvinist prelate of Debrecen, Dezső Balthazár, who openly protested against Ágoston's book.¹⁷²

Before 1914 the Jewish question had been present in public discourse in Hungary, and hence provided the vocabulary and the arguments for a more radical anti-Semitism that would emerge in the first decades of the twentieth century. Anti-Semitism was one of the pre-dominant problems, one of the important divisions, but not yet “the” problem or “the” main division that came to permeate all pores of the society, as it did by 1918. It was the First World War that proved to be the catalyst, contributing to the extreme intensification of the split between a modern and a pre-modern country, thereby sealing the fate of “liberal Hungary.”

It is interesting to observe how the new charges brought against this apparently “triumphant” Jewry fit into the old stereotypes. They largely avoid front service = they always shrink from physical effort; they have an eminent role in the operations of war-economy = they occupy every position in the Hungarian economy; many of them make money as profiteers and usurers = as merchants they regularly cheat Christians; they play a conspicuous role in spreading a frivolous culture during the war = they uproot traditional (Hungarian, Christian) values. Even the influx of Jewish refugees from Galicia fitted into the old pattern of an allegedly continuous Jewish immigration. Let us add that this new – often racially connoted – anti-Semitism was, of course, far from being a spontaneous outburst of popular feelings. It was well-organized and coordinated, mainly by ecclesiastical circles. A fair number of politicians joined them, sometimes out of conviction, sometimes for tactical reasons. By 1918 the transformation of Hungarian society into hostile, antagonistic camps was largely completed with the stage set for a red and/or white revolution – the consequences of which continue to bedevil our public life ever since.

While these changes took place within a short period of time, the bitter experiences of the middle classes – mainly those of civil servants at this point – were unavoidably built into old structures and explained by old enmities. The final split between a Christian-Hungarian and a Hungarian-Jewish middle class was brought about by the effects of the world war; mentalities and hostilities became ossified during the war years. Civil servants increasingly felt betrayed by the all-embracing state they served, exploited by more powerful groups, deceived in their patriotic loyalty. For most contemporary observers this dual process

¹⁷² *Alkotmány*, August 8th 1918.; Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, 410.

appeared as a ruining of the (old) Christian-Hungarian middle class, its place being filled by the rising (new) Jewish middle class. For an ever larger part of the public, this whole process looked like one part of the middle class being intentionally driven out for the sake and benefit of another part – a process that started long before the war and that accelerated between 1914 and 1918. By 1918 anti-Semitism became a cultural code in Hungary, too;¹⁷³ all important issues came to be seen through this lens as related to the Jewish question. Jewish ascendancy (“*térfoglalás*” = occupation of space) was the new code-word of the period: all stereotypes came to be perceived as parts of an emerging “Jewish conspiracy.” Thus anti-Semitism also turned out to be part of a new, radical and/or racial Hungarian nationalism, making it a kind of new common denominator.

Finally let me point out again that I do not regard this development of the “Jewish question” and of anti-Semitism in Hungary as arising inevitably as a necessary consequence of the First World War. Among the most important factors I attribute the main role to the Christian Churches and chiefly the Catholic Church. Without their engagement, the lining up of heavy-weight prelates like Ottokár Prohászka and Bela Bangha or politicians like Karoly Huszár, it would have been impossible to mobilize Christian-Hungarian society. The Church authorities were, in many ways, continuing the pre-war policies. Yet, as talk about a coming “final showdown” between the two camps became almost commonplace in the last years of the war, Catholic prelates and politicians seemed to grasp the opportunity and take the lead in the crusade for a Christian Hungary. It is quite remarkable how Catholic and Protestant circles as well as Catholic and Independent political camps drew ever closer during the war, on the basis of anti-capitalism, anti-liberalism and anti-Semitism, while the question of national minorities was temporarily pushed into the background. Thus the First World War brought about new splits and divisions in Hungarian society, exacerbating several of the existing antagonisms so that they became sharper than ever before.

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¹⁷³ Shulamit Volkov, “Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23 (1978): 25-46.

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Croatian-Slavonian Jews in the First World War*

by Ljiljana Dobrovšac, Filip Hameršak

Abstract

This paper seeks to present various levels of the Croatian-Slavonian Jews' experience of the First World War. To begin with, although several war memorials are known to have been preserved, the scope of Jewish casualties remains unknown, having been a controversial theme within the former Yugoslav framework. However, recent research has reconstructed the patriotic and social care activities of Jewish societies for the period of 1914–1918; this research additionally charts the life paths of various notable individuals, both Zionist and assimilationist. Furthermore, although various sources attest to an increase in the negative perception of Jews as a result of the war, which in turn contributed to the mass looting of 1918–1919, one can reach no simple conclusions about the character of this changed perception. Similarly, although Zionist representatives publicly vested great hopes in the emancipatory potential of the new Yugoslav state, the Austro-Hungarian Empire had for all intents and purposes shown itself to be not so deficient after all.

Marginalized Participants of the Forgotten Conflict
The War and the Jewish Communities
Notable Individuals
The Perception of Jews
Great Expectations, Great Disappointments

Marginalized Participants of the Forgotten Conflict

Before the twenty-first century, Croatian historiography did not show much interest in researching the history of the Croatian-Slavonian Jews during the First

World War.¹ The reasons for this are manifold – ranging from the scarcity of histories of the smaller Jewish communities to the lack of more profound research into the great conflict. However, there are several recent books that show that the situation has slowly begun to change, and these books touch on Jewish history during the First World War in their chapters. Thus, Ivo Goldstein in a 2004 study describes the situation of the Jews of Zagreb during the war,² as does Alen Budaj, whose 2007 study gives a short overview of the status of Požega's Jews in the same period.³ Similarly, Ljiljana Dobrovšak has recently published a book on the Osijek Jewish community, including its activities during the First World War,⁴ and an outline of the contemporaneous position of Croatian-Slavonian Jews in general.⁵

Situated within the Yugoslav framework for the most part of the twentieth century, mainstream Croatian historiography had been concentrated mostly on the opponents of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the monarchy's resulting downfall. As a result, loyalist political options remained unresearched or one-sidedly presented. Moreover, despite the fact that – willingly or not – the majority of the male populations of Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria, and Bosnia–Herzegovina fought within the Habsburg armed forces, one cannot find

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Jeffrey Grossman, University of Virginia, for the linguistic revision of the article.

¹ Under the terms of 1867 and 1868 compromises, historical Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia were an autonomous entity (despite the plural form of its official title, this was a singular administrative unit) within the Lands of the Hungarian Crown (Transleithania). In October 1918 the South-Slav lands under Habsburg rule proclaimed their independence from Austria-Hungary, joining the Kingdom of Serbia in a new state, initially called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

² Ivo Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918-1941* (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2004), 25–56.

³ Alen Budaj, *Vallis Judaea – Povijest požeške židovske zajednice*, (Zagreb: D-graf, 2007), 139–142.

⁴ Ljiljana Dobrovšak, *Židovi u Osijeku od doseljavanja do kraja Prvog svjetskog rata* (Osijek: Čarobni tim–Židovska općina, 2013).

⁵ Ljiljana Dobrovšak, "Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918)," in *Review of Croatian Studies*, 10/1 (2014): 113–134. For further bibliography on the history of the Croatian Jews see also Lj. Dobrovšak, "Hrvatska, srpska, austrijska i mađarska historiografija o povijesti Židova od 1868. do danas," *Historiografija/povijest u suvremenom društvu*, (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014), 51–70 and Lj. Dobrovšak, "Povijest nacionalnih i vjerskih zajednica u Hrvatskoj od 1868. do 1941. godine," *Hrvati i manjine u Hrvatskoj: moderni identiteti* (Zagreb: Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje, 2014), 25. Authors' note: unless implied otherwise, the terms "Jew" and "Jewish" in this article refer primarily to religious affiliation, following the practice of the official censuses and registries of the period (most of the Croatian-Slavonian Jewish municipalities were Neologist). However, the terms "Jewish identity," "Jewish legacy," "Jewish origin," etc., are here generally used in a wider sense, without prescribing the relative importance of any of the possible constitutive elements, albeit in practice a person's former or ancestral religious affiliation was typically a key factor in their self-definition.

even traditional military-historical treatments of the war, apart from the incomplete, sometimes even fuzzy overviews of 1943–1944 by Slavko Pavičić.⁶ Consequently, although some recent studies, adopting a “history-from-below” approach to battlefield experience and everyday life in the rear, have brought some advance in scholarship, we still lack more thorough studies of various military, social, cultural, legal, and economic aspects of the Great War, which could also give us a clue to both general and special components of Jewish experience.⁷

Undoubtedly, the losses suffered on the battlefield, in POW and internment camps, but also in the hospitals and households, were immense. However, since the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated after the war, those losses were never definitively tallied.⁸ On the other hand, within the new Yugoslav framework, which was based on the state and military legacy of the Kingdom of Serbia, the fate of those who had fought on the side of the Central Powers, including their offensives in 1914 against Serbia and the occupation of Serbia from 1915 to 1918, was – to put it mildly – not a promising subject.

For instance, only beginning in the 1930s does one see the printing of several Croatian language memoirs by former Habsburg officers, which did not contain an outright demonization of Austria-Hungary, while the pro-Habsburg diaries and memoirs tended to remain unpublished until the 2000s; the one exception is the 1941 book by writer, nationalist, and Ustaša politician Mile Budak.⁹ Generally speaking, the most influential literary presentations were that of leftist writer and notable Communist Party member Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), situated in distant Galicia or Bukovina, and therefore – unlike those of neighbouring Serbia or the Italian front – easily prone to a simplistic depiction of the First World War as yet another pure case of Croats serving as *Kanonenfutter* (cannon fodder) sacrificed for “foreign interests.” In that sense,

⁶ Slavko Pavičić, *Hrvatska vojna i ratna poviest i Prvi svjetski rat*, (Zagreb: Hrvatska knjiga, 1943) and S. Pavičić, *Jugozapadno (talijansko) bojište u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, vol. 1, (Zagreb: Zagrebačka priradna tiskara, 1944).

⁷ On this problem, with further bibliography, see Filip Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa: hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat* (Zagreb: Ljevak d. o. o., 2013), 177–192.

⁸ Based on the seminal 1919 book by Wilhelm Winkler, Branimir Bunjac proposes a starting figure of approximately 58 000 dead soldiers from the territory of Croatia and Slavonia, i.e. around 2.2% of the total population. Branimir Bunjac, *Ratne i poratne žrtve sjeverozapadnog Međimurja 1914–1947* (Čakovec: Povijesno društvo Međimurske županije, 2012), 325.

⁹ See Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa: hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat*, 239–254.

the post-1945 socialist Yugoslavia did not differ much from its dynastic predecessor.¹⁰

As it seems, remembrance of the dead was, in practice, limited for almost a century to individual families. Beginning with the First World War, the majority of the fallen on the territory of Croatia and Slavonia, in general, received no memorials, and lists of the dead were not collected adequately.¹¹ The existence of numerous – more or less maintained – cemeteries along the former frontlines is also a fact that has only recently been recognized. The same applies to the losses among the Jewish population as well as to their remembrance.

In the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia the Jews were allowed permanent residence in 1783, gaining legal equality in 1873. According to the 1910 census, the Kingdoms' 21,103 Jews (according to religious affiliation) represented around 0.8% of its 2,621,954 inhabitants.¹² Therefore, applying the estimated 2.2% fatal casualty rate would bring us to a hypothetical total of 464 dead Jewish soldiers from the territory of Croatia and Slavonia. However, to this day, we must depend on highly fragmented data instead of detailed casualty lists. Unlike the situation for Jewish soldiers who had fought in the Serbian Army, there has been neither any systematic research of the individual wartime fate of Croatian–Slavonian Jews¹³ nor the erection for them of a general public memorial.¹⁴

For instance, a memorial erected in 1930 in the central Mirogoj cemetery bears only the names of forty-nine Jewish officers, NCOs, and soldiers – not all of

¹⁰ On Krleža's influence, see F. Hameršak, "Nacrt za pristup kulturnoj povijesti Prvoga svjetskog rata iz hrvatske perspektive," *Dani Hvarškoga kazališta* (Zagreb–Split: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti–Književni krug Split, 2015), 21–49.

¹¹ According to the 1917 Croatian-Slavonian Government decree, a reform of the civil registry system should have been undertaken in order to make possible the reliable collection of evidence of fallen soldiers, first at the level of the parish or municipality and then at the national level, but at the moment only several partial lists have been found.

¹² Dobrovšac, "Povijest nacionalnih i vjerskih zajednica u Hrvatskoj od 1868. do 1941. godine," 34–35, 41.

¹³ As early as 1927 an impressive book was published, which contained biographical data on 150 Jewish soldiers of the Serbian Army (out of 600 mobilised) who had been killed or had died of other causes between 1912 and 1918: *Spomenica poginulih i umrlih srpskih Jevreja u Balkanskom i Svetskom ratu 1912–1918* (Beograd: Odbor za podizanje spomenika palim jevrejskim ratnicima, 1927).

¹⁴ The central memorial to the fallen Jewish soldiers of the Serbian Army was erected in the Belgrade cemetery, also in 1927.

them inhabitants of Croatia and Slavonia – who died and were buried in Zagreb [Fig. 1].



Fig. 1. Detail of the monument to Jewish war victims, Mirogoj cemetery (Zagreb, 1930)

Furthermore, a memorial erected in 1934 in the Koprivnica cemetery mentions eight casualties, while the one erected in 1935 at the Križevci cemetery testifies to six victims from the local Jewish municipality (all three memorials were sponsored by the *chevra kadishah* funeral societies).¹⁵ All in all, combining these

¹⁵ Dobrovšak, “Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918),” 125–127.

epigraphic sources with selectively researched casualty lists and death records, up to this day Ljiljana Dobrovšak has managed only to collect an incomplete total of 97 names of Jewish victims related to Croatian-Slavonian territory and the Međimurje region.

Symptomatically, the 1940 introduction of a *numerus clausus* for the Jewish students at Yugoslav universities reflected the division between the two opposing groups of former 1914–1918 combatants of Jewish affiliation, that is, those fighting on the side of Austria-Hungary, and those on the side of Serbia, since the *numerus clausus* was supposed not to affect the children of First World War veterans who served in the Serbian Army.¹⁶

The War and the Jewish Communities

At the beginning of the war, the majority of Austro-Hungarian Jews were patriotically oriented and shared the national fervor of most of the Monarchy's peoples, even during mobilization.¹⁷ The Jews in Austro-Hungary had been given permission to join the army decades earlier, and all the officer ranks were open to them. In the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, between 300,000 and 500,000 Jewish soldiers were mobilized between 1914 and 1918, 25,000 of whom were officers – a significant statistical disproportion resulting from the higher level of education, on average, among the Jewish soldiers. Around 25 Jews or Jews by origin (some of them had converted to other faiths) had achieved the rank of general during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with Sámuel Hazai (originally Kohn) even becoming the Hungarian minister of defense in 1910 and *Generaloberst* in 1917, the second most important officer after the general chief of staff.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ženi Lebl, *Odjednom drukčija, odjednom druga: sećanja i zaboravi*, (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2008), 17–20.

¹⁷ According to the 1910 census, 932.458 Jews representing 4,5% of the population resided in Transleithania, while 1.313.687 representing 4,6% of the population lived in Cisleithania. The largest groups of Austrian Jews lived in Galicia (871.906) and Bukovina (102.919); Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁸ Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 83; Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 459; and István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918*, (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 172–178.

A special role played by the Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was that of financing the war effort. Their share in the war loans, whether through a corporation or individually, reached 10% of the entire amount. They also played a very important role in the production of war materials. In fact, some individuals made their fortunes during the war and were rewarded by the rulers with aristocratic titles and honours.¹⁹

While a portion of the wealthier Jews were financing the war, others were dying on the battlefields, and those who survived the horrors of war and captivity in Italy, Serbia, or Russia were often wounded, disabled, or gravely ill, and sometimes suicidal. Of course, the civilian population did not fare much better – for instance, the official count of displaced Jews in Cisleithania alone reached a total of 177.745 by June 1917.²⁰

Besides the brief Serbian occupation of Eastern Sarmia in 1914, there were no military operations on the territory of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia. Their people had to participate in the war nonetheless. In the beginning, most of the Jews, like most other citizens of the Monarchy, were shocked by the events in Sarajevo. Jewish municipalities from Croatia and Slavonia played prominent roles in various manifestations related to that destructive event. The two largest Jewish municipalities – those of Zagreb and Osijek – held funereal meetings and organized commemorations for the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sofia on the day following the assassination. Telegrams of condolences were sent to Croatian-Slavonian Ban Ivan Skerlec, and a solemn funereal mass was held in synagogues, during which the heads of various municipalities gave moving speeches of remembrance for the late Crown Prince. Besides the Jews of the municipalities, the district leaders as well as prominent individuals from the Zagreb and Osijek communities were present at the memorial services. Lights for the salvation of Franz and Sofia's souls were kindled in synagogues over the next thirty days in keeping with the Jewish custom of *shloshim* for mourning the dead.²¹

After the outbreak of the war, young Jewish men were, like all others, mobilised into field units, mainly the Common Army 36th Infantry Division and the Hungarian-Croatian 42nd Honvéd (Home Guard) Infantry Division. Both

¹⁹ Patai, *The Jews of Hungary*, 460.

²⁰ "Broj židovskih evakuiraca," *Židov*, October 15th, 1917.

²¹ Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918-1941*, 25; Dobrovšak, "Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914-1918)," 116.

divisions – their regiments and accompanying units – were highly active in the 1914 Serbian campaign, having been transferred to the Eastern (Russian) Front in early 1915. After Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary, some units of the 36th Division were dispatched to that front; these were followed by the rest of the division and by the core of the 42nd Division, but only in 1918, after the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.²²

Those who died in the first days were buried with the highest honours at local cemeteries, and mourning services were held for them in synagogues. Later, however, the fallen were buried near their place of death so that even their families did not know the locations of their gravesites. Numerous Jews from Croatia and Slavonia distinguished themselves during military operations and were decorated multiple times for their outstanding bravery and devotion to the homeland.

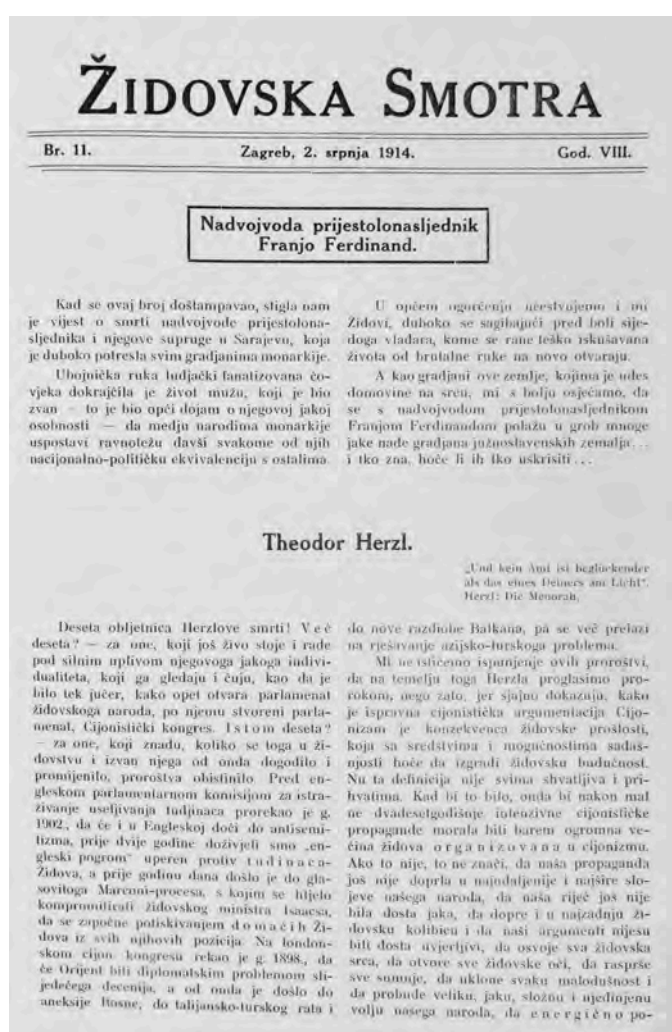
As in the rest of the Monarchy, the wealthier Croatian-Slavonian Jews were inclined to financially support the war effort beginning in November 1914, when the first war bonds (*Kriegsanleihe*) were created and fixed at a 6% interest rate.²³ The more affluent gave large sums for the bonds, which by 1918 numbered eight cycles in total and which were a major source of financing for the war. For example, Šandor Alexander (1866–1929), an industrialist from Zagreb offered a million Austrian gold crowns for war bonds.

On the other hand, socio-political life in the Jewish municipalities came to an almost complete halt at the outset of the war, a situation that lasted until 1917. The publishing of the Zagreb Zionist magazine *Židovska smotra* [Jewish Review] stopped, with the last issue dated August 14th 1914 [Fig. 2]. Its former

²² Apart from sporadic mentionings in standard general overviews and Pavičić's work of 1943–1944, Croatian-Slavonian units of the Austro-Hungarian army were, practically speaking, not given special attention. Notable recent exceptions are Nikola Tominac's research on the Rijeka/Otočac 79th Infantry Regiment and the Bjelovar State Archives publications on Varaždin/Bjelovar 16th Infantry Regiment; see also Dinko Čutura and Lovro Galić, "Veliki rat: pregled ratnih operacija," *Hrvatska revija*, 3/4(2004): 13–60, and Filip Novosel, "Hrvatsko-slavonske postrojbe u sastavu Austrougarske vojske za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata," in *Scrinia Slavonica*, 10/10 (2010): 267–289.

²³ Unless stated otherwise, the following paragraphs in this section are based on Dobrovšac, "Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918)," 116–125. That article also includes references to the Jewish press and the earlier works of Ivo Goldstein, Alen Budaj, Mira Kolar, Vijoleta Herman-Kaurić, Ivan Mirnik, Lucija Benyovsky, Aleksandra Muraj, Ivan Balta, and others.

editor was a lawyer and poet named Aleksandar Licht (1884–1948),²⁴ who was soon mobilized. Numerous Jewish sports, Zionist, and cultural societies ceased their activities. These included, in Zagreb, the Israelite Croatian Literary Society, the Jewish Academic Support Society and the Jewish Academic Cultural Club “Judeja.”²⁵ The Zionist society “Zion” ceased to be active in Vinkovci, as did the Jewish Zionist Civil Society in Bjelovar, the Zionist Society “Jehuda Halevi” in Brod na Savi (today, Slavonski Brod), the Jewish Youth of Karlovac, the Zionist society *B’ne Jisroel* in Križevci, and the Zionist society “Theodor Herzl” in Osijek, etc.



²⁴ Paulina Radonić Vranjković, “Licht, Aleksandar,” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 8, (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013), 668–669.

²⁵ As far as “Judeja” was concerned, 16 out of 18 members were sent to the front, of which one was considered missing, three were captured, and four decorated.

Fig. 2: “Židovska Smotra”, August 14th, 1914.
Obituary for Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria.

This was a consequence of the Ban's Decision from 27 July 1914, which completely halted the activities of all societies save for the Red Cross. However, the Ban could, in agreement with the military command and with the recommendation of the county and city authorities, allow individual societies to continue their activities. Soon, on September 22nd 1914, the Ban re-formulated this decision and allowed government commissioners independently to give societies that dealt with child support and nutrition or offered support in the case of illness and/or death permission to continue their activities.

Accordingly, Zionist and culturally-oriented Jewish societies had to freeze their activities, while women's and charitable societies were permitted to work, but still had to adapt to the new circumstances. The members of those Jewish societies that had ceased to operate found other ways to participate in humanitarian work, mostly through the charitable societies, so that Jewish women were engaged in various volunteer associations or Red Cross subsidiaries where they collected food, clothing, various supplies, funds for wartime relief, and even sent packages to the front. The wives of distinguished Jews often worked as nurses or caregivers in hospitals, where they gave solace to the wounded and dying.

The leaders of Jewish municipalities, who had not been mobilized for the war, played a prominent role in these efforts as did their wives and daughters. As noted above, humanitarian activists continued their work, with the presidents of Jewish municipalities trying in various ways to assist the wounded as well as those who had lost a family member or were left suddenly impoverished. To that end, the Committee for Assisting Unemployed and Disabled Commerce, Industry, and Accounting Office Workers, later renamed *Prehrana* [Nutrition], was established in Zagreb. The most prominent role in the activities of this committee was taken by the aforementioned Šandor Alexander, a distinguished member of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb, who on 13 August 1918 received a hereditary title of Hungarian nobility from King Charles IV.

During the First World War, a Soldiers' Home was also opened in Zagreb, as was a shelter for soldiers returning from the front and refugees, while free hot meals were also handed out. The chambers of the Zagrebian Jewish municipality's

Nursing Home were for the most part converted into a military hospital. The Care Centre for the Poor of the Jewish Municipality was active in Zagreb from the beginning of the war, where one department was set about collecting gifts and donations for wartime relief. Monetary aid was offered by Jews from the entire territory of Croatia and Slavonia, not just Zagreb.

Jewish owned companies also participated in the collecting of relief funds and offered a considerable sum of aid money. The Centre used the funds collected to provide weekly food supplies to the families of mobilized soldiers. It also covered the expenses of treating wounded soldiers, acquiring bandages, medicines, and of lighting and heating the hospitals. In addition, the Centre secured the supplying of Jewish soldiers with ritually prepared food on holidays. The Jewish Municipality of Zagreb played an especially prominent role in providing aid to its members. Its leaders arranged for all mobilized Zagrebian Jews, as well as those Jews from other municipalities who were stationed in Zagreb, to be present at the celebration of all major Jewish holidays. In addition, the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb organized a Foundation for the Care of Jewish War Orphans. Founded in 1917, it was named after King Charles. As many as 18 foundations were registered with the Zagreb municipality in late 1916, most of them founded by its prominent members.

From the very beginning of the war, the president of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb, the distinguished attorney Robert Siebenschein (1864–1938), participated in the Central Committee for the Protection of Families of Mobilized Soldiers from the Territory of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia Who Died in the War. The Committee was established in 1914, with the aim of helping to provide for the families of mobilized soldiers who were left without a source of income after the death of their breadwinners. In order to coordinate the activities of the foundations and various initiatives, the Zagreb Jewish municipality organized a Board of Trustees for the Poor and a War Relief Station. The school of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb started producing sandbags in 1915 to be sent to the front. The municipality also collected funds for helping the Jews of Galicia and Bukovina, who were left impoverished because of military operations there. The Jewish municipalities in Osijek were in a similar position, since their members participated in the activities of the Red Cross, the Society for Supporting the War Disabled of Osijek and Virovitica, and the like.

Some of the Jewish women's societies ceased their activities, but others continued, having adapted themselves to wartime conditions. For example, the

Israelite Women's Charitable Society of Zagreb "Jelena Pristerova" continued working as a society for the support of the "bashful poor" in general, and the "poor widows and orphans of Israelite faith" residing in Croatia in particular. The Society also supported the "Israelite Youth" (which intended to devote itself to crafts), covered dowries for poor fiancées, founded and maintained humanitarian institutions, hospitals, and alms-houses. During the war, it founded a central depot for various types of goods that were then sent to Jewish soldiers on the front and in hospitals, while special attention was given to Jewish refugee families throughout the Monarchy. The Society took part in various actions together with other Zagrebian societies, collecting monetary contributions and various materials (bandages, sheets, cigarettes, and food) for all wounded soldiers regardless of religious affiliation.

The Israeli Ferial Colony continued its activities, the goal of the society being to "heal and mitigate the wounds caused by the war" and to provide child care by arranging for children to stay at the Adriatic coast or in spas. Colony members also organized settlements for underfed children. By 1918, the Israeli Colony had founded several subsidiaries in Bjelovar and Koprivnica.

We know little of the activities of the Israelite Women's Charitable Society of Vinkovci, except that it worked together with the First Women's Charitable Society of Vinkovci (renamed the Croatian Women's Society in 1917) to organize parties, and that members of both societies helped with the feeding of poor schoolchildren. The Israelite Women's Charitable Society of Sisak organized "entertainment evenings" to help the widows and orphans of soldiers who died in the war. Members of the Israelite Women's Charitable Society of Osijek took part in all charitable actions intended to help the Jews of Osijek, and also the other inhabitants of that city.

The *chevra kadishah* societies played an especially prominent role in charitable activities. Their goals included the visiting and care of the sick, conducting religious ceremonies for dying or dead Jews, funerals, and the administration and maintenance of Jewish cemeteries. Thus, the *chevra kadishah* of Zagreb helped organize care for the wounded in the nursing home of the Jewish Municipality and paid for a doctor to treat every poor Jew. In addition, already by summer 1915, it had organized for separate burial plots to be set aside in the Mirogoj Cemetery for the Jews who had died in the war.

Besides participating in the activities of charitable societies of their own faith, Jewish citizens also worked with other non-religious voluntary associations and committees, sometimes even serving as the presidents of such organizations.

They were active in the Child Protection League, later called the League for the Protection of the Families of Mobilized Soldiers, the aforementioned Central Committee for the Protection of the Families of Mobilized Soldiers from the Territory of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia who Died in the War, and the Red Cross.

In Osijek, which was initially relatively near the front line, Jewish women took part in the activities of the Red Cross and the Society for Assisting the War-Disabled. The situation was similar in Koprivnica where Jews participated in the activities of the local societies, the Red Cross, and the societies of their own faith (such as the Israeli Women's Society), while helping the locals provide for the children from Istria and Dalmatia.

Whereas social activities had for the most part died down, religious ceremonies and holidays continued to be observed, especially Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, and Yom Kippur. As a consequence of the war, there was an influx of refugees into the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb from Bosnia, Rijeka, Trieste, and other areas affected by the war. Along with the refugees, Jewish POWs from the Russian Army attended sermons, under the watchful eye of two sergeants. The Jews of Zagreb at first talked to the POWs, and in later years accepted them as their own. In 1916 and 1917 they even took them for dinner at a restaurant on Zagreb's main square.

Hand in hand with the general process of liberalisation in 1917 and 1918 the political, social, and cultural life in the Jewish municipalities experienced a gradual rekindling. In place of the former *Židovska smotra* magazine, a new Jewish organ called *Židov: Hajehudi, glasilo za pitanja židovstva* [The Jew: Hayehudi, An Organ on Jewish Issues; see Fig. 3] began publication on September 16th, 1917 (the date of the Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah*), while a number of Jewish organizations became active again (the Jewish Youth literary meetings, the Jewish Youth of Osijek, the Jewish Academic Support Society, as well as various local Zionist organizations). Elections were organized in the Croatian-Slavonian Jewish municipalities, and in early 1918 the municipalities slowly started returning to their usual activities.



Fig. 3: Židov: Hajehudi, glasilo za pitanja židovstva

Notable Individuals

The previous section dealt primarily with activities of various Jewish organizations. In order to represent in all its complexity the Jewish legacy in Croatia and Slavonia as a part of Austria-Hungary, an additional look on the individual level is also needed. As opposed to the aforementioned activists, the common denominator of the following people is that they participated in some sort of activity related to the war effort. Some of them had become irreligious, converted to Catholicism, or otherwise assimilated, but they all shared at least an element of Jewish identity.

To start with, several Croatian-Slavonian politicians of Jewish origin exerted a notable influence on wartime events in the region. For instance, Osijek-born lawyer Josip alias Josef Frank (1844–1911) was a founder of the Pure Party of Rights whose adherents became known as *frankovci* [the Frankists]. The uneasy combination of his pro-Habsburg and nationalist Croatian views was also present during the 1914–1918 period when Josip's sons Vladimir (1873–1916) and, especially, Ivo (1877–1939) continued to be active in the Frankist Party of Rights. Following the fall of Austria-Hungary, Ivo, a staunch opponent of the new Yugoslav state, presided over the Committee of Croatian Emigrants in Vienna, Budapest, and Graz.²⁶

At the other end of the political spectrum stood Hinko Hinković alias Heinrich Mozer or Mozes (1854–1929), a Vinica-born lawyer whose manifold activities are too numerous to describe in brief. After being persecuted as a defence attorney in the 1909 Zagreb High Treason Trial, he was elected as an adherent of the Serb-Croatian Coalition to the Croatian-Slavonian as well as the Hungarian-Croatian Diet. Leaving Austria-Hungary in 1914, he became a vice-president of the Yugoslav Committee, thus taking part in the creation of the new Yugoslav state, an experience he would describe in his 1927 memoirs.²⁷

Viktor Alexander (1865–1934) was another member of the influential Alexander family. Born in Zagreb, his career was strictly connected to the Croatian-Slavonian judiciary. During the war he was the chief public prosecutor of the Kingdoms. In late 1917 or early 1918 he addressed an elaborate communication to King Charles concerning the high treason accusations by the *Military General Government for Serbia directed against several hundred residents of Croatia and Slavonia, which he judged to be false*.²⁸

His half-brother, Artur Oskar Alexander (1876–1953), a renowned painter and art-collector, served as an official war painter of the Habsburg Army, producing at least a hundred pictures.²⁹

²⁶ See Stjepan Matković, *Čista stranka prava 1895-1903* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest-Dom i svijet, 2001); Stjepan Matković, *Izabrani portreti pravaša*, (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2011), and Stjepan Matković, Marko Trogrlić, *Iz korespondencije Josipa Franka s Bečom: 1907–1910* (Zagreb–Split: Hrvatski institut za povijest–Odsjek za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu, 2014).

²⁷ Mladen Švab, "Hinković, Hinko," *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 5 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2002), 575–577.

²⁸ Ivan Mirnik, "Referat dr. Viktora Alexandera caru Karlu," *1918 u hrvatskoj povijesti* ed. Željko Holjevac, (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2012), 395–417.

²⁹ I. Mirnik, "Obitelj Alexander ili kratka kronika izbrisanog vremena," in *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 28/28 (1995): 117–121.

Even greater was the reputation of Alexander Roda Roda (born Sandór Friedrich Rosenfeld, 1872–1945), a writer and war correspondent for the influential Viennese newspaper *Die Neue Freie Presse*. Moving to Slavonia in his early infancy, he served from 1894 to 1901 as an artillery officer in Osijek. Although he presumably left no writings in Croatian, themes connected with Osijek and Slavonia occur rather frequently in his literary work, and his scandals were well remembered among the population.³⁰

Born in the Slavonian town of Našice, Mavro Špicer or Moritz Spitzer (1862–1936) had for decades prior to 1918 been an administrative Honvéd officer in Zagreb and Budapest. A former Viennese student of classical and Slavic languages, he retained a lifelong interest in Croatian, German, and Hungarian literature, being also a lexicographer, translator, and anthologist, as well as an Esperanto pioneer, associate of various Vienna, Budapest, Prague, München, Leipzig, and Berlin periodicals. He was a contributor, presumably the key one, to the official Hungarian-Croatian (1900) and Croatian-Hungarian (1903) military dictionaries, and probably also a participant in other Honvéd translating activities, since, under the terms of the 1868 Compromise, Croatian was the official language of all the Croatian-Slavonian Honvéd units.³¹ From 1906 to 1911 he gave a series of public lectures (to be published as pamphlets in German) for the Zagreb *Militärwissenschaftlicher Verein*, espousing a mixture of social Darwinist attitudes on art, warfare, and upbringing.³²

Even if one knows little about how he was attached to Jewish life, Leo, alias Lavoslav, Pfeffer (1877–1952) should also be mentioned, for he had been the judge trusted with leading the 1914 investigation into the Sarajevo Assassination.³³ Apart from serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1901 to 1918, Pfeffer was educated in Zagreb and Karlovac, living there for most of the time. It

³⁰ The Roda bird (stork) is a common sight in Slavonia; see Vlado Obad, “Eine eigenartige Gegenseitigkeit: Roda Roda und Slawonien,” in *Zagreber Germanistische Beiträge*, 4/4 (1996): 97–132.

³¹ Velimir Piškorec, “Iz života i djela Mavra Špicera (1862-1936),” in *Našički zbornik*, 8/8 (2007): 145–210. Contrary to given information, Špicer was buried in the Catholic section of Zagreb Mirogoj cemetery.

³² Kristian Novak, “Muze pod oružjem: estetizacija rata u govorima Mavre Špicera,” in *Fluminensia*, 2/23 (2011): 85–97.

³³ See Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 381–386.

was also in Zagreb that he published a controversial book on the investigation,³⁴ contributing to the subject in several periodicals. In his book, Pfeffer declares himself to be a Croat and a Catholic,³⁵ but several authors also refer to him as a convert, albeit without substantiation. Most notably in the 2014 Austrian-German movie *Sarajevo* (directed by Andreas Prochaska), the military authorities put pressure on his character, who plays a decisive role in the investigation, to blame the official Serbia, “reminding” him in the process of his Jewish background.

Somewhat more humble was the social standing of Lavoslav, alias Leo, Kraus (1897–1984), author of a lesser-known memoir published in 1973.³⁶ Although written more than a half century after the First World War by a retired physician of the Yugoslav People’s Army who had joined Tito’s partisans in 1943, the book nonetheless represents a valuable perspective on the events of 1914–1918. Born in Osijek to a working class father, Kraus was drafted soon after his high school graduation. Spending the second part of 1915 as a reserve officer trainee in Ogulin and Rijeka, he was transferred in spring of 1916 to the Eastern Front, serving there in the ranks of the Common Army 78th Infantry Regiment almost continually until early 1918. Following a student’s leave of several months in Budapest, he spent the final weeks of the war on the Italian river Piave.

Writing his recollections in Croatian, Kraus was somewhat cryptic about his Jewish identity as well as his position toward the Habsburg Monarchy. For instance, although he declared himself to have been a Zionist until 1917,³⁷ Croats and Serbs (of Yugoslav orientation) tend to predominate among his pre-war friends and acquaintances, and he was proud to mention his participation in the 1912 general strike of high school students, as well as in the boycott of German songs and demonstrative singing of anti-Hungarian Croatian songs in Rijeka in 1915.³⁸

Surely, he was unhappy to be drafted and had problems accepting the crude ways of the Ogulin school, but he soon enough began to view the training as a

³⁴ Leo Pfeffer, *Istraga u Sarajevskom atentatu*, (Zagreb: Nova Evropa, 1938; two editions), annotations by Milan Ćurčin; see “Pfeffer, Leon,” *Karlovački leksikon* (Zagreb: Naklada Leksikon–Školska knjiga, 2008), 455.

³⁵ According to the birth register, Pfeffer was born in the Croatian coastal town of Novi, today Novi Vinodolski, and baptized in early infancy – for this information we are indebted to Jadran Jeić of the National and University Library, Zagreb.

³⁶ Lavoslav Kraus, *Susreti i sudbine: sjećanja iz jednog aktivnog života*, (Osijek: Glas Slavonije, 1973).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

challenge to be taken.³⁹ In fact, Kraus argues economically in his memoirs about the ethical basis of official war aims and the overall chances of military success. Curiously enough, he was inclined to note that as of late 1917 he stopped believing in the victory of the Central Powers, a victory he in any event did not want to see.⁴⁰ Was this a victory he did not want to happen in 1973, in 1917, or already in 1914? – this is a question we can ask to no avail. As he recalls, having become an atheist, it was the armistice of 1917 and the fraternization with Russian officers that had made him into a kind of pacifist Bolshevik who would later become an active member of the illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Perhaps all of that constituted an evolution too radical to be openly confessed? At the same time, all of the battlefield exploits that had earned him the highly esteemed Golden Bravery Medal and the promotion to lieutenant are depicted as irrationally motivated, a result of the *fight or flight* heat of the moment.⁴¹

All in all, as the only known example of a published First World War battlefield memoir published by a Croatian-Slavonian Jew, Kraus's book should be approached with caution, in order not to make general conclusions before other relevant ego-documents are interpreted. For instance, it could be compared with an unpublished 115-page German language manuscript diary by a technician named Oskar Schwarz or Švarc (1882–1962), born in the Slavonian village of Vrpolje and drafted into the Osijek-based Common Army 38th Field Canon Regiment. Albeit without enthusiasm, Schwarz tried to adapt and to fulfil his duties. A weary veteran of the Eastern and Italian front, promoted to the rank of lieutenant, he had by mid-1918 finally had enough, and was transferred to the rear because of a simulated illness. Interested in the fate and ways of Galician Jews, he photographed their cemeteries, and also recorded some conversations that led him to conclude that he was in fact a “half goy.”⁴²

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 69–71.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴¹ Kraus was decorated by the Corps commander General Maksimilijan Čičerić who offered not only to have him promoted to an active officer status but also to provide a letter of recommendation for the Vienna *Kriegsschule*. Some of his apparently well-meaning colleagues also advised him to convert to Catholicism if he decided to pursue a military career; *ibid.*, 96–97.

⁴² Schwarz's diary is in the private possession of his Zagreb relatives whom we would like to thank deeply for the exclusive information of its existence and overall content. Steps are being taken that will hopefully result in its publication in the near future.

The Perception of Jews

As the war years went by, the general level of dissatisfaction grew steadily among both the Croatian-Slavonian political elite and the general population. On the one hand, despite numerous battlefield casualties, none of the desired political reforms – for instance, those which would really unite Croatian lands or democratize voting rights – were introduced, at least not until it was too late. On the other hand, everyday life in the rear became increasingly demanding – there was less and less food, and speculative tendencies were not adequately dealt with. The population grew gradually poorer and was threatened with hunger. As a result, existing negative stereotypes were boosted, and Jews were subjected to various levels of suspicion or sometimes even maltreatment.

For a part of the non-Jewish public, Croatian-Slavonian Jews were considered to be hostile foreigners, namely Austrian Germans or Hungarians, because a part of the Jewish population still spoke German or Hungarian. For instance, even in the pre-war years the aforementioned Josip Frank was publically denigrated for his Jewish origins. Accordingly, his party was accused of being corrupted by particular Jewish interests and therefore not genuinely nationalist.⁴³ Moreover, it seems that even within the opposing émigré circle of the Yugoslav Committee the vice-president was sometimes referred to as “that Jew Hinković.”⁴⁴

Furthermore, already in 1914 the Jews in general began to be seen as war profiteers and exploiters, enriching themselves at the expense of the rest of the population, and becoming dominant in certain branches of the economy. Apart from the usual charge of usury, Jews were accused in public of exploiting their neighbors and the unfit soldiers, having them perform various forms of work. It was also believed that many Jews had acquired prominent positions in the army through favoritism, and that a large number of them had, through bribery or their education, kept themselves safe far behind the front lines.⁴⁵

⁴³ See Matković, *Čista stranka prava 1895-1903*, 23, 31, 296, 313 and, for instance, Zvonimir Kostelski (Krga Galoper), *Jozua I. car horvacki ili Tko će stvoriti veliku Horvacku*, (Zagreb: Tisak S. Marjanovića, 1907) or “Zašto Židovi trgovci pomažu Jozefa Franka?,” *Hrvatski narod*, May 7th, 1908.

⁴⁴ Filip Hameršak, “Josip Jedlowski: životopis (s bilješkama za transnacionalnu povijest jedne građanske obitelji),” in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1/37 (2005): III.

⁴⁵ Dobrovšak, “Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918),” 125–129.

War diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies also testify to the existence of various levels of anti-Jewish sentiment, at least among the literate Christians of both the Catholic and the Orthodox denomination. Be it mild or severe, laconic or elaborate, around ten out of forty published book-length texts of (in a wider sense) Croatian low-ranking officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, direct participants in the First World War, contain some sort of pejorative comment. Notably, on several occasions the actual face-to-face interaction was much more humane.

In that sense, the most radical example is given by the aforementioned war memoirs of lawyer, writer, and politician Mile Budak (1889–1945). Probably written in 1917, in Italian captivity, they were first published only in 1941, after the Independent State of Croatia had been founded. First, according to Budak, not the true-born Hungarians but the Hungarian Jews, who have allegedly taken over the public affairs in Transleithania, are to be held responsible for Hungarian chauvinism, resulting in the subordinated position that Croatia-Slavonia found itself in.⁴⁶ Second, apart from Greater Serbian schemes, the main cause of the war should be ascribed to profit-driven capitalism – and, according to the author, the Jews, capable of inciting international quarrels as they seem fit, stood behind 80 percent of the capital.⁴⁷ However, Budak also declares himself not to be a principled anti-Semite, stressing that ordinary, poor Jewish people were getting killed as well.⁴⁸ Also, recalling a debate on whether the Jews really do systematically evade the frontline, he neutrally transmitted various views, including those on their troubled national identity.⁴⁹

Although in more casual manner, university professor Antun Vrgoč (1881–1949) expressed a similar mixed set of attitudes in his 1937 war memoirs, probably written several years earlier. Maintaining that pre-1918 Hungarian Jews had superficially embraced radical nationalism as a means of social climbing,⁵⁰ and that twentieth-century wars were caused by materialist ethics and the greedy “hooked nose” (i.e. the Jewish capitalists),⁵¹ Vrgoč also stressed the dominant

⁴⁶ Mile Budak, *Ratno roblje: albanski križni put zarobljenih časnika*, vol. 1, (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1942), 54–57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 172–173.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 172 and *ibid.*, vol. 2, 126–127.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 171–172.

⁵⁰ Antun Vrgoč, *Moje uspomene na Svjetski rat (godina 1914–1920)*, vol. 3, (Zagreb: tiskara Dragutina Spullera, 1937), 429.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 546.

Jewish character of Soviet communism.⁵² His personal experience included critical remarks on an allegedly sadistic Habsburg reserve officer from a wealthy Jewish background, a quarrel over high prices with a Jewish dealer in spirits, but also a sympathetic acquaintance with an old, solitary Galician Jew whom he had talked into taking fatherly care for two displaced Jewish girls.⁵³ Finally, seeing the anti-Jewish pogroms in the 1914 Russian-occupied Lemberg he was simply horrified, not trying to ascribe it to any putative guilt.⁵⁴

The supposed nationalism of the Hungarian Jews is also offered as an explanation for a 1917 flag incident on the Isonzo front, as presented by the former military chaplain Ante Messner-Sporšić (1876–1956) in his 1934 memoirs.⁵⁵

That image cannot be found in the 1930 book by Grgo Turkalj (1884–1953), a former NCO whose elementary school education level made him of all authors probably the closest to the oral culture-dominated world of common soldiers. Transmitting sentences spoken by his illiterate brother Mato, Grgo's memoirs include depictions of an allegedly incompetent Jewish physician (mocked also because of his weak knowledge of Croatian) and general statements on the warmongering, mostly Jewish, frontline service-evading capitalists.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the author views the entry of the USA into the war as primarily motivated by protection of its financial, again mostly Jewish interests.⁵⁷

In his 1939 memoirs even the open-minded Pero Blašković (1883–1945), a highly decorated former Habsburg active officer, gives a somewhat caricatured portrait of a Bosnian Jewish NCO named Loewy,⁵⁸ also not failing to mention that during his days in a French POW camp the apathetic senior active officers allowed the junior reserve officers “of a large part of the Israelitic faith” to take over the leadership, resulting in the demise of discipline (except for the

⁵² *Ibid.*, 486.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 52–53, 73–74, 105.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 178–179.

⁵⁵ Ante Messner-Sporšić, *1915–1918: odlomci iz ratnih uspomena* (Zagreb: Tipografija d. d., 1934), III. Interestingly, the alleged chauvinism of Hungarian Jews was also criticized by at least one contributor to the aforementioned Zagreb Zionist magazine. See Nikola T., “Nekoliko riječi k jugoslavenskom problemu,” *Židov*, August 16th, 1918.

⁵⁶ Grgo Turkalj, *1609 dana na fronti*, (Winnipeg: Knjižara “Kanadskog glasa,” 1930), 24, 92.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵⁸ Pero Blašković, *Sa Bošnjacima u Svjetskom ratu* (Beograd: Globus, 1939), 227–229.

Blašković's Bosnian regiment, where – it follows – even the Jews retained high spirits).⁵⁹

Minor critical remarks can also be found in the 1940 memoirs of Petar Grgec (1890–1960), a renowned Catholic humanistic intellectual. Apart from being highly irritated by the fact that Alice Schalek, described here as a “war-correspondent of the Jewish *Neue Freie Presse*,” visited the Isonzo front, he reports that his colleague, having been assigned a favorable duty in the rear, had been squeezed out by a Jew,⁶⁰ and that the renowned lieutenant colonel Stanko Turudija has picked up a selection of German subalterns who despise “the Semitic calculating spirit.”⁶¹

Additionally, in the opinion expressed in 1923 by Ante Kovač (1897–1972), a Croat who joined the Serbian (later nominally Yugoslav) volunteer division consisting almost entirely of former Austrian-Hungarian POWs in Russia, the unrest of 1916–1917 among the volunteers was caused not by their inequality, but by Austrophilia, Frankism and, above all, “hellish Jewish agitation” in the city of Odessa.⁶² A similar line of thought is also present in the 1937 memoirs by another former volunteer, a Slavonian ethnic Serb named Jovan Korda (1894–1967). According to Korda, Serbs and Croats quarreled because of foreign influences, so the German, Hungarian, Jewish, and other elements should be cleansed from the Serbo-Croatian “national substance.”⁶³

A view that mirrored that of Mile Budak on the chauvinism of Hungarian Jews was also expressed in the 1927 memoirs of another ethnic Serb, Živko Prodanović (born in 1884). A physician from what is today Northern Vojvodina, mobilized into a Karlovac-seated regiment, Prodanović claimed that around the time war broke out “Croatized Jews, Germans, and Hungarians were bossing around the barracks, preparing a hanging noose for everyone not up to their taste.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 455.

⁶⁰ Petar Grgec, *U paklenom trokutu* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko književno društvo sv. Jeronima, 1940), 24, 124.

⁶¹ Petar Grgec, *Krvava služba*, (Zagreb: Hrvatsko književno društvo sv. Jeronima, 1940), 109–110.

⁶² Ante Kovač, *Impresije iz jedne epohe* (Zagreb: Hrvatski štamparski zavod, 1923), 22–23.

⁶³ Jovan Korda, *Odesa, Arhangelsk, Solun* (Osijek: Štamparski zavod Krbavac i Pavlović, 1937), 59.

⁶⁴ Živko Prodanović, *Iz ratne torbice* (Novi Sad: Zastava, 1927), 4.

However, on a more personal basis, when meeting one Lieutenant Pollak, Prodanović described him as “a Jew, but a good and pleasant man.”⁶⁵

Similar conceptions can also be found in the literary fiction of the period. As early as 1915, a comedy by renowned Croatian author Milan Begović (1876–1948) titled *Easy Service* was staged at the Zagreb National Theatre. Its plot revolved around a young Jewish conscript trying to evade the frontline service with all the help he could get from his family of military suppliers. While the Catholic newspapers praised the play for satirizing the phoney patriotism of a Jewish business family and liberal ones criticized it for the most part only on artistic grounds, the Frankist newspapers branded it as an unjustified anti-Semitic attack on the self-sacrificing Croats of the faith of Moses, conceding only that perhaps some contracts made by Hungarian Jews deserved to be questioned. Subsequently, the play was banned after two performances.⁶⁶ Interestingly, an analogous but minor Jewish character would later find his place in the 1930s novel *Giga Barićeva and the Seven Suitors* by the same author.

On the other hand, the notion of a warmongering “shallow Jewish daily press,” as opposed to the solidarity of common soldiers, and probably alluding to the aforementioned *Neue Freie Presse*, can also be found in 1920s and 1930s editions of Krleža’s *Royal Hungarian Home Guard Novella*, a part of the *Croatian God Mars* cycle.⁶⁷

Finally, in an autobiographical satirical novel about the First World War, written and partially published in the 1930s by Bosnian Croat writer Ante Neimarević (1891–1965), several characters also discuss the thesis of Jewish capitalists guilty for their wartime activities, with the skeptical one seeming to take the upper hand in the end.⁶⁸

During the war, disfavor towards the Jews was shown even in the Croatian-Slavonian Diet (Sabor), especially when it enacted the Law on Usury (27 April 1916). The law contained sanctions against all the usurers, mentioning no particular ethnicity or creed, but only the Jews were singled out during the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁶ Mislav Gabelica, “Dramski repertoar Kraljevskog zemaljskog hrvatskog kazališta tijekom Prvoga svjetskog rata” in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 47/1 (2015): 103–138.

⁶⁷ Miroslav Krleža, “Magyar király Honvéd novella,” *Hrvatski bog Mars* (Zagreb: Minerva, 1934), 99. Spoken by the omniscient narrator, the relevant words were removed from the post-1945 editions.

⁶⁸ Ante Neimarević, *1914–1918* (Zagreb: Štamparski zavod “Ognjen Prica,” 1976), 339–340.

preliminary discussions, prompting the editors of *Židov* to caustically point out that the real target was not the usurers but the Jews. Another argument for such a worried conclusion was the alleged fact that within the economies of the Central Powers, nationalization or similar regulatory steps were taken primarily in those industrial branches in which Jews tended to be very prominent.⁶⁹

Undoubtedly, certain members of the Diet, such as Ivan Kovačević (1873–1953), publically expressed their displeasure with the Jews. It is interesting to note that none of the other members reacted either positively or negatively to Kovačević's particular statement, given in late 1917.⁷⁰

Another member of the Diet, Stjepan Radić (1871–1928), who would later become a renowned Croatian national leader, also expressed a negative opinion of Jews during his wartime public appearances. He did not consider himself to be an anti-Semite but, in his own words, opposed the idea that Jews should be able to take prominent positions in Croatian-Slavonian society, viewed them as usurers and speculators, and excluded them from his Croatian Peasants' Party.⁷¹ Until mid-1918, anti-Semitism was usually expressed in writing or orally, but the increasing poverty and generally desperate situation in the country near the end of the war resulted in the escalation of anti-Semitic outbursts, which sometimes resulted in physical attacks on Jews.⁷²

For example, in late 1917 in the town of Ludbreg the chief fireman shouted "Let the Jewish houses burn!" to one of his men, after a fire had spread to a neighboring Jewish house. In August 1918, there were anti-Semitic demonstrations in the Daruvar Beer Hall because a Zagrebian opera singer of Jewish origin sang Croatian and German songs during his performance. In November Jewish tombstones in Stubica were devastated, while soldiers of the Daruvar infantry unit of the new State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs Army insisted that their Jewish comrades be excluded from serving in the military. According to *Židov* magazine, at the same time the unconverted Jews ceased to

⁶⁹ Lav Stern, "Ratno gospodarstvo i Židovi," *Židov*, November 15th, 1917.

⁷⁰ Dobrovšak, "Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918)," 129.

⁷¹ For further bibliography on Radić's opinion on Jews, see *ibid.*, 129.

⁷² For further bibliography, see Dobrovšak, "Fragments from the History of the Croatian Jews during the First World War (1914–1918)," 130–132; Ivo Banac's article, "I Karlo je o'šo u komite – Nemiri u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj u jesen 1918," in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24/3 (1992): 28–29, is a seminal contribution to this history.

be seen as trustworthy enough to continue to serve in the Zagreb Academic Guard unit of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs; Jewish businessmen in general were not included in the consultative commissions of the new Zagreb-seated government; and the wealthy Jews of Varaždin were pressed into “voluntary contributions” for the new authorities.⁷³

Most important of all, as public security had practically collapsed with the fall of Austria-Hungary, a massive wave of civilian- and military-related unrest swept through Croatia and Slavonia in late 1918 and early 1919. Previously existing groups of “Green cadre” deserters were now joined by soldiers from disbanded units, impoverished peasants, and riotous citizens, who directed their discontent towards former state and municipal officials, gendarmes, clergy, war profiteers, wealthy peasants, shop and tavern owners, businesses, and nobles’ estates. Many traders, often rural Jews, fell victim, and robberies and arsons against Jewish shops and other property became commonplace in the whole of Croatia and Slavonia, as almost all urban and rural settlements were affected.

The general scope of events makes it hard to ascertain the exact degree to which the perpetrators were motivated by anti-Semitic attitudes. For instance, several reports from local authorities pointed out that Jewish property was the first to come under attack after the magazines of the former Habsburg Army. Additionally, some officials excused such destructive behavior by claiming that the victims were actually war profiteers, a term which was probably destined to connote the notorious “rich Jewish capitalists.” On the other hand, among small shopkeepers and traders the Jews simply constituted a statistical majority, thus also prone to assault on more general anarchist-socialist or agrarian grounds.⁷⁴

On November 16th 1918, a Zionist delegation from Zagreb was received by the presidency of the National Council. As reported in *Židov*, during ensuing talks the presidency expressed the opinion that the mass robberies were not of an anti-Semitic character “save perhaps” in a few places. If, moreover, there has somewhere been anti-Jewish haranguing, the presidency most strongly condemned it.⁷⁵

⁷³ Lavoslav Šik (L. S.), “U eri slobode,” *Židov*, December 1st, 1918.

⁷⁴ See Andrea Feldman, “Židovi u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji,” *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, 2000), 453–454.

⁷⁵ “Spomenica ‘Zemaljske organizacije cionista iz jugoslavenskih zemalja’ Narodnom vijeću Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba,” *Židov*, November 17th, 1918.

Unappeased by such a conditional statement, the *Židov* magazine returned to the subject two weeks later. True, non-Jews were also affected by the unrest, but only as collateral victims, for the troubles were exclusively the consequence of the anti-Semitic harangues by the press, intellectuals, and government officials, who not only failed to take adequate measures even in cases where they had foreknowledge of what would happen, but also instigated anti-Semitic actions of their own.⁷⁶

Great Expectations, Great Disappointments

At this time, it is hard to conclude whether the majority of Croatian-Slavonian Jews welcomed the demise of Austria-Hungary. On the one hand, the foreseeable future must have been full of worries. On the other, even for the most apolitical people that demise was a way for the war finally to come to an end.

As far as the Zagreb Zionist magazine *Židov* was concerned, since late 1917 it had run a regular news feature titled “From the Yugoslav Lands,” thus implicitly acknowledging the line of the May Declaration, which proposed a South-Slav unificatory government under Habsburg rule.

Gradually, during 1918 one finds expressions of more direct support in several instances. This include a declaration signed by fifty-eight “Young Jews of Osijek” that was published in March,⁷⁷ another article in August;⁷⁸ a declaration of open support for the struggle for “complete freedom and independence” of the Yugoslav peoples in mid-October,⁷⁹ followed by the October 21st proclamation,⁸⁰ and a November 16th communication of the Zagreb-based Committee of the Zionist Organization of the Yugoslav Lands addressed to the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs.⁸¹

These last two documents stated that while the Zionists did not wish to involve themselves in the politics of the newly-created state, they welcomed every solution to the South Slavic problem that would best suit the ideals of the

⁷⁶ L. Šik (L. S.), “U eri slobode.”

⁷⁷ “Izjava židovske omladine o jugoslavenskoj deklaraciji,” *Židov*, March 1st, 1918.

⁷⁸ Nikola T., “Nekoliko riječi k jugoslavenskom problemu.”

⁷⁹ Šalom ben Cvi, “Jugoslaveni i Židovi,” *Židov*, October 16th, 1918.

⁸⁰ “Zemaljska organizacija cionista iz jugoslavenskih zemalja,” *Židov*, October 23rd, 1918.

⁸¹ “Spomenica ‘Zemaljske organizacije cionista iz jugoslavenskih zemalja’ Narodnom vijeću Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba” (see footnote 76).

Yugoslav people and be implemented by their elected representatives. The Committee also expressed the hope that Yugoslavia would secure equality before the law and free development for all the minorities, including special Jewish representatives in the parliament,⁸² and that the new “Yugoslav press” would help reduce public antipathy toward Jews.

However, even once the 1918–1919 turmoil had calmed down the post-war period did not bring any great relief. Having been born outside the borders of the new Yugoslav state and therefore unable to obtain citizenship, numerous Jews were forced to either return to their “home” countries or migrate to other parts of the world. Predictably, no special parliamentary representatives were granted. Of course, the negative stereotypes persisted. Indeed, they were actually disseminated with increasing frequency by the media as the Second World War approached a conflict that would result in the almost complete destruction of the once prosperous Jewish communities of former Croatia and Slavonia.⁸³

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⁸² Introduction of a single Jewish representative to the Croatian-Slavonian Diet was already proposed in 1917. See “K izbornoj reformi u Hrvatskoj,” *Židov*, October 1st, 1917.

⁸³ Ivo Goldstein, “Židovi u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji – problem ravnopravnosti i jednakovrijednosti,” *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, vol. 2, eds. Hans-Geroge Fleck, Igor Graovac, (Zagreb, 2000), 465–482.

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The Remembrance of World War One and the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans

by Gerald Lamprecht

Abstract

This paper discusses discourses and activities of memory of the Austrian “Federation of Jewish War Veterans” (Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten/BJF), based primarily on the analysis of the journal “Jewish Front” (Jüdische Front) as well as on archival sources. A remarkable increase in anti-Semitic activities as well as acts of violence committed by the National Socialists led former Jewish soldiers of the Austrian army to found the BJF in 1932. The aim of the BJF was to defend the Austrian Jewry against anti-Semitic accusations as well as to strengthen their Jewish self-consciousness by focusing on the remembrance of the Jewish military service during the Great War and an idealized and exaggerated war experience. To reach their objectives, the BJF was organized hierarchically and militarily. The members wore uniforms, and the BJF organized military inspections, spread propaganda via the journal “Jewish Front” and initiated the erection of Jewish war memorials in several Austrian cities. Due to the fact that the BJF wanted to unify the Austrian Jewry under its leadership, it claimed to be above all party lines and propagandized a common Austrian Jewish identity.

Introduction

Austrian War Memory and Collective Identity

Jewish Soldiers – Jewish War Victims – Jewish Veterans

Memory and Identity Discourses in the Context of World War One

Introduction

At the end of December 1932, the first issue of the journal “Jewish Front” (*Jüdische Front*) was released. It was the “Official Organ of the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans” (*Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*** [BJF]),¹ which had been founded in Vienna a few months earlier. The aim of the BJF and

¹ *Jüdische Front*, December 29th, 1932.

the journal was to fight the increasing anti-Semitism by means of remembrance of Jewish military service during the Great War. The general guidelines for this struggle can be read in the foreword of the first issue, written by the first leader of the BJJ, Major General Emil Sommer:

Shoulder to shoulder with our comrades, without any distinctions by nation or denomination, we stood as a wall against a world of enemies. A feeling of exacerbation must come over us now when this comradeship that we all kept faith with in the face of the enemy is sold down the river. My Jewish brothers, who are pressed hard by the hate and malice of their enemies, are calling on me now in the autumn of my life to be their leader in their defense. The honor of an upright soldier commands me to follow this call and to fight with all my fortitude together with you against all injustice. We will uphold our honor as loyal citizens of our fatherland beyond any political differences, and we will defend ourselves against all attacks. Standing alone, we have to lead in the fight for our honor and without doing harm to anyone. It is a fight against injustice and defamation. The path is hard, the prejudices we are confronted with enormous.²

In his foreword, Sommer addressed many of the central *topoi* of Jewish discourses of memory prevailing during and after the Great War: the fight against anti-Semitism party truce (*Burgfrieden*); comradeship; soldiers' solidarity regardless of denominational, national, and social differences; brotherhood, and Jewish solidarity. One of these agents of memory was the BJJ, which, beyond considering strategies against anti-Semitism, also negotiated the positioning of the Jewish people within the Austrian state and society as well as Jewish self-understanding and Jewish identity in general. These negotiations did not occur in isolation but were related to Gentile and general discourses during a time that was recognized by Austrian and Central European Jews as a time of fundamental crises arising from political and social transformations.³ For the Austrian Jews these crises arose from the breakdown of the Habsburg Monarchy, which led to the questioning of well-practiced narratives of Jewish identity and Jewish positioning within state and society.⁴ If Jews were a distinctive religious group of citizens among others within the supranational and multiethnic monarchy, they

² GMJ Emil Sommer, "Kameraden!" *Jewish Front*, December 29th, 1932.

³ Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Sustaining Austrian 'National' Identity in Crisis: The Dilemma of the Jews in Habsburg Austria, 1914–1919," *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, eds. Pieter M. Judson, Marsha L. Rozenblit (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 178–92; Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna 1918 – 1938* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 2.

⁴ See for example David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 161–89.

now became a minority whose rights, at the beginning of the new republic, were vague. Furthermore, the revolutionary process of the foundation of the Austrian republic in 1918 was accompanied by anti-Semitic riots, public violence and permanent uncertainty for Jews, especially in Vienna.⁵

Within various discourses about Jewish identity and a Jewish positioning within state and society the discourse on memory is only one among others, but it was central for the BJV. In this article, I will discuss the discourses and practices of memory of the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans. My research is primarily based on the analysis of the journal *Jewish Front* and of archival sources. In this context, I will show how Jewish military service, the commemoration of Jewish soldiers, Jewish identity and the positioning of the Jewish people within state and society, as well as their fight against anti-Semitism are interlinked. Furthermore, I will explain that the discourses of the BJV are embedded in older lines of argumentation, which, in turn, are rooted in the Enlightenment.

Austrian War Memory and Collective Identity

According to Reinhart Koselleck, the political cult of the dead (*Totenkult*), the public remembrance of the fallen soldiers, and thus war memory, in general, has always been more than just private grieving and public mourning. Thus has Jay Winter argued in his outstanding analysis of memory and mourning in response to the First World War.⁶ Negotiating inclusion or exclusion of a community of memory, of a political entity, always constitutes a political act. Therefore, commemorating the fallen soldiers has always been part of political culture and part of a discourse creating (usually national) collective identity.⁷ It has always served the political entity, the nation or the state, in its efforts to stabilize and to legitimize itself. And by commemorating all the men who were willing to risk

⁵ Bruce F. Paules, *Eine Geschichte des österreichischen Antisemitismus. Von der Ausgrenzung zur Auslöschung* (Wien: Kremayr & Scheriau 1993), 116-31; Peter G. J. Pulzer, *Die Entstehung des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland und Österreich 1867-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2004), 299-332.

⁶ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 223-29; Jay Winter, *Remembering War. The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 8-13.

⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, *Einleitung to Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmale der Moderne*, eds. Reinhart Koselleck, Michael Jeismann (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994), 9.

their lives, the nation strengthens its unity and gives meaning to the senseless death of each individual soldier.

Thus, with the establishment of modern liberal society and the modern nation since the end of the 18th century, the so-called “hero’s death” of each individual soldier moved more and more to the center of the cult of the dead and war memory.⁸ Since then, the death of the citizen soldier on the battlefield has been recognized as proof of his loyalty to the state and to the nation. In turn, the state granted each soldier political participation and civil rights.⁹ This nexus between military service and citizenship/civil rights was of great importance to the history of Jewish emancipation.

At the very beginning of the discourse dealing with Jewish military service in modern history stood the enlightened politics of tolerance of Emperor Joseph II¹⁰ and the book by Prussian councilor Christian Wilhelm Dohm *Ueber die buergerliche Verbesserung der Juden* [On the Civil Improvement of the Jews],¹¹ first published in 1781. In his text, which was written in the spirit of the Enlightenment, Dohm dedicates a whole chapter to the question of Jewish military service, in which he first cites all the arguments of the opponents of Jewish emancipation.¹² According to these opponents, Dohm writes, Jews are unfit for military service in general. In particular, they argue that the religious rules of the Sabbath rest, the laws of *Kashruth*, and the religious command that only a defensive war could be a just war were barriers for Jewish military service. Additionally, the social segregation of the Jews from other religious groups, their “inability to tolerate physical discomfort and labor,” and their physical constitution are listed as arguments against Jewish military service. Furthermore,

⁸ See for the “Cult of the fallen soldiers,” George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 70–106.

⁹ For example Ute Frevert, “Bürgersoldaten – Die allgemeine Wehrpflicht im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert” *Die Wehrpflicht und ihre Hintergründe. Sozialwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur aktuellen Debatte*, ed. Ines-Jacqueline Werkner (Erlangen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004), 45–64, 48–9; Nikolaus Buschmann, “Vom ‘Untertanensoldaten’ zum ‘Bürgersoldaten’? Zur Transformation militärischer Loyalitätsvorstellungen um 1800,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* XII (2013), 105–26; 105.

¹⁰ See: Erwin A. Schmidl, *Habsburgs jüdische Soldaten 1788–1918* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 21–50; Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military. A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2013), 38–47.

¹¹ Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Ueber die buergerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, Berlin 1781.

¹² Christian Wilhelm Dohm was in contact with Moses Mendelssohn, the founder of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah, who influenced his work. See Uwe J. Eissling, “Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden und die Vision einer ‘judenfreien’ Welt” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 88 (1991): 27–58; 32–33.

they claim that Jews are disloyal and in case of doubt would not fight against other Jews. As a consequence, they come to the conclusion that “citizens who do not defend the society to which they belong cannot be citizens like others; they cannot demand equal rights and have to put up with oppressive differences.”¹³ However, Dohm dismisses these arguments: “It is right to demand unlimited military service from the Jews. But currently they are not able to perform it, because the oppression under which they have had to live for such a long time has suffocated their military spirit and physical courage and caused religious speculations and unsociable behavior. They have not had a fatherland for more than one and a half millennia. How could they go to battle and die for it? But I am convinced that they will do this with the same competence and loyalty as everyone else if a fatherland will be given to them.”¹⁴

Dohm’s book, written at the end of the 18th century, already presents the *topoi* and arguments concerning the issue of Jewish military service and war memory that would then prevail during the entire 19th and early 20th centuries. First of all, these debates revolved around the question whether Jews could be equal citizens of the states in which they live; secondly, they focused on the question of how Jews negotiated their identity and position in modern societies. Those party to these debates were Jews and Gentiles, and analyzing the memory of the First World War, we can see within these discourses all the political and social fractions and dislocations within the Jewish population (the Zionist, religious, and so-called “assimilated” groups) as well as the society at large.¹⁵ Furthermore, it must be stated that for the Habsburg/Austrian Jews, the end of the war and the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire brought about new problems.¹⁶ While the Habsburg Empire had been a supranational state that accepted the coexistence of different ethnic/national groups under its reign, the new republic (German-)Austria understood itself as a Christian German nation state. This

¹³ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236–37.

¹⁵ For the political differentiation of the Jews in interwar Austria see Feidenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna 1918 – 1938*.

¹⁶ Marsha Rozenblit argues that the Jews of the Habsburg Empire had a tripartite identity, which came to an end with the breakdown of the monarchy. This identity was composed of a patriotic loyalty to the state/dynasty, the cultural sharing with one or another of the monarchist nationalities and the sense of belonging to the Jewish people, in terms of an ethnic identity. Referring to the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans and the followers of the liberal Jewish party (Union), I would argue that this tripartite identity did not come an end. The loyalty to the dynasty was substituted by the loyalty to the state, a constitutional patriotism. Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing A National Identity. The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23 – 25.

state had to (re-)define its relation to national as well as religious minorities. Additionally, it tried to distance itself from the former supranational monarchy.

These two issues – Austria’s self-understanding as a nation state and its distancing itself from the monarchy – had a great impact on the political life and practice in Austria after 1918 and on the political and public activities commemorating the fallen soldiers of the First World War. In contrast to other European countries, the new Austrian state was for many years unable to create a national or canonized narrative with a national cult of the dead to commemorate the Great War. Consequently, an Austrian War Memorial (Hero’s Memorial) could not be erected until the 1930s. Instead of a national memory discourse, various commemoration activities on a local or group level were established.¹⁷ Thus, after the end of the war in almost every Austrian village and city a war memorial for the victims of the local community was erected, initiated by veterans’ organizations, or political or religious groups. They normally placed their memorials next to the church, on the cemetery, or on the village square. Commemoration practices and the language of memory were mostly embedded into a religious (Christian) discourse and aimed at supporting primarily the private and regional grieving for dead relatives.

Whenever any attempts to initiate a collective memory narrative occurred, struggles and political conflicts followed immediately. The erection of the war memorial on the outer wall of the Cathedral in Graz, for instance, was accompanied by severe political controversies.¹⁸ This memorial had already been planned during the war but could not be realized before 1923. The bourgeois, Christian Social initiators of the memorial put the memory of the fallen soldiers into a patriotic, partly monarchic and religious context.¹⁹ This was again criticized by German nationalists and, especially, by Socialists. In the socialist newspaper *Arbeiterwille* [Workers’ Will], for instance, we can read about the inauguration of the war memorial, which was attended by high-ranking

¹⁷ The first attempt of the state to remember the fallen soldiers in the regions was initiated by a decree of the minister of internal affairs in June 1915. In this decree, the minister proposed the erecting of memorials or commemorative plaques similar to those he had in Serbia. Erlaß des Präsidiums des Ministeriums des Inneren vom 21. Juni 1915 (Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (StLA)), Statth. Präs. A5b-3440/1915.

¹⁸ Stefan Riesenfellner, “TODESZEICHEN. Zeitgeschichtliche Denkmalkultur am Beispiel von Kriegerdenkmälern in Graz und in der Steiermark von 1867–1934,” *TODESZEICHEN. Zeitgeschichtliche Denkmalkultur vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. Stefan Riesenfellner, Heidemarie Uhl (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 1–77; 32–3.

¹⁹ “Ein Fest der Liebe. Die Enthüllung des Grazer Kriegerdenkmals,” *Grazer Tagespost*, June 11th, 1924.

politicians from the city of Graz and the district of Styria as well as leading members of the Catholic Church:

It was a commemorative ceremony of the old black-and-yellow power, whose pitiable victims would turn over in their mass graves in the rocky karst, in the marshes and steppes of Russia, the Carpathian Mountains, and the horrible fields and mountains of Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania, if they had seen what happened when they were used by those for whom they were only cannon fodder, lawless and submissive slaves, to show off in the old and false glamour, to demonstrate boldly and cheekily the black-and-yellow era, which was a bloody curse for millions of people and which will live on as a curse in the hearts of the starving orphans, in the souls of the careworn widows, in the dismal feelings of the old mothers whose happiness and lives were destroyed forever.²⁰

In contrast to the Christian Social initiators of the memorial, the *Arbeiterwille* and the Socialists wanted to place the memory of the war within a spirit of pacifism and positioned themselves against the old monarchic, bourgeois, and nationalistic order as well as against the Christian Social party. They had their own notion of how to memorialize the war appropriately, which could be seen when in 1925 the “Red Vienna”²¹ initiated a new war memorial in place of the older and provisional one at the Viennese Central Cemetery. The wooden cross that had been erected in 1915 was then replaced by a monumental memorial, designed by the famous sculptor Anton Hanak. Contrary to the hegemonic Austrian practice of a nationalistic and bellicose memory discourse,²² the center of Hanak’s memorial showed the stone sculpture of the “great mother” and the inscription “Lord, give us peace! To the fallen of the World War, the city of Vienna.”²³

²⁰ “Heldenehrung,” *Beilage zum “Arbeiterwille,”* June 12th, 1923.

²¹ “Red Vienna” (Rotes Wien) was the specific name for the Austrian capital Vienna under the reign of the Social-Democratic party in the years from 1918 to 1934. In this period many progressive ideas, especially concerning the social housing construction (sozialer Wohnbau) and social service were implemented. See for example *Kampf um die Stadt*, ed. Wolfgang Kos (Wien: Czernin Verlag, 2010).

²² For example Oswald Überegger, *Erinnerungskriege. Der Erste Weltkrieg, Österreich und die Tiroler Kriegserinnerung in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2011).

²³ Inscription in German: “Herr, gib uns den Frieden! Den Gefallenen des Weltkrieges die Stadt Wien” See: Heidemarie Uhl, “Kriegsallerseelen 1914–1918” in *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs. Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg*, eds. Alfred Pfoser, Andreas Weigl (Vienna: Metropolverlag, 2013), 114–121; 120–21.

The examples from Graz and Vienna point to all the ideological and political conflicts within the Austrian memory discourses in the interwar period, and it becomes evident that different political and social groups made sense of the meaningless death of thousands of soldiers in different ways. Some interpreted the death of each soldier as a heroic sacrifice for the fatherland while others understood the mass deaths as a warning for the future and dedicated their practice to the pacifist motto “No more war.” Consequently, during the first years of crisis, the young republic was unable to create an “Austrian national consciousness” – something for which the impossibility of establishing a collective memory of war is a telling expression.

It was only the Austrian fascist regime, the so-called “Ständestaat,” that tried to create an Austrian national consciousness in opposition to Nazi Germany and the Austrian National Socialists. By doing so, the “Ständestaat” also tried to establish a hegemonic national war memory. A visible symbol thereof is the Austrian Heroes’ Monument, which was built in the Exterior Castle Gate in Vienna and which was inaugurated in 1934.²⁴ Although the initial planning had already begun at the end of the Austrian Republic, this memorial was an important and prestigious project for the Austrian fascist regime, one that aimed to represent the new Austrian consciousness by referring to the history and glory of the Habsburg Empire. The underlying rationale of this endeavor was to create a Catholic and conservative Austrian identity.²⁵ In the center of the Heroes’ Monument there is a crypt, designed like an early Christian chapel, with the tomb of the “Dead Warrior.”²⁶ Next to the tomb, memory books (“Heroes’ Books”) listing the names of all the fallen Austrian soldiers were displayed, because this should be “a memorial for all the living and dead heroes of the World War. It should be a memorial for the centuries old and glorious army, a memorial of the thousands of battles, in which the sons of Austria fought, a memorial of victories that made our former fatherland great and powerful, a memorial of the innumerable heroic deeds upon which Old Austria’s (“Altösterreichs”) military glory was founded and preserved.”²⁷

²⁴ *Das österreichische Heldendenkmal in Wien. Ein Führer durch Raum und Zeit* (Vienna: n.y).

²⁵ For the Heroes’ Memorial see: Peter Stachel, *Mythos Heldenplatz* (Vienna: Pichler Verlag, 2002), 99–102.

²⁶ *Das österreichische Heldendenkmal in Wien. Ein Führer durch Raum und Zeit* (Vienna: n.y).

²⁷ *Gedenkschrift anlässlich der Weihe des österreichischen Heldendenkmals am 9. September 1934*, ed. Vereinigung zur Errichtung eines österreichischen Heldendenkmals (Vienna: 1934), 44–45.

The “Dead Warrior” was modeled on the “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier” in Paris or London, but it was not non-denominational. The Austrian “Dead Warrior” was clearly a Christian soldier as much as Austria was a Christian country, and, complying with the intentions of the initiators of the memorial, a Holy Mass was to be held every day in honor of the fallen soldiers. This commemoration practice did not, however, correspond exactly to Austrian history or to social or political realities, since Catholic soldiers were also joined by non-Catholic Christian and Jewish soldiers who fought at their side in the Austrian Army and for their fatherland. They, too, had the right to be equal members of the memory community, and, consequently, equal citizens. Yet, for these minorities the Austrian fascist regime reserved a place only at the margins, in the form of a separate memorial place next to the crypt in the south wing of the Heroes’ Monument.²⁸

Jewish Soldiers – Jewish War Victims – Jewish Veterans

The positioning of the fallen Jewish soldiers and Jews in general on the margins of the community of memory and the entire society had a long, anti-Semitic tradition in Austria. However, various Jewish representatives tried to fight against this tradition for centuries. The protagonists were Jewish communities, Jewish veterans and their organizations, as well as relatives of the war victims. In their struggle, they referred to the promise of emancipation that the state would grant them full legal equality and social recognition, if, like other citizens, they were willing to serve in the army. They wanted the state and Gentile society to appreciate their loyalty to the fatherland and their willingness, be they soldiers or civilians, to give their lives for their country.²⁹ They demanded protection by state and society on the symbolic as well as on the political level from anti-Semitic accusations and attacks.

For Jews in Austria, anti-Semitism existed during as well as after the war, but it increased massively throughout this time. Anti-Semitic attacks in the context of the war first emerged in late 1914 and 1915, when thousands of Jewish refugees

²⁸ *Das österreichische Heldendenkmal in Wien. Ein Führer durch Raum und Zeit* (Vienna: n.y).

²⁹ For example “Das jüdische Opfer des Krieges,” in *Dr. Bloch’s oesterreichische Wochenschrift*, September 9th, 1914.

began to search for shelter in the western territories of the monarchy.³⁰ At this time, however, the state tried to implement and maintain the party truce and hindered the anti-Semites by means of rigorous censorship restricting their public attacks on Jews. This changed when Emperor Franz Joseph II passed away in November 1916 and his successor, Emperor Karl I, reconvened the Austrian parliament. As part of the discourse around nationalistic conflicts and triggered by military, political, social, and economic crises, anti-Semitism obtained increased publicity and became an increasingly integral part of the overall political discourse.³¹ For anti-Semites, Jews were the scapegoats for all problems of state and society. They accused the Jews of having no fatherland, of being cowards, and of war-profiteering, and they demanded their exclusion from society.³² Anti-Semites were present in all political parties, but were particularly strong in number among Christian Socialists³³ and German nationalists³⁴; they were well represented in editorial departments³⁵ of various newspapers and in various anti-Semitic organizations. Among veterans' organizations, for instance, one might note the Front-Line Soldiers' Organization of German-Austria ("Frontkämpfervereinigung Deutsch-Österreichs"), founded in 1920. Its constitution included an "Aryan-Paragraph," and the Front-Line Soldiers became a gathering place for anti-Semites generally and, later, National Socialists, in particular, in Austria's interwar years.³⁶

³⁰ See Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, "Abreisendmachung" *Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914 bis 1923* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995); Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 67–100.

³¹ For example Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Sustaining Austrian 'National' Identity in Crisis," 185.

³² Gerald Lamprecht, "Juden in Zentraleuropa und die Transformationen des Antisemitismus im und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 24, ed. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Berlin: Metropolverlag, 2015), 63–88.

³³ Leopold Kunschak, the chairman of the Christian Social Workers Association and the later minister Heinrich Mataja as well as the founder of the anti-Semites League Anton Jerzabek have been named. Thomas Stoppacher, *Die Zeit des Umbruchs in einem antisemitischen Umfeld – Die jüdische Bevölkerung in Österreich 1917-1919 in den Debatten des Parlaments*, unpublished manuscript. For the Christian Social movement and anti-Semitism see also John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in late imperial Austria. Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848–1897* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Robert S. Wistrich, *Die Juden im Zeitalter Kaiser Franz Josephs* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 171–97.

³⁴ For Karl Hermann Wolf, member of the German National Association (Deutschen Nationalverband) see Stoppacher, *Die Zeit des Umbruchs*.

³⁵ The voice of the Christian Social party was the *Reichspost*, an anti-Semitic newspaper published in Vienna.

³⁶ Frontkämpfervereinigung Deutsch-Österreichs (Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WStLA)), A32-5442/1922.

Jews responded relentlessly to these anti-Semitic attacks, and Jewish communities, and their notables, rabbis, journalists, as well as Jewish political parties developed defense strategies against anti-Semitism and social exclusion.³⁷ Hence, for instance, in December 1917, Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937), who was already a member of the committee for the “Jewish War Archive” in 1915,³⁸ published a call in different German-Jewish journals in Vienna to found an organization for the Jewish War Combatants and War Invalids (“Verbandes jüdischer Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegsbeschädigter”³⁹). Referring to similar considerations in Germany, he sought to found an organization in Austria that would represent Jewish interests and preserve items and memorabilia related to Jewish war experiences. According to Birnbaum, the aims of this organization were:

1. Legal protection of all members in all claims against the state and others related to the war;
2. Representation of interests of the members before social service organizations of every kind;
3. Arrangements to enable the reentry of members into the civil economy (certificate of employment, certificate for the possibility of self-employment, perhaps commercial, industrial, and agricultural companies of the organization);
4. Representation of the interests of all Jewish war combatants and war invalids – particularly in order to preserve their reputation and honor – before the representatives of public life and before society.⁴⁰

As with similar organizations that would follow, Birnbaum assumed that especially the fourth aim of his organization would protect not only the interests of Jewish soldiers (“Jewish community of faith”) but would also lead to the “protection of the Jewish people’s community” in general. “The activity, which has to be developed to preserve the interest, the reputation and the honor of the

³⁷ *Der Erste Weltkrieg aus jüdischer Perspektive. Erwartungen – Erfahrungen – Erinnerungen. Themenheft der Zeitschrift zeitgeschichte*, eds. Gerald Lamprecht, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, Heidrun Zettelbauer 41/4 (2014).

³⁸ “Aufruf des ‘Jüdischen Kriegsarchivs,’ *Oesterreichische Wochenschrift*, January 1st, 1915.

³⁹ “Verband jüdischer Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegsbeschädigter” in *Jüdische Zeitung. Nationaljüdisches Organ*, December 12th, 1917.

⁴⁰ “Verband jüdischer Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegsbeschädigter” in *Jüdische Zeitung. Nationaljüdisches Organ*, December 21st, 1917.

Jewish war combatants and war invalids, has to result in instructive and statistical material of common Jewish value and has to prompt further activities for the benefit of the Jewish community and the Jewish reputation.”⁴¹

Birnbaum, who wanted to enlarge the membership of his organization beyond the group of Jewish war veterans, was fully aware of the fact that the conditions of war and other obstacles prevented the official establishment of the organization in 1917. However, he wanted to be prepared for peacetime,⁴² because he, like other alert Jewish contemporaries, assumed that with the end of war anti-Semitism would increase dramatically and would threaten Jewish life and existence in Austria fundamentally. Thus, he argued, the Jewish community had to be well prepared to react appropriately.

In 1919, the Organization for the Jewish War-Disabled, Invalids, Widows and Orphans was founded. Although it is not clear if Nathan Birnbaum was involved in its founding, this organization implemented his ideas. It focused mainly on the difficult economic and social situation of its members and tried to provide substantive assistance.⁴³ The organization’s journal, titled *Bulwark of the Jewish War-Victims* and first published in 1926, shows how difficult the economic and social circumstances were for the Jewish war invalids.⁴⁴ In the lead article of the first issue, titled “What we Want,” the author writes with a degree of resignation, but also combatively:

Among war victims all over the world, the Jewish ones are worst off. Not only that they had to fight against each other as members of the different states they were living in, but also is the poor or even completely missing social service of these ‘fatherlands by choice’ (*Wahlvaterländer*) for their co-fighters a nagging pain, which is related to the war and its horror for the Jewish war victims. Let us

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Eleonore Lappin, “Zwischen den Fronten: Das Wiener Jüdische Archiv. Mitteilungen des Komitees Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv 1915–1917,” *Deutsch-jüdische Presse und jüdische Geschichte I: Dokumente, Darstellungen, Wechselbeziehungen*, eds. Eleonore Lappin, Michael Nagel (Bremen: Edition Lumière, 2008), 229–46.

⁴³ As there is no specific research on the question of public social welfare for Jewish veterans and war disabled, we have to refer to the book written by Verena Pawlowsky and Harald Wendelin about Austrian welfare politics for the victims of war. In their book they do not mention any anti-Semitic tendencies within the Austrian welfare politics, although some of the organizations for war-disabled – especially the Christian Social ones – were anti-Semitic. Verena Pawlowsky, Harald Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates. Kriegsoffer und Sozialstaat in Österreich 1914–1938* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 265–73.

⁴⁴ For the difficult situation of the Austrian war-disabled see Verena Pawlowsky, Harald Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates. Kriegsoffer und Sozialstaat in Österreich 1914–1938* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015).

make no mistake: the revolution and the marching in of the ‘republican freedom’ in the defeated states resulted neither in the end of anti-Semitism nor did it the proud feelings of the states of the entente. [...] How could they [the Jewish war victims] act otherwise than to demand insistently, to fight for their rights instead of always competing for love and attention in vain? For those who fought for their ungrateful fatherland, and for their miserable widows and orphans, there is no other possibility left to fight than: to take the fight to the public!⁴⁵

Due to unknown internal quarrels the Organization for the Jewish War-Disabled, Invalids, Widows and Orphans split into two successor organizations with similar aims in 1929.⁴⁶ These organizations also turned their attention mainly to providing substantive assistance for their members, to compensating for neglected aspects of symbolic recognition for the Jewish war victims, and to further engagement in remembrance activities.⁴⁷ These were then the main issues pursued by the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans, founded in Vienna in 1932.⁴⁸ Former Jewish soldiers of the Habsburg army founded this

⁴⁵ “Was wir wollen,” “Schutzwehr” der jüdischen Kriegsofper, August 18th, 1926.

⁴⁶ The Organization for the Jewish War-Disabled, Invalids, Widows and Orphans was dissolved in 1929 and in its place two others were founded: the Organization of the Jewish War-Invalids, Widows and Orphans (“Verband der jüdischen Kriegsinvaliden, Witwen und Waisen”) and the Aid-Association for the Jewish War-Victims, Invalids, Widows and Orphans in Vienna (“Hilfsverband der jüdischen Kriegsofper, Invaliden, Witwen und Waisen in Wien”). Both organizations also accepted members who weren’t front-line soldiers. E.g. (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA)), AdR, Pol Dion Wien 1953/1937; (ÖStA), AdR, Pol Dion Wien 1411/1931; (ÖStA), AdR, BKA 117212/1929; Pawlowsky, Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates*, 275.

⁴⁷ The Austrian compensation legislation (“Entschädigungsgesetzgebung”) demanded the separation of war-disabled, invalids, war victims, widows and bereaved from veteran’s organizations. This could be the reason why organizations of war-disabled, widows and orphans were not primarily engaged in commemoration activities for the fallen soldiers. See Pawlowsky, Wendelin, *Die Wunden des Staates*, 502–503.

⁴⁸ Although the BJF had many members, there has been only limited research into its history; see for example Martin Senekowitsch, *Gleichberechtigte in einer großen Armee. Zur Geschichte des Bundes Jüdischer Frontsoldaten 1932–1938* (Roma: Viella, 1994), Michael Berger, *Eisernes Kreuz – Doppeladler – Davidstern. Juden in deutschen Armeen. Der Militärdienst jüdischer Soldaten durch zwei Jahrhunderte* (Berlin: trafo Verlag, 2010), 151–168. Recently Gerald Lamprecht, “Erinnerung an den Krieg: der Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs 1932 bis 1938” in *Weltuntergang. Jüdisches Leben und Sterben im Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Marcus G. Patka (Vienna: Styria premium, 2014), 200–10, Gerald Lamprecht, “Geteilte Erinnerung? Der Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten,” *Zonen der Begrenzung. Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne*, eds. Gerald Lamprecht et. al (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2012), 87–104, Schmidl, *Habsburgs jüdische Soldaten 1788–1918*, 146–56.

organization in response to increasing anti-Semitism in the 1920s and early 1930s, mainly driven by the National Socialists. In founding the Austrian Federation, the Jewish veterans were following the example of the Germany-based Reich Federation of Jewish Front-Line Soldiers (“Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten/RJF”) founded in Berlin in 1919.⁴⁹

The main aim of the BJF was to protest against the “permanent defamation and daily defilement of the Jewish name and Jewish honor”⁵⁰ and to put up an active fight of resistance. Its members legitimized their activities by citing their patriotic military service for the Habsburg army, as the head of the BJF, off-duty captain Sigmund Edler von Friedmann, argued in his speech at the general muster on May 5, 1935: “Was the Jewish blood that was shed worth less than the blood of the Gentiles? No! It was the same lifeblood that was shed, the same lifeblood that was wept over by Jewish and gentile mothers. Thus, we do not beg for equality, we do not beg for equal rights, we demand them!”⁵¹

The founders of the BJF did more than raise the idealistic claim for social recognition; they also strove for the unification of the fragmented Jewish population in Austria under the leadership of the BJF. They deduced their claim to leadership from their military service and argued that only former soldiers with their war experiences and the experiences of comradeship would be able to successfully wage the struggle against anti-Semitism. This basic orientation as well as the fundamental ideology were articulated prior to the election of the council of the Viennese Jewish Community in 1936: “We front-line soldiers know, perhaps better than others, to assess how invaluable are rigid discipline and subordination under authoritarian command in an endangered position and in a dangerous situation.”⁵²

The BJF valued rigid organization and a clear hierarchical structure (both common to the military) as the basis of effective and powerful action and for the overcoming of social and political differences. Such organization and action, they assumed, were something the front-line soldiers’ community had already realized in the trenches. Consequently, the BJF understood itself as impartial and

⁴⁹ *Mitteilungen der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Graz*, January 1933, 4; E.G. Martin Berger, *Eisernes Kreuz – Doppeladler – Davidstern*, 123–50, Ulrich Dunkler, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten 1919–1938. Geschichte eines jüdischen Abwehrvereins* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1977).

⁵⁰ “Aufruf zur Gründungsversammlung des Bundes Jüdischer Frontsoldaten im Juli 1932” in *Drei Jahre Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs* (Vienna n.y.), 18.

⁵¹ *Drei Jahre Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs*, 54.

⁵² “Mehr Würde, mehr Einsicht!,” *Jüdische Front*, February 1st, 1936.

requested that the other Jewish political and religious parties and groups also subordinate their particular interests to the interest of the whole:

We aspire not to primacy, we do not want to intervene in the rights and agendas of individual Jewish parties. They all should carry on and foster their ideological particularities and singularities. They should, though, be unified in their defense against external enemies, like all peoples who possess a sense for and understanding of practical vital necessities, and who have been and still are in hours of danger. In such times, there was no opposition among the parties, there were only national comrades.⁵³

Based on its conviction that military service and war experience were fundamental to the particular values and attitudes of the BJF, the organization only accepted former Jewish soldiers as its members.⁵⁴ The aims of the BJF were written down in the statutes and covered the “fostering of traditional comradeship among the Jewish front-line soldiers and other Jewish war veterans, as well as in conjunction with gentile front-line soldiers and gentile war veterans.” Furthermore, “protection and preservation of the honor and reputation of the Jewish citizens of Austria [...], moral and substantive assistance of all Jewish institutions,” “moral and substantive assistance for suffering Jewish front-line soldiers and their families, their widows and orphans,” “permanent care for graves of Jewish front-line soldiers,” “promotion and support of all efforts to strengthen the defense capability of the Jewish citizens of Austria, physical training of the Jewish youth, and active support of all sporting activities in Austrian Judaism.”⁵⁵

While the first statutes, dating from 1932, underscored the maintenance of military traditions, social service, and the strengthening of Jewish self-consciousness, the general alignment of the BJF changed somewhat in 1933 in light of the foundation of the Austrian fascist regime with its attempt to create an Austrian self-consciousness.⁵⁶ The new program accentuated the “unbreakable commitment to the fatherland Austria, and the unbreakable commitment to an upright Judaism.” Furthermore, it promised that they would put themselves “on the line for Jewish honor, Jewish reputation, and in all situations in which Jewish life is in danger.” The BJF also wanted to uphold “the

⁵³ “Einheitsfront,” *Jüdische Front*, May 1st, 1936.

⁵⁴ See the statutes of the BJF and their §5 membership (WStLA), 6959/1932.

⁵⁵ Statutes of the BJF from 1932 (WStLA), A32 6959/1932.

⁵⁶ In the statutes from 1936 the foundation of a Jewish Heroes Museum is mentioned (WStLA), A32 6959/1932.

traditions of the Austrian army” along with unification of Austrian Jewry. It is interesting that the statutes not only supported an Austrian Jewish identity but also mentioned the promotion of the development of the *Yishuv* in Palestine.⁵⁷

Despite the range of issues they addressed, the struggle for equal rights, guaranteed by the Austrian constitution, and self-defense against anti-Semitism stood at the center of the activities of the BJF. All this found its expression in the BJF’s pledge, formulated in 1934: “I pledge loyalty to Austria! Pledge to Judaism! Pledge to the BJF Austria!”⁵⁸. In addition, the BJF participated in Austrian memory discourses, memory activities, and intra-Jewish as well as Jewish-Gentile debates on Austrian Jewish identity and the position of the Jewish population within society. The instruments used by the BJF to reach all the objectives were the organization of a number of sub-groups (women’s groups, youth groups) and a wide range of activities (propaganda, protection of events, memory activities, cultural events, public musters, demonstrations and interventions with public and political authorities).

Memory and Identity Discourses in the context of World War One

One main task of the BJF was publicizing their aims. To that end they founded the journal *Jewish Front: Official Organ of the Austrian Federation of Jewish War Veterans* in December 1932. The owner and publisher was the BJF, and the first chief editor was the Viennese businessman Robert Politzer.⁵⁹ He was followed by the civil servant and engineer Karl Reiß and, in January 1935, by the engineer Otto Braun, who was supported by the author Alfred Winzer, the responsible editor of the section devoted to *Bundesnachrichten* [“federal news”].⁶⁰ In January 1935, the federal news report became a separate section of the *Jewish Front*, covering various activities of the BJF’s sub-groups in the Austrian federal states. In January 1936, Karl Reiß returned as editor of the journal and stayed in this position until the forced suspension of the *Jewish Front* in March 1938.⁶¹ By that time, 108 issues of the journal had been published, available for purchase either individually and/or by subscription.⁶² The members

⁵⁷ *Drei Jahre Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs*, 28.

⁵⁸ Russian States Military Archiv/Special Archiv (RGWA), 672-1-274.

⁵⁹ *Jüdische Front*, December 29th, 1932.

⁶⁰ *Jüdische Front*, January 1st, 1935.

⁶¹ *Jüdische Front*, January 1st, 1936.

⁶² (Year/Issues) 1932: 1; 1933: 14; 1934: 18; 1935:24; 1936:24; 1937:23; 1938:4; The last issue was released on February 23rd 1938.

of the BJF and the Jewish population in Austria constituted the journal's target audience, but it is, for lack of historical sources, nearly impossible to describe the reception of the *Jewish Front* in any real detail.

According to the stated editorial policy, the journal reported on the BJF's various activities in Austria and informed its readers about the general political ideas of the organization. It published articles devoted to intra-Jewish debates, contemporary political and social developments, the establishment of the Austrian fascist regime, the rise to power of the National Socialists in Germany, the possibilities and strategies of self-defense against anti-Semitism, the Jewish self-consciousness of the front-line soldiers, as well as the Jewish population in Austria and Europe. Regardless of the particular topic, the question of how and in what form Jewish life could continue in Austria played an especially important role, and the BJF tried to formulate a narrative for an Austrian-Jewish identity in the face of the current challenges. This narrative was based on considerations of a liberal concept of nation, state, and citizenship. For the BJF this concept had already been realized in the multiethnic and supranational Habsburg monarchy and also during World War I. In several articles and speeches, the authors referred to the Habsburg army, military service, and the comradeship they had experienced, and they deduced guidelines for the present situation:

Even if the Austrian Jews – whether Zionists or not – see the emergence of a common Jewish land in the settlement in Palestine, and if they confess love and affinity toward this Jewish Palestine, even then, the Jews have the same right as Germans who are also living dispersed all over the world to acknowledge and to love the land in which they live and work, the plot of land that they have defended with their blood, as their fatherland. [...] We acknowledge our fatherland, we Jewish front-line soldiers, as Jews and Austrians, as we are now and as we want to be in future. And we demand for ourselves the right to declare our confession freely and clearly.⁶³

In all the debates, military service and war experience are the main points of reference. Both are supposed to prove Jewish loyalty toward the state/fatherland and buttress the legitimate demand for equal rights as equal citizens. Both are also the main arguments against a *völkish* view of the nation, which maintains that a person's Jewishness constitutes a reason to exclude him or her from the nation and, consequently, from society. For the BJF, the liberal concept of the nation was represented by the constitution, which guaranteed citizens equal

⁶³ "Das Recht der Juden auf ein Vaterland," *Jüdische Front*, January 15th, 1934.

rights regardless of their religious denomination. Thus, the authors writing in the *Jewish Front* repeatedly invoked the constitution, as we can read, for instance, in January 1933: “We nowadays have the duty to give the state its share of the earnings from our work, and this is really not a small amount. Herewith we fulfill our civic duty. But we demand that the state be equally aware of its duties and not allow that one part of the population be treated in an inhuman way for no reason and be declared outlawed pariahs.”⁶⁴

This Jewish constitutional patriotism, on the one hand, which placed the equality of all citizens at its center, always opposed the *völkish* nationalism that began its course to triumph no later than 1918.⁶⁵ On the other hand, for many other Jews in Austria, it served as a positive reference to Austrian and Habsburg history, as shown by an article from 1933 bearing the title “Loyalty for Loyalty.” Concerning questions of Pan-Europe and the present developments in the Austrian society, it reads: “We Jews, who are neither proponents of a German nor a Slavic kind of nationalism, especially we Austrian Jews, particularly as we are untouched by such inhibitions can, [...] only wish for the revitalization of this economic zone; a region in which each nation could live out its peculiarities, a region in which people respected their fellows and showed them understanding. A region in which the cultural competition of the nationalities only led to good things for all”⁶⁶. In view of the current situation in Germany as well as Austria, the author continued:

We Jewish front-line soldiers of Austria are for many reasons loyal to our fatherland, which we defended together with our Christian fellows. Regardless of the fact that in Germany a government is in power, which for us Jews no words can describe and whose results are like a river of mud, which will not last forever, so, regardless of all this, we see the well-being and the mission of Austria only therein: that it will be the leader and mediator of the East. But if we turn to or are annexed to the West, our people and our country will sink into total insignificance. The longstanding coexistence of many nations in Austria has established a culture that is a tribute to our country.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ “Die verfassungsmäßige Gleichberechtigung der Juden im Spiegel der österreichischen Tagespolitik,” *Jüdische Front*, January 30th, 1933.

⁶⁵ Jan M. Piskorski, *Die Verjagten. Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Siedler Verlag, 2013), 60.

⁶⁶ “Treue um Treue,” *Jüdische Front*, July 8th, 1933.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

In this article, National Socialism and Austrian German nationalism are both contrasted with an idealized Habsburg monarchy. The author presents especially the German nationalism of Austria as a historical aberration that should be revised for the benefit of both Austria and its Jewish population. The author of the article invokes in this context the “noble Austrian soul with its characteristic culture,” which would be stunted in the case of an annexation with the “cold, calculating nature of the North-German.” In making this point, the author refers to rabbi Joseph Samuel Bloch and his text “The National Dispute and the Jews in Austria” (1883).⁶⁸ Bloch, too, criticized nationalism and anti-Semitism and declared the Jews as the only true Austrian people, because they had not affiliated themselves with any national movement.⁶⁹

From the positive references to the Habsburg monarchy it can be inferred that the BJF had legitimist tendencies. After 1934, however, when the first leader of the BJF, Emil Sommer,⁷⁰ left the organization, the new leadership took a stand against legitimism, albeit with some reservations. They argued that although the Habsburg monarchy conjures up memories among the members of the BJF, as front-line soldiers and as Jews, “of times, that were more beneficial, happier, more harmonious than present,”⁷¹ the BJF as an organization could not support a legitimist position. On the one hand, they had supported it by arguing that “after the foundation of the new Austria [...] the majority reserved the right to decide for the form of government that was most likely to represent its historical and political sensibility. It is consistent with this attitude that we demonstrate our sympathies for the legitimist idea, whenever the tradition of the old Austrian army and in particular the reputation of the last and highest supreme commander is fostered and upheld.”⁷² On the other hand, they argued with reference to the history of the BJF’s founding and its policy that the BJF was to be politically and religiously impartial. This impartiality should concern the members of the BJF, which belonged to Zionist, liberal and the religious/orthodox Jewish parties, as a community as well as its relationship to

⁶⁸ Joseph Samuel Bloch, *Der nationale Zwist und die Juden in Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1886), 41.

⁶⁹ “II. Generalappell des B.J.F.” *Jüdische Front*, May 15th, 1935.

⁷⁰ Immediately after leaving the BJF Emil Sommer founded his own organization with the name Legitimist Jewish Front-line Soldiers. But this organization had only few members. (ÖStA), AdR, BKA Zl. 150.385/1934.

⁷¹ “Monarchie und Legitimus. Die Stellungnahme des BJF,” *Jüdische Front*, March 1st, 1937.

⁷² *Ibid.*

other Gentile political parties.⁷³ To get to the heart of the relation between the BJF and legitimism, we can also read the following statement by the BJF in the article titled “Monarchy and Legitimism:”

We sympathize with it [legitimism] from the bottom of our hearts, but we have to refuse, for the above-mentioned reasons, to participate actively. Undoubtedly, we would welcome a change in the internal situation that would give us again the possibility to participate in building the state not only passively, as taxpayers, but also actively, joyfully. But as long as the participation of a Jewish group in a movement is seen as a ‘burden’ for this movement, as long as the rules of the form of government are exclusively constituted as a prerogative for the Christian majority, our pride alone forbids us to impose ourselves onto a movement, although we welcome its aims and are even willing to support them. This is not false pride, but the result of the bitter insight that we are only granted equality and civil rights in so far as we are defined as objects but never as subjects of the political decision-making process. For these reasons we have to decline to participate in the internal movement, whether in the Fatherland Front (“*Vaterländische Front*”)⁷⁴ or in the “Frontmiliz”⁷⁵. We are and we will remain an impartial and apolitical organization, joined by the idea of loyalty to the state and to Judaism.⁷⁶

As can be seen in this and many other articles, the BJF was confronted with the difficult challenge that, on the one hand, its members came from various political backgrounds, and, on the other hand, the BJF had to be impartial by all means in its stance toward both the various Jewish groups and parties and against the Austrian political parties and the state. Furthermore, the BJF also had to find an arrangement with the Austrian fascist regime, which was anti-Semitic but at the same time the only available partner for the fight against the National Socialists

⁷³ See: Gerald Lamprecht, “Erinnerung an den Krieg: der *Bund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten* Österreichs 1932 bis 1938,” *Weltuntergang. Jüdisches Leben und Sterben im Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Marcus G. Patka (Wien: Styria books, 2014), 200–210.

⁷⁴ The *Vaterländische Front* [Fatherland Front] was founded on the 20th of May 1933 by the Austrian fascist regime based on the model of other fascist mass and unity parties; see Emmerich Tálos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem Österreich 1933–1938*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2013), 147–90.

⁷⁵ The *Frontmiliz* [front militia] was a centralization of all defense organizations that supported the Austrian army and police. The *Frontmiliz* was organized within the *Vaterländische Front*; Tálos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem*, 225–28.

⁷⁶ “Monarchie und Legitimismus. Die Stellungnahme des BJF,” *Jüdische Front*, March 1st, 1937.

and for the independence of Austria.⁷⁷ Moreover, political activities were only possible within the Fatherland Front.⁷⁸ Thus the BJJ supported the Austrian fascist regime from April 1933 onwards and became the only Austrian Jewish organization to enter the Fatherland Front on June 9th, 1933.⁷⁹ They justified this step by arguing that “the government turns to all the people who are willing to support its opus and rescue it from confusion and a civil war. This is exactly the same goal that we also aspire to, and as we are convinced that the government is honestly and frankly aiming at inner peace, we will follow its call and line up behind the government as upright Jewish front-line soldiers. We are offering our collaboration solely to help the Jewish community and our Jewry.”⁸⁰

Conclusion

In the 1930s the BJJ had (besides the Jewish sports club *Hakoah*) the highest membership of any Jewish organization in Austria.⁸¹ The BJJ tried to unify the Austrian Jewish population and also to be an effective defense organization. While *Hakoah*, however, tried to create a positive Jewish identity on the basis of athletic success, youthfulness, and the ideals of Zionism, the Jewish front-line soldiers legitimized their doings and their consciousness by reference to modern Jewish history, Jewish military service, and the war experiences gained in the First World War. For them, their service to the country should have been proof enough of Jewish loyalty to state and society, and should also have served as a guarantee of their recognition as equal citizens. Their experiences of comradeship during the war as well as military structures were seen as ideals and guiding principles in times of crisis. But all this only could only be realized once the

⁷⁷ We can read in reference to the anti-Semitism of the Fatherland Front: “The BJJ knows that these tendencies only arise from the will to take the wind out of the sails of the National Socialists. The Jewish front-line soldiers, unified in the BJJ, demand, on the grounds of their proven and widely acknowledged efforts in the Word War, justice and the end of the anti-Semitic attacks, which are not only a breach of the constitution but also a blemish on the reputation of Austria as a cultivated state [or: civilized state –sometimes ‘Kultur’ is translated as ‘Civilization’ – and it would read better here].” “Die Bundesführung teilt mit” *Jüdische Front*, 1st April 1936.

⁷⁸ On the relationship between the Austrian fascist regime and Judaism [Austrian Jewry? the Jews?]: *Österreich! Und Front Heil! Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front: Innenansichten eines Regimes*, ed. Robert Kriechbaumer (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 103–07; Táló, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem*, 470–90.

⁷⁹ RGWA, 672-1-275.

⁸⁰ “Pflicht der Stunde,” *Jüdische Front*, April 4th, 1933.

⁸¹ In 1935 the BJJ had approximately 20.000 and in 1938 24.000; *Drei Jahre Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs*, 58; Erwin A. Schmidl, *Habsburgs jüdische Soldaten*, 155.

political and ideological differences within the Austrian Jewish population could be overcome, as the deputy leader of the BJV, Ernst Stiassny, pointed out in a meeting in Graz in November 1934. Following Stiassny, in times of crisis there was no place for a sophisticated analysis of the question whether “Judaism is a race or denomination” because, he argued, it would in any event always be clear that Judaism always has been a “community of fate.”⁸²

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⁸² Bericht über die Generalversammlung der Ortsgruppe Graz des BJV am 10.11.1934 (RGWA), 672-1-293.

**Ernst Toller's *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe*
[Complete Works: Critical Edition]**

by *Steven Schouten*

Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe*. Im Auftrag der Ernst-Toller-Gesellschaft herausgegeben von Dieter Distl, Martin Gerstenbäum, Torsten Hoffmann, James Jordan, Stephen Lamb, Peter Langemeyer, Karl Leydecker, Stefan Neuhaus, Michael Pilz, Kirsten Reimers, Christiane Schönfeld, Gerhard Scholz, Rolf Selbmann, Thorsten Unger und Irene Zanol (Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen, 2015).

- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 1: Stücke 1919-1923*, herausgegeben von Torsten Hoffmann, Peter Langemeyer und Thorsten Unger.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 2: Stücke 1926-1939*, herausgegeben von Bert Kasties, Karl Leydecker, Lydia Mühlbach, Michael Pilz, Kirsten Reimers, Christiane Schönfeld und Thorsten Unger.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Autobiographisches und Justizkritik*, herausgegeben von Stefan Neuhaus und Rolf Selbmann, unter Mitarbeit von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 4.1: Publizistik und Reden*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 4.2: Publizistik und Reden*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 5: Lyrik, Erzählungen, Hörspiele, Film*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, James Jordan, Stephen Lamb, Stefan Neuhaus, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz, Victoria Strobl und Irene Zanol.

This impressive and very ambitious publication is the fruit of long and intense research. It contains all of the published and unpublished work of the German Jewish playwright and intellectual Ernst Toller (1893-1939).



Portrait of Ernst Toller [n. d.] Courtesy of Wallstein Verlag

In addition, it contains documents about Toller's personality, creative work, and political activities, such as the interrogation transcripts of the trials following his participation in the Bavarian revolution and *Räterepublik* [Republic of Councils] in the aftermath of the First World War. Those interested in the life and the work of Toller will be absolutely delighted by the abundance and great diversity of material collected here.

It has long been a wish of various scholars to produce such an all-inclusive work. A first serious attempt to collect Toller's work after the author's death in May 1939 was a single volume edition of 1961. It contained Toller's autobiography, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* [Growing up in Germany, 1933]; his *Briefe aus dem Gefängnis* [Letters from Prison, 1935]; four of his plays, i.e. *Die Wandlung* [The Transformation, 1919], *Masse-Mensch* [Masses and Man, 1919], *Die Maschinenstürmer* [The Machine Wreckers, 1922], and *Hinkemann* [Hinkemann, 1923]; two of his lyrical works, i.e. *Vormorgen* (1924) and *Das Schwalbenbuch* [The Swallow Book, 1924]; a text by the Austrian writer Stefan Großmann on Toller's trial after his participation in the *Räterepublik*; a very short bibliography; and a foreword by Kurt Hiller, a leading figure of so called Activist Expressionism in the 1910s—a movement that had profoundly

influenced the young Toller during the First World War.¹ John M. Spalek (b. 1928), who did much to establish the legacy of exile authors and that of Toller in particular, decided to expand this Toller-edition and aimed at a more complete version from the 1960s onwards. Spalek, a Polish-American scholar of German literature, edited the first bibliography, *Ernst Toller and his Critics: a Bibliography* (1968)— a first, serious attempt to an overview of all the work by and about Toller.² Together with Wolfgang Frühwald, moreover, he also collected Toller's work—a project that resulted, ten years later, in the publication of the *Gesammelte Werke* [Collected Works, 1978]. This five volume collection,³ published by the Carl Hanser Verlag, expanded the *Auswahl-Edition* of 1961 with other plays by Toller, i.e. *Der entfesselte Wotan* [The Unchained Wotan, 1923], *Hoppla, wir leben!* [Whoops, we're alive! 1927], *Feuer aus den Kesseln* [Fire from the Kettle, 1930], *Nie Wieder Friede!* [No More Peace! 1936], and *Pastor Hall* [Pastor Hall, 1939]; with his *Justiz-Erlebnisse* [Justice-Experiences, 1927]; and with some of his speeches, political pamphlets, articles, and poems. In addition, Spalek published a book, *Der Fall Toller* [The Toller Case, 1978], with selected and previously unpublished material on Toller's biography and political activities, such as the interrogation transcripts of Toller's trials in 1918 and 1919. A volume of collected letters by and to Toller remained unpublished at that time, as the editorial house wanted to include only a selected, rather than complete, volume of the correspondence. Spalek had selected some thousand letters, but the Carl Hanser Verlag was willing to print only three hundred. Spalek feared that the remaining letters would never be consulted by scholars, and therefore declined publication with the aim of publishing at a later date in some other venue.⁴

Spalek was aware of the need to update the *Gesammelte Werke*. He had published only a selection of Toller's plays. He also realized that the edition did not include new material about Toller brought to light by scholars after 1978. Ultimately, his aim was the creation of a 'complete' edition. In 1993, he discussed

¹ Ernst Toller, *Prosa, Briefe, Dramen, Gedichte*. Mit einem Vorwort von Kurt Hiller (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1961).

² John M. Spalek, *Ernst Toller and His Critics. A Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968; New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973).

³ Ernst Toller, *Gesammelte Werke* (GW), eds. John M. Spalek und Wolfgang Frühwald (Frankfurt a/Main: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978). Five volumes— 1: *Kritische Schriften, Reden und Reportagen*; 2: *Dramen und Gedichte aus dem Gefängnis (1918-1924)*; 3: *Politisches Theater und Dramen im Exil (1927-1939)*; 4: *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*; 5: *Briefe aus dem Gefängnis*.

⁴ Interview with Dieter Distl d.d. November 9th 2015.

the need for such an edition with Dieter Distl, the author of a political biography on Toller that was published in that very same year.⁵ Their conversation led to the idea of an Ernst Toller Society in Neuberg an der Donau (near Munich), a Society that was founded four years later, in 1997, with the aim of publishing an edition of all of Toller's work. Distl, who became the president of that Society, coordinated the first steps toward such an edition. Others like Toller-expert Stefan Neuhaus, for instance, joined the project.⁶ In 2009, Neuhaus became a professor in Innsbruck (Austria), and with the aid of the Austrian *Wissenschaftsfonds* (FWF) he opened a branch office of the Toller Society there. Thereafter, the editing process of the *Sämtliche Werke* [Complete Works, 2015] could truly begin.⁷ Moreover, the creation of this office took place in the year that the copyright on Toller's works—seventy years after his death—expired. Producing the *Sämtliche Werke* had before then been encumbered by the struggle over rights, a problem that was now resolved.⁸ Still, collecting all of Toller's published and unpublished material was very time consuming. As Toller's *Nachlass* had been dispersed as a result, amongst other things, of his forced flight from Nazi Germany into political exile after 1933, visits had to be paid to a variety of places, predominantly in Germany and the United States. According to Michael Pilz, one of the main editors, scholarship on Toller since the publication of the 1978 *Gesammelte Werke* had significantly contributed to the collection of this archival material, but all the sources had to be consulted by the editors themselves.⁹ Finally, in December 2014, the *Sämtliche Werke* were published by Wallstein-Verlag.

Until the appearance of the *Sämtliche Werke*, Spalek and Frühwald's edition had been the most complete and authoritative work in the field. The *Sämtliche Werke* have expanded the 1978 edition—with the editors of this new edition claiming a level of completeness that distinguishes it from the earlier one. Of

⁵ Dieter Distl, *Ernst Toller. Eine politische Biographie* (Munich: Bickel, 1993).

⁶ Stefan Neuhaus edited, amongst others, the following publication of the Ernst-Toller-Society: *Ernst Toller und die Weimarer Republik: ein Autor im Spannungsfeld von Literatur und Politik*, eds. Stefan Neuhaus, Rolf Selbmann and Thorsten Unger (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).

⁷ Interviews with Michael Pilz d.d. November 4th 2015, Kirsten Reimers d.d. November 5th 2015, and Distl d.d. November 9th 2015; "Editorische Nachbemerkung zur Werkausgabe" in Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke (SW): Volume V*, 472.

⁸ Christiane Grautoff, Toller's third wife, had sold her husband's rights to Sidney Kaufman, a film producer and friend of Toller, and the rights were then inherited by Kaufman's daughter, complicating the publication of all of Toller's work.

⁹ Interview with Pilz d.d. November 4th 2015.

course, completeness, as the editors also write, is only an ideal— the new *Sämtliche Werke* do not claim to be all-inclusive.¹⁰ Excluded from this five-volume edition are, first of all, Toller's letters. Although the Toller Society has now amassed a considerable collection of the letters, it has decided to publish them separately in a two-volume edition—with publication still possible in 2016.¹¹ In the context of this two-volume edition of letters, the editors also found some small, additional publications by Toller, such as newspaper and magazine columns, that were not included in the *Sämtliche Werke*.¹² A new bibliography, intended as an update of Spalek's 1968 bibliography, has since been finalized and published as well,¹³ although this book, edited by Michael Pilz, is likewise not part of the *Sämtliche Werke*.

Another significant difference from the 1978 edition of Spalek and Frühwald is that the *Sämtliche Werke* published in December 2014 are not simply a reader's edition. They are, rather, a *critical* edition. They contain elaborate appendices with, among other resources, lists of various editions of Toller's works, directories of all variations made to those works, detailed comments, and scholarly afterwords. Here the editors have performed some truly meticulous research. The variations' directories, which are in my view among the most valuable *critical* contributions of this edition, reveal the changes made by Toller to texts (plays, poems, autobiography, etc.) and, thus, also reveal much about the way in which Toller continually fashioned and re-fashioned his work throughout his life. Marvelous and very labour-intensive work has been done with regard to the comments, too, although occasionally these comments are open to slightly varying interpretations¹⁴ and – albeit only on very rare occasion

¹⁰ Toller, *SW*, V, 471.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; Interviews with Pilz and Reimers d.d. November 4th, resp. November 5th, 2015.

¹² Interview with Pilz d.d. November 4th, 2015.

¹³ *Ernst-Toller-Bibliographie 1968-2012. Mit Nachträgen zu John M. Spalek: Ernst Toller and his critics (1968)*, ed. Michael Pilz (Würzburg: Köningshausen & Neumann, 2016).

¹⁴ For example, the editors argue in one of their comments (“4, 23,” 297) that the so-called *Kommis des Tages* in Toller's *Die Wandlung*, takes a Marxist stance and calls for violence. This interpretation corresponds to that of William Anthony Willibrand and others. However, it is unlikely that Toller modeled the *Kommis* on a Marxist. To be sure, Toller's play was more or less finished by December 1917 (see the typescript in the Landauer archive, IISG, Amsterdam), and the *Kommis* is already part of this first draft. At that point, Toller had not yet experienced the impact of the Communists (or, therefore, any possible equation between Marxism and violence), something that would become the case only during the *Räterepublik* in 1919. There are no signs that Toller was influenced by Marxist ideology at that time. Nor is there any indication that he was well informed about it. Toller writes that he first read the Socialist classics - Marx, Engels, etc. - in prison in February-April 1918, but there is no evidence of profound impact of these readings.

– provide some erroneous information.¹⁵ The afterwords analyse and interpret scholarly research on Toller’s work, some of the changes made to his work, and the reception of that work both during and after Toller’s life in literature and reviews as well as on stage. I find these afterwords, which are provided for the vast majority of the many sections in each of the edition’s five volumes, very insightful and well-composed. Yet, they are occasionally absent, as, for example, in the section on Toller’s unpublished poems (printed in Volume V).

The *Sämtliche Werke* are divided into five massive volumes. Each volume, as well as each section of each volume, is chronologically organized. **Volume I and II** include all of Toller’s plays. More specifically, **volume I** contains Toller’s first play, *Die Wandlung*, written in 1917-1918, and all the plays that were written in the years that he spent in prison from 1919 to 1924 as a consequence of his involvement in the ill-fated Bavarian *Räterepublik*. The prison plays include *Masse Mensch*, *Die Maschinenstürmer*, *Der deutsche Hinkemann* [The German

It is much more likely that the *Kommis* represents the kind of demagogue born out of the war—he is the one who propagates war for its own sake, and for its aesthetic aspect. In so doing, he is the antithesis of the protagonist of the play, Friedrich. He is, moreover, a counter-image of Friedrich in a phase that is not yet politicized—he is, in many respects, an apolitical figure. For this, see my dissertation: Frederik Steven Louis Schouten, “Ernst Toller: An Intellectual Youth Biography” (unpublished dissertation, EUI Florence 2007), 168. On the *Kommis* as a Marxist, see: William Anthony Willibrand, *Ernst Toller and his Ideology* (Iowa City, 1945), 40; Walter H. Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis. Expressionism in Twentieth-Century German Literature* (Stanford, California, 1959), 183 (relying on Willibrand); on the *Kommis* as a “man of the proletarian masses” (Mennemeier), see: Franz Norbert Mennemeier, “Das idealistische Proletariendrama: Ernst Tollers Weg vom Aktionsstück zur Tragödie” *Zu Ernst Toller: Drama und Engagement*, ed. Jost Hermand (Stuttgart: Klett, 1981), 28 resp. 76

¹⁵ Relying on a study by Maria Piosik, the editors wrongly write that Toller’s grandfather was the “merchant and factory owner Isaac Cohn” (*SW, III*: comment “105, 19,” 651). In truth, Toller’s grandfather was called Heimann Cohn, and he was a corn merchant and an innkeeper. Isaac Cohn was a relative, but not Toller’s grandfather. Moreover, referring to Wolfgang Rothe’s pioneering work on Toller, the editors falsely state that Rothe argues that “Max Sel” was possibly Wilhelm Rach (*SW, III*: comment “110, 29,” 651). Rothe does not equate “Max Sel” with Rach. It is likely, as I have argued in my dissertation, that “Max Sel” was Max Seligsohn (b. 1892). Seligsohn was a companion at the *Knabenschule* in Samotschin, Toller’s birthtown. On Heimann Cohn and “Max Sel,” see: Schouten, “Ernst Toller,” 46-47 and 56; on Rothe’s reference to Rach, see: Wolfgang Rothe, *Ernst Toller in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1997), 125, footnote 21; for Piosik on Isaac Cohn, see: Maria Piosik, “Ernst Tollers Kindheit und Jugendjahre in Polen (1893-1912)” *Ernst Tollers Geburtsort Samotschin*, eds. Thorsten Unger and Maria Wojtczak (Würzburg: Köningshausen & Neumann, 2001).

Hinkemann, 1923]¹⁶, and *Der entfesselte Wotan*, all of which were also part of the 1978-edition by Spalek and Frühwald (as well as more or less part of the *Auswahlausgabe* of 1961). Volume I also contains some lesser known, ‘smaller’ dramatic pieces, i.e. *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers* [The Rage of the Mocking Lover, 1920], *Deutsche Revolution* [German Revolution, 1921], and *Bilder aus der größten französischen Revolution* [Images from the Great French Revolution, 1922], none of which had not been included in the 1978 edition. While most of these early plays deal with humanitarian idealism and politics, *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers* is about love and sexuality in 16th century Italy. The play, written in the Eichstätt prison (near Munich), has been characterized by one scholar (and co-editor of the *Sämtliche Werke*) as “a sublimation of Toller’s sexual wish-phantasies in prison.”¹⁷ First published in 1920 in the Expressionist monthly *Die Weißen Blätter*,¹⁸ it has received hardly any serious attention in scholarship. This is the first time that the play has been incorporated in a Toller edition.¹⁹

Volume II covers the plays written in the Weimar period after Toller’s release from prison in 1924 as well as those written in exile (1933-1939). It contains not only those plays that were already included in the 1978 edition, such as *Nie wieder Friede!* and *Pastor Hall*, but also those that Toller wrote with Walter Hasenclever – i.e. *Bourgeois bleibt Bourgeois* [Bourgeois will be Bourgeois, 1929] — and Hermann Kesten – i.e. *Wunder in Amerika* [Miracle in America, 1931] – as well as four smaller, lesser known works--*Berlin 1919* (Berlin 1919, 1926/27), *Der Autor Alwis Kronberg* [The Author Alwis Kronberg, 1933], *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* [The Emperor’s New Clothes, 1932], and *Forget Europe* (1936/37)--none of which had been included in the Spalek-Frühwald edition. Volume II also contains variations and different versions of the above-mentioned *Berlin 1919*, *Hoppla, wir leben!* and *Feuer aus den Kesseln*—variants of works that no previous Toller edition has ever before published in this form. In

¹⁶ This is the same play as *Hinkemann*; the first version of this play was called *Der deutsche Hinkemann*, and it was published in 1923, whereas *Hinkemann* was the title given to the next editions, from 1924 onwards. The 1961 edition choose to integrate the play as *Hinkemann*, the 1978 edition as *Der Deutsche Hinkemann*.

¹⁷ Kirsten Reimers, *Das Bewältigen des Wirklichen. Untersuchungen zum dramatischen Schaffen Ernst Tollers zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000) 63.

¹⁸ Ernst Toller, “Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers, oder Frauenlist und Männerlist: Ein galantes Puppenspiel in zwei Akten frei nach einer Geschichte des Kardinal Bandello,” *Die weißen Blätter: Eine Monatsschrift*, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1920) (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Klaus Reprint, 1969), 489-504.

¹⁹ “Nachwort” to *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers*, Toller, *SW, I*, 340-352.

addition, and also unlike the 1978 edition, the volume contains *Die Blinde Göttin* [The Blind Goddess, 1932] —a play that was inspired by the trial of Max Riedel and Antonia Guala, a couple that had been falsely accused of the murder of Riedel's wife and that had, as a result, served years in a Swiss prison. The case inspired Toller to write an article, published on October 31st 1931 in *Die Weltbühne* (vol. 27, n. 41),²⁰ and a radio play, *Indizien: Drama für Rundfunk* [Evidence: Drama for the Radio, 1932], broadcasted on May 7th 1932 by the Viennese RAVAG.²¹ *Die Blinde Göttin*, a reworking of the radio play, was staged for the first time on 31 October 1932 in the Raimund Theater in Vienna.²² The play is one of many of Toller's works in which social (in)justice is central.

Volume III contains Toller's autobiographical work and critique of the legal system, i.e. Toller's *Justiz-Erlebnisse*; his autobiography; his prison letters; "short prose" [*kleine Prosa*]; interviews that have been conducted with Toller; and the interrogation transcripts of the trials following his participation in the January strike of 1918 and in the 1919 *Räterepublik*. The *Justiz-Erlebnisse*, a collection of articles, are about Toller's experiences of and reflections about the German legal system during his prison years (1919-1924). Toller's autobiography, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* (1933), is an absolutely marvelous piece of work that reveals much about Toller's life, although it is often more a fictional than an autobiographical account. The "short prose" and the "interviews" contain several relatively brief texts by and about Toller. An example of the "short prose" is *Gefangenschaft und Sexualität* [Prison Life and Sexuality, 1932]. The text, first presented at a congress of the World League for Sexual Reform in September 1931 in Vienna, analyses the relation between prison life and sexuality on the basis of Toller's impressions and experiences in the Eichstätt prison—the same place, that is, in which he wrote *Die Rache des Verhönten Liebhabers*. The interrogation transcripts of the trials of 1918 and 1919 provide fascinating material for all those interested in Toller's role in the Bavarian revolution. They also contain interesting information on Toller's life before the revolution.

Volume IV, subdivided into two physical volumes (4.1 and 4.2), contains *Quer Durch: Reisebilder und Reden* (1930); Toller's early political pamphlets; publications during the Bavarian Revolution and official texts of the *Räterepublik*; speeches; essays; reviews; contributions to *Festschriften*; travel

²⁰ The article is printed in Volume IV.1: Ernst Toller, "Giftmordprozeß Riedel-Guala," *Ibid.*, SW, IV.1, 509-512.

²¹ Toller, SW, V, 420.

²² "Nachwort" to *Die Blinde Göttin*, Toller, SW, II, 753-772; also, Toller, SW, V, 420.

reports; parts of a book on Toller's Spanish relief project of the late 1930s; and some additional, not very substantial material. *Quer Durch* contains Toller's impressions of travels in the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as a section entitled "speeches and essays;" the latter section contains, amongst others, Toller's letter from 20 December 1917 to Gustav Landauer, his spiritual father during the First World War. The Toller-edition of 1978 had already integrated a selection of texts from *Quer Durch*, including Toller's letter to Landauer, but as a whole the book has never been part of a Toller edition.²³ However, the most interesting sections of volume IV consist, in my view, of the early political pamphlets and the publications and official texts of the Bavarian *Räterepublik*. Here lots of previously unpublished material has been printed along with more familiar material, such as the call (*Aufruf*) of Toller's *Kulturpolitischen Bund der Jugend in Deutschland* [Cultural Political League of the Youth in Germany, 1917]. The political pamphlets contain material on Toller's first public actions, i.e. those in student circles from 1917, those in the Munich strike movement of January 1918 and those in the Revolution and *Räterepublik* in 1918-1919.

Apart from being a brilliant writer, Toller was a brilliant orator— a talent that first manifested itself during his political career in Munich at the end and in the aftermath of the First World War, but that remained part and parcel of his public performance from that time onward. Apart from speeches held during the Bavarian Revolution this volume contains the speeches Toller held in his later life, including the speech he gave at the PEN-Club in London in 1936. The section containing Toller's essays includes previously unpublished material, but also such texts as the *Weltbühne*-article on the Riedel-Guala case (see above), which had also been printed in the Spalek and Frühwald edition. The "travel reports" of volume IV expand beyond Toller's reports on travels to the United States and the Soviet Union, which had been printed in the above mentioned *Quer Durch*, to include reports on travels to countries such as Denmark, Hungary, and Spain. Republican Spain, more than any other foreign country, held a special significance for Toller during his years of political exile. He had tried to aid this country with food in the late 1930s, and also selected material for a book about this project (printed in the last section of volume IV)—although the book never materialized. The Spanish relief project itself was also unsuccessful.

²³ Toller, *SW*, IV.2, 801.

Volume V contains Toller's published and unpublished poems; a section that the editors call "aphorisms and anecdotes"; narratives; radio plays; and film scripts. Toller was best known as a playwright and intellectual, but in his early life, especially before 1920,²⁴ he also wrote poetry. His first published poem, "Marschlied" ["Marching Song"], appeared in 1918 in the well-known literary magazine *Die Aktion*. Besides individual poems and a few translations of poems, Toller published three volumes of poetry, i.e. *Gedichte der Gefangenen* [Poems of Prisoners, 1921], *Das Schwalbenbuch*, and *Vormorgen*, as well as three so called *Chorwerke* [Choral Works], i.e. *Requiem den erschossenen Brüdern* [Requiem for the Brothers Who Have Been Shot to Death, 1920], *Tag des Proletariats* [Day of the Proletariat, 1920], and *Weltliche Passion* [Worldly Passion, 1934]. Toller's *Schwalbenbuch*, based on a visit of swallows to Toller's prison cell in 1922, is a beautifully composed work of poetry about a pair of swallows that challenge the authorities of Toller's prison, Niederschönfeld, with their liberty to settle wherever they want and with their repeated returns after having been chased away. Toller's *Chorwerke* are a contribution, as the editor of this section also writes in the afterword, to socialist poetry. Fascinating in this volume is the section of unpublished poems, most of which have been printed in James Jordan's *Previously Unpublished Poems of Ernst Toller* (2000).²⁵ However, I am skeptical about the attempt by this section's editor to date many of these poems by means of a somewhat uncritical acceptance of Jordan's interpretations. In my opinion, Jordan tried to date these poems in the above mentioned book on the basis of rather superficial historical analyses. The sections "aphorisms and anecdotes" and "narratives" contain, amongst others, the previously unpublished text "Der Tod einer Mutter" ["The Death of a Mother"] – the text, dated 1939 by John M. Spalek, reveals how much Toller fashioned his autobiography up to the very end of his life. It also suggests how central his relationship to his mother, Ida Toller-Cohn, was to his life. The narrative is a romanticized story of the way in which a (i.e. Toller's) mother defended her son's reputation against the Nazis until her death on 28 December 1933.²⁶

²⁴ "Editorische Vorbemerkung" Toller, *SW*, V, 295.

²⁵ James Jordan, *Previously Unpublished Poems of German playwright Ernst Toller (1893-1939). A Critical Translation* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2000).

²⁶ On the date of the death of Toller's mother, see: Richard Dove, *He was a German: A Biography of Ernst Toller* (London: Libris, 1993), 248; on the significance of Toller's relationship to his mother, see for example: Steven Schouten, "Ernst Toller's Opfer," *Faltenwürfe der Geschichte: Entdecken, entziffern, erzählen*, eds. Sandra Mass and Xenia von Tippelskirch (Frankfurt am Main: Böhlau Verlag 2014), 159-179.

Volume V also contains Toller's radio plays, i.e. *Berlin, letzte Ausgabe!* [Berlin, Last Edition! 1930] and the above mentioned *Indizien*. While *Berlin, Letzte Ausgabe!* has received much scholarly attention, *Indizien* is largely unknown. As we have seen, this play was inspired by the Riedel-Guala trial and reworked in *Die Blinde Göttin. Indizien*, which is here first published in book-form.²⁷ It reveals not only the “ethical problems” of evidence-based justice, the editors of this section write, but also shows how reality is presented in a public sphere dominated by mass media—in this case by radio.²⁸ Interestingly, Toller thus used the radio as a medium to point to the dangers of that specific medium at the very same time. With regard to the film screenplays, finally, the volume includes, amongst others, *Der weg nach Indien* [The Way to India, undated]. The manuscript, written in American exile (probably between 1937 and 1938/39),²⁹ was never published as text or realized as film. As a screenplay writer, Toller was unsuccessful.

The *Sämtliche Werke* are a milestone in scholarship on Toller. Although the *Werke* cannot, of course, replace the original documents that are kept in the archives, scholars will find in this marvelous five-volume edition all the material they might need for further research on Toller. The texts provide not only Toller's creative work, but also information about that work, as well as about Toller's life and the issues of the age in which he lived. All this makes these works interesting not only for literary scholars, but also for historians and other specialists. Toller's reputation as a writer intersected with his social and political activism, and his work therefore touches upon a variety of social and political themes—ranging from political idealism to the search for social justice, and from the use and abuse of mass media to issues of love and sexuality.

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²⁷ Toller, *SW*, V, 421, 424.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 432.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 438.

Robert Weinberg, *Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia. The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014) pp. 188.

Edmund Levin, *A Child of Christian Blood. Murder and Conspiracy in Tsarist Russia: the Beilis Blood Libel*, (New York: Schocken Books, 2014) pp. 377.

by *Darius Staliunas*

In 2014 there appeared two books, devoted to the so-called Beilis affair. One of the incentives for their appearance was the fact that 2013 marked the hundredth anniversary of the affair, which in fact took place in 1913 in Kiev, when the Jew Menahem Mendel Beilis was charged with the murder, which had actually happened two years earlier in 1911, of the Christian boy Andrei Iushchinskii for religious purposes – that is, in order to get his blood.

These two books consistently, although in different styles, relate the history of the Beilis affair. Most of the details related in these books are essentially the same: part of the law enforcement personnel felt that it was not a ritual murder and tried to resist the falsification of the case, and hence also the incrimination of Beilis, but the other side (especially assistant prosecutor Georgii Chaplinskii) together with local right-wingers, as well as with the support of some high-level officials (Minister of Justice Ivan Shcheglovitov), fabricated the case against Beilis. The absurdity of the situation was that Beilis was not a religious Jew, yet the indictment only implied religious reasons. Both authors believe that, most likely, the crime was committed by Vera Cheberiak together with her gang of thieves. Cheberiak in order to conceal the crime imitated a ritual murder, and later contributed to the incrimination of Beilis. In a very similar manner both authors evaluate the process, in which the prosecutors did not provide any solid evidence against Beilis, and their invited experts, for example the priest Justinas Pranaitis, during the trial appeared as totally incompetent. As well-known, the court acquitted Beilis, but acknowledged Iushchinskii's killing as a ritual murder and in doing so loosely confirmed the charges against the whole Jewish community.

The fact that these books have a lot of similarities should not surprise. Both were written basing upon works of same historians (especially of Hans Rogger, the favourite of the two authors) and on similar sources. Both use similar comparisons (for example, the notorious Dreyfus case in France). Both believe

that the increase in blood libel cases detected in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, was associated with the emergence of anti-Semitism (Levin, p. 306; Weinberg p. 7). Both Levin and Weinberg at the beginning of their books provide a list of the main characters, which in general is more typical to the theatrical genre, rather than academic literature. So, even though there are important differences (which we will discuss later) in these books, the overall picture of the Beilis affair is very similar.

This case was already well-known to researchers of the history of East European Jews¹ and, moreover, remained for a long time in the cultural memory of East European Jews themselves. Yet, a detailed academic study was indeed missing. In a larger context, it must be said that the blood libel cases in the Russian Empire until now have gained far less attention² than those in Prussia (German Empire) and Austria (Austrian-Hungarian Empire).³

The books discussed here, devoted to the Beilis affair, are important not only because they reconstruct in-details the course of this case, describe the attitudes and actions of various groups of society and the representatives of the authorities, but also for more general reasons. First of all, they are important for the scholarly debate about the relationship between the older hostility to the Jews (Jew-hatred) and modern forms of anti-Semitism; secondly, they are relevant in the context of the dispute of the Russian government's role in organizing anti-Jewish pogroms or accusing Jews of using the blood of Christians.

¹ John D. Klier wrote about it: John Klier, "Cry Bloody Murder", *East European Jewish Affairs*, 36/2 (2006): 213-229.

² Of course, one has to mention the conference at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2014:

<http://www.jewishculture.illinois.edu/events/conferences/RitualMurder-Conference.html>

³ Here one must mention the works carried out already for many years by Hillel J. Kieval, "Representation and Knowledge in Medieval and Modern Accounts of Jewish Ritual Murder," *Jewish Social Studies*, 1/1 (1994): 52-72; H. J. Kieval, "Middleman Minorities and Blood. Is There a Natural Economy of the Ritual Murder Accusation in Europe?" in *Essential Outsiders. Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, edited by Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), 208-233; H. J. Kieval, "Neighbors, Strangers, Readers: The Village and the City in Jewish-Gentile Conflict at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 12 (2005): 61-79; H. J. Kieval, "The Rules of the Game: Forensic Medicine and the Language of Science in the Structuring of Modern Ritual Murder Trials," *Jewish History*, 26 (2012): 287-307.

In scholarly literature one can find those who strictly separate the old (religious) hostility to the Jews from the modern (secular) one; others do not see essential differences between intolerance to the Jews in the Middle Ages and modern times. The Beilis affair clearly shows that another interpretation is more accurate: that modern anti-Semitism, in fact, was different from the previous forms of hostility to the Jews (it became “scientific” – based on racial theory, it encouraged immediate political action, stressed very much the entrenchment of the Jews throughout the world and so on), but it also integrated older forms of Jew-hatred. The belief that Jews need Christian blood for religious or medical purposes, which was found not only in the nineteenth but also in subsequent centuries, is just good proof of such symbiosis. As Weinberg writes, “In fact, it is likely that both kinds of antisemitism influenced and even reinforced each other. Antisemitism was acquiring a modern complexion, but pre-modern prejudices sustained it” (p. 8).

For a long time the investigation of the history of Jews in the Russian Empire were influenced by the publications of the famous political activist and historian Simon Dubnov, according to which the life of the Jews in the Romanov Empire had been a permanent torment, and the imperial government from the partitions of Poland-Lithuania at the end of the eighteenth century consistently discriminated against the Jews. Even more so, the government organized pogroms against Jews and prepared processes, which accused the Jews of using the blood of Christians. The historiography of the last few decades rejected this interpretation. The works of Hans Rogger, Schlomo Lambroza, John D. Klier, Alexey Miller and others clearly showed that the discrimination of the Jews did not begin immediately after the first partition of Poland-Lithuania⁴, that the imperial government was not interested in pogroms and did not organize them. It is true, at the same time, that researchers also noted that, for example, the role of the Russian government in pogroms should not be entirely overlooked: it created the atmosphere of intolerance towards Jews; strongly discriminated against this ethno-religious group; after the pogroms, the government often operated inefficiently; the participants to pogroms often did not receive punishment, etc. As Hans Rogger wrote in 1966 about the Beilis affair, “There had been no grand design; there had not even been a tactical plan. There had been an experiment, conducted by a small band of unsuccessful politicians and

⁴ Until that time the Jews could not legally live in the Russian Empire. Therefore, the “Jewish question” arises only after 1772 when Russia joined part of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of which a significant proportion of the population were Jews.

honest maniacs to see how far they could go in imposing their cynicism and their madness on the state.” (Weinberg, p. 84). The books being reviewed somehow differ in this sense: although both books follow the new historiographical paradigm, Levin’s book still contains some elements that remind one of Dubnov’s interpretation: “Russia’s Jews were subject to a vast, oppressive, and ever-growing burden of more than a thousand discriminatory statutes and regulations restricting where they could live, where they could worship, which schools they could attend, and what kind of work they could perform.” (Levin, p. 11) It is not clear how the author calculated that there were more than a thousand statutes and regulations. There is no need to argue that the Jews were one of the most discriminated ethnic/confessional groups in the Russian Empire, however, one must remember that the life of all social, confessional or ethnic groups in the Romanov Empire was in one way or another regulated by imperial authorities. In addition, it is not true that the situation of the Jews only worsened. During the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) many reforms, which did not discriminate the Jews, were implemented. Although Levin sees differences between the views of the imperial officials to the Jewish question and specifically to the Beilis Affair (for example, he believes that Pyotr Stolypin was against that falsification), he often talks in general about the “government,” which fabricated the case against Beilis (pp. 126-127).

In general, understanding the motives that led the representatives of the government to accuse a Jew of ritual murder is one of the biggest challenges for the researcher that deals with such a topic. Levin has a pretty clear answer: the officials fabricated the case, because they wanted to please the Tsar, who allegedly was pleased with how everything went (pp. 119-120). In addition, he argues with no hesitation that the Tsar let his subordinates understand that he believed in Jewish ritual murder, even though he did not have strong evidence to support this thesis: “Nicholas had become the first Russian ruler to convey clearly to the *narod*, the common people, his belief in the existence of Jewish ritual murder. He never articulated this message in words but conveyed it through unmistakable ceremonial symbolism – by so visibly supporting the Black Hundreds, as on this day – and through the actions of his officials in the notorious Kiev murder case” (Levin, 183).

Meanwhile, Weinberg is considerably more careful. In his view, the historian cannot determine with certainty the motivation of these officers, so in his book he only presents hypotheses. It may be, in the opinion of Weinberg, that the already mentioned Shcheglovitov sought to strengthen the “ideological bulwark

that would justify autocratic principles, values, and policy, particularly toward the Jews” (Weinberg, p. 13). Meanwhile, the case with lower-ranking officers was clearer. Right-wing activists in Kiev influenced some of the officials who carried out the investigation. Similarly, just like Levin, Weinberg believes that the rightists expected to please the Tsar and to strengthen anti-Jewish policies. It may be that, in this way, the officials hoped to “prove” that the Jews were really dangerous and thus justify Russia’s ongoing anti-Jewish policies (pp. 13-14). At the same time Weinberg notes that “without the persistent efforts of Golubev⁵ (and to a lesser extent Cheberiak), who untiringly cajoled and harangued police and judicial officials in Kiev to focus their investigation on Jews, it is unlikely that the authorities would have manufactured a case against Beilis, or any Jew for that matter” (p. 27). The profession of the historian is really ungrateful when one has to disclose the motivation of heroes of the past. The author of the review acquainted only with these two books and the earlier works of historians on the same subject, but not with the primary sources, can only question the raised hypotheses or propose new ones. It seems to me that the hypothesis about the desire to please the Tsar is a plausible one. I think that in addition to the raised hypotheses, one can raise one more - it may be that the officials involved in this process did not have any special, far-reaching political or personal goals, but sincerely believed that the Jews from time to time, especially during Easter and Passover, carried out ritual murders.⁶ In addition, one could, perhaps, succeed in disclosing the motivation of officials of a higher rank, for example, Shcheglovitov, by analysing in greater detail his activities and views (this is often difficult to do with lower-level officials because of a lack of sources).

There are also more important differences between these two books. The study of Weinberg is written according to all the norms characteristic for an academic text: the Beilis affair is placed in a wider context; the narration is concise and clear; statements logically follow from the presented materials; footnotes are provided when discussing facts. To be praised in this book is that it contains sixty-four authentic documents concerning the Beilis affair. In this way, the reader can check the majority of the author’s theses. Moreover, these documents can be used when teaching and lecturing about the process. Therefore, this book is above all recommended to academic readers.

Levin obviously targets another public: information about the sources used in

⁵ Vladimir Golubev – university student, member of the Society of the Double-Headed Eagle.

⁶ Weinberg also mentions this hypothesis in his book: see p. 27.

his book is provided in a different manner than usual academic literature; in the titles of chapters we see only citations, but there is no precise explanation of the content; and what is most important - this book is more like a good historical detective novel than an academic monograph. Levin many times even tries to convey the emotions of the characters, has fewer doubts about the course of events or the motivation of characters. Therefore, this book is more suitable as a leisure reading, although it also conveys pretty well the general atmosphere of the period in Kiev and the Russian Empire.

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Atalia Omer, *When Peace Is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp Thinks about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 368.

by Jon Simons

When Peace Is Not Enough is a deeply felt, well-researched and innovative book that offers reflexive and constructive criticism of the *thought* (rather than practice of) the mainstream or liberal Zionist peace camp. Atalia Omer interrogates the underlying logic of the conflict in terms of Zionist, Jewish Israeli identity, which she argues is particularistic, Orientalist and ethnocentric (she does not go so far as to call it racist). For the author, “Euro-Zionism” is the “root cause of the conflict” (p. 275) and the source of multiple injustices.

Religious peace studies provides Omer’s with a novel critical hermeneutics, through which she attends to the secular, liberal Zionist peace camp’s unacknowledged reliance on a political theology. It incorporates Jewish religious symbolism at the same time as it attempts to secularize Biblical mythology, turning redemption of exile into return to the land. Consequently, liberal Zionism is immersed in a messianic historical narrative even as it blames the militant illiberalism of religious settler Zionism for the lack of peace. The Zionist peace movement is conceptually blind to the injustices (colonialism and conquest) entailed by establishing and sustaining an ethno-democratic Jewish state. It is focused on ending the Occupation of 1967 in order to ensure a majoritarian Jewish state, while overlooking the Nakba of 1948. Omer also adopts several other disciplinary perspectives: political theories of multiculturalism and justice, post-colonialism, and cultural theory, from which she derives an analytical-normative “metric by which [to] ... evaluate peace agenda” (p. 156). Liberal Zionist peace is not enough, because it is not *justpeace*, meaning a positive, holistic, transformative peace that entails social justice.

Omer’s critical analysis is confined to two peace groups. *Peace Now* exemplifies secular Zionism, but as it is a shadow of its former self, it would have been helpful if the book considered a group that has more current standing. The religious Zionist *peaceniks*, represented by *Rabbis for Human Rights*, are credited with challenging ethnocentrism through their recognition of the non-Jewish Other (the “stranger in our midst”) and with distinguishing the Judaic tradition from Zionism. But they fail the test because they accept the political theology of Zionism and Jewish majoritarianism.

Omer is by no means merely critical, but suggests ways in which conceptual blindness can be overcome. She calls for a post-secular secularism through which

Jewish religious tradition can be reinterpreted, pluralized, and play a positive role in Israeli nationhood. Omer also argues that the subaltern voices of Arab Jews (*Mizrahim*) and Palestinian Israelis must be integrated into an intra-Jewish and intra-Israeli reformulation of national, religious and ethnic identity. Between them, those voices articulate socio-economic injustice in Israel with Euro-Zionist colonialism, its Orientalist antagonism to Arabs and Middle Eastern Jewish religion, ethnicity and culture. The discourses of these subaltern social groups have their shortcomings too, Omer says, but are vital to both the conceptualization of *justpeace* and the reimagining of Israeli identity – and Judaism – as belonging in the Middle East. After all the critique, a de-Zionized Israel will need a substantive identity to which people feel committed.

The book advocacy for an intra-Israeli debate about the character of Jewish and Israeli ethnic, religious, and national identity will probably fall on deaf ears. Omer's approach to *justpeace* entails recognition of Zionist colonialism, the injustice of the Nakba, and the eradication of *Ashkenazi* ethnic supremacy. Such talk is anathema to liberal as well as mainstream Zionists, which might prove her point about conceptual blindness, but stands in the way of her holistic approach to conflict transformation that involves “a form of cultural therapy” and “trauma healing” (p. 67). The book will not be persuasive to Zionist Israelis, Diaspora Jews, and many others who regard Arab (and Muslim) hostility to the Jewish state and intransigence as the obstacle to peace. From their perspective the peace movement is blind – in this case to a harsh reality. Omer does acknowledge that Jewish (even if mostly *Ashkenazi*) Diasporic history of persecution, in particular the Holocaust, frame the way in which Jews experience the conflict, as victims of hostility. If openness to subaltern voices is vital to change that perspective, it could be productive to add social psychology to the disciplines Omer includes in her approach to peacebuilding, and to refer to the extensive literature on and examples of dialogue and reconciliation in this and other conflicts.¹

When Peace is not Enough stands out from other studies of the Israeli peace camp by not approaching it as a social movement, but as a discourse. In doing so, it tends to assume that conceptual blinders rather than material practices and circumstances explain its weaknesses. But is that the case? Omer argues that *Rabbis for Human Rights* falls short as it differentiates normatively between the rights of Israeli Palestinians (as “strangers” on a Jewish majority) and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Yet, during the week in which I read this book, in

¹ See, for example, Daniel Bar-Tal, “Psychological obstacles to peace-making in the Middle East and proposals to overcome them,” *Conflict and Communication Online*, 4/1 (2005): 1-15.

June 2015, *Rabbis for Human Rights* was engaged in its usual work, combining solidarity activity on the ground with legal activism to prevent the destruction of a Palestinian village within the Green Line (Umm al-Hiran) and one beyond it (Susiya). In practice, it blurs the normative boundary between Jewish Israel and Palestine.

On another tack, Tamar Hermann's social movement study of the shortcomings of the Israeli peace movement analyzes the waxing and waning success of the peace movement primarily in terms of changing political circumstances, rather than conceptual limitations. Hermann also recognizes the movement's failure to attract Palestinian Israelis and *Mizrahim*.² Similarly, Omer notes that a coalition that articulates the "domestic" struggles of the *Mizrahim* and Palestinian Israelis for justice and the "external" struggle of the Palestinians for national self-determination have not materialized," (p. 258) even though the conceptual resources for it exist. Again, social movement research may be a useful route to understand that lack.

Another useful line of analysis to explain the absence of a coalition for *justpeace* might follow from a minor voice among the subaltern voices. Omer does note that a core voice of new *Mizrahi* discourse, the Black Panthers, was informed by the radical left anti-Zionism of *Matzpen*, and she does include the Israeli Communist Party among the voices of Palestinian Israelis. Yet she does not develop a perspective that would, as do these doubly marginalized voices, offer a systematic critique of neoliberalism and capitalism. The holistic approach to peacebuilding on which she draws, which entails "concern with systematic injustices" (p. 67), seems ill-equipped to analyze such injustices without recourse to theories (such as Marxism and neo-Marxism) that identify the root causes of social injustice and social conflict in systematic exploitation. Omer wants to both uphold "the principles and values undergirding liberal democracies" and critique "the systems of domination that rearticulate and limit their implementation" (p. 220). But what if (as Marxists and some poststructuralists claim) liberal democracy necessarily entails domination?

Omer characterizes her critical project as a "hermeneutics of citizenship." Yet, that is an odd phrase for the radical practice of peacebuilding she envisages. Repeatedly, she turns to the terms "imagination" and "reimagination" to characterize the work that has to be done on the way to *justpeace*. Omer is leading us towards an inspiring vision of Israel-Palestine, one which is at home in the Middle East and enables all its inhabitants to feel at home. To achieve that

² Tamar Hermann, *The Israeli Peace Movement: A Shattered Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Jon Simons

vision we need not only multiple perspectives but also multiple material acts, affects, bodies. Perhaps the vision is utopian, but “Utopia is a form of concretization that requires detailed planning.”³ Maybe it is enough that the activists who still engage in Palestinian-Israeli peacebuilding, in spite of the difficult circumstances under which they work, imagine peace concretely.

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³ Norma Musih, “Hannah Farah – Kufr Bir’im”, in *Solution 196-213: United States of Palestine-Israel*, ed. Joshua Simon (Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2011): 72.

Yulia Egorova and Shahid Perwez, *The Jews of Andhra Pradesh: Contesting Caste and Religion in South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. x-208.

by Galit Shashoua

For centuries, the myth of the Lost Tribes of Israel has served a spiritual role in Jewish history. It spread into the “tool-kit” of Western colonizing nations giving meaning to the “others” they met in new “explored” lands.¹ In recent decades, remote communities with Jewish practices and claims to belonging have attracted attention from religious activists, and scholars. What sets this study apart from the rest are its broad lens, creative theoretical framework, and rich ethnographical detail. In *The Jews of Andhra Pradesh: Contesting Caste and Religion in South India*, Yulia Egorova and Shahid Perwez home in on the process by which the boundaries and meaning of Jewishness are negotiated among the Bene Ephraim. Treating the development of identity as a fluid, ongoing process, the authors explore the broad political and social context in which the Bene Ephraim operate: their Jewish identity takes shape vis-à-vis Indian society with its caste system, on one hand, and the Israeli-Jewish state and related diaspora organizations, on the other. They present the methods by which Bene Ephraim give meaning to their Jewishness and develop practices and ceremonies. The study deals not only with the ways in which Bene Ephraim see themselves, but also with the ways in which the world around them enables and constrains their Jewishness and Jewish traditions. Egorova and Perwez thus seek to understand the ways in which the Bene Ephraim consider themselves to be Jewish, both on the individual and community level, as well as how they are perceived by a wide range of actors on the outside.

Within Indian society, the Bene Ephraim construct Jewishness through their interaction within the institutions, politics, religion and culture of the region. Although the caste system was officially outlawed in 1947, it is still an influential force in daily life. The authors argue that the Bene Ephraim—like other “untouchables”—develop alternative origin narratives to explain their inferior position in the caste system. These stories turn inferiority into a source of strength, a cause for celebration. The Bene Ephraim fit into this discourse of contested identities by emphasizing their Jewishness and their belonging to the Lost Tribes of Israel. They argue that the Jewish tradition of the Bene Ephraim is

¹ Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2002)

as much an expression of their pride in being *Madigan*, a type of outcast, as it is a protest against the caste system. Bene Ephraim's re-interpretation of India's history and Hindu tradition within the context of the Lost Tribes narrative allows the leaders of the Bene Ephraim – the Yacobi brothers – to claim a connection not only to ancient Israelites but also to Hindu traditions that they were excluded from because of their status. But Bene Ephraim identity is forged not only through narratives but through practices. With rich detail, Egorova and Perwez describe the religious practices of Bene Ephraim: their synagogues, festivals, burials, and dietary laws. Decisions on how to practice are negotiated within the constraints imposed by their material existence, for example, the need to shop and prepare meals on Shabbat (since there is no refrigeration).

Equally important to internal influences on the Judaizing process of the Bene Ephraim are the Israeli state and society, as well as international NGOs in the Jewish world. Within this complex web of relations, the Bene Ephraim construct new meanings of Jewishness, push the boundaries of known Jewishness and in return are impacted by the process. Here again we encounter tension. Their claim to be descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel links them to pre-biblical Judaism, while a desire to conform with norms in the larger Jewish world today makes practices such as wearing *kippot* (male head coverings) and using *siddurim* (prayer books) – both post-biblical practices—more attractive. The two Yacobi brothers lean toward opposite poles of this spectrum, adding another layer of complexity to community change.

In the Israeli context, the story of the Bene Ephraim is related to the Israeli Law of Return. The Bene Ephraim frame their Jewish identity in terms of *teshuvah* (return). They do not employ the language of conversion, but rather, speak about a return to the religion of their ancestors as members of the Lost Tribes of Israel. As far as the state of Israel is concerned, however, the Bene Ephraim do not qualify for the Law of Return unless they convert to Judaism since they are neither Jews by *Halakhah*, nor qualify based on other criteria of the law. So while the narrative of the Lost Tribes is central to Bene Ephraim identity as Jews, in practice their desire to be accepted as Jews in the state of Israel pushes the community toward more mainstream Judaism.

Here I find that the great strength of the book in positing fluid identities is also a source of weakness. The authors are too optimistic in their assumption that identity negotiation is an open process. While they acknowledge the existence of external constraints, they do not go far enough in recognizing the strong enforcing power of the State, particularly regarding *'aliyah*, and the Law of Return. The Bene Ephraim (and Bene Menashe for that matter) serve as examples not only for the changing boundaries of Jewishness in the state of

Israel, but the enduring power of political and religious institutions. The Bene Menashe successfully used their narrative of being part of the Lost Tribes to obtain recognition as *zera' yisrael* (lit. seed of Israel), which enables them to migrate to Israel. But in order to do so they had to convert. The enforcing power of the State and the rabbinical establishment pushes them toward more traditional Judaism. The same is true with Bene Ephraim. Without denying agency on the part of these groups, there is no doubt that the process of Judaizing is being shaped by rabbinical *Halakhah* in the State of Israel.

Nonetheless, *The Jews of Andhra Pradesh* is a remarkable contribution to the growing literature that deals with emergent Jewish communities and the process of Judaizing. Its ability to provide both rich description and a complex theoretical framework to deal with the questions of expanding boundaries of Jewishness raises the bar for other scholars. The book furthers our understanding of how the myth of the Lost Tribes is being employed within the context of Indian society and its caste system, and at the same time how it interacts with the Law of Return and the national and religious debates about “who is a Jew?” Scholars of identity construction theory, as well as specialists on Indian society, Israeli society and Jewish groups outside of Israel will all benefit from this valuable work. It adds an impressive body of knowledge to our understanding of Jewish communities in India and the tension between “old” and emerging communities.

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Sharon Rotbard, *White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), pp. 256.

by *Barbara Mann*

Cities are notoriously hard to pin down; they are a work in progress, always already both dynamic stage and evolving container of the diverse lives that move in and out of them. Stories about cities are even more slippery. However, just as history is told by the victors, stories about cities, as Sharon Rotbard points out in *White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa*, are also primarily dictated by those powerful economic, political and social forces that have built them. The received history of Tel Aviv in relation to Jaffa – the town from which it emerged, and to which it remains joined at the hyphenated-hip – is the putative subject of Rotbard’s study; however, the book is also a broader investigation of cultural and political identity, and especially how Israeli Jews have negotiated the burdens and responsibilities of national autonomy and regional power.

In the years since Rotbard’s bracing and passionate book first appeared in Hebrew in 2005, scholarship about Tel Aviv-Jaffa has burgeoned.¹ Scholars now have a fuller appreciation of the development of Israeli urban space, and Tel Aviv’s and Jaffa’s particular roles therein. Yet *White City, Black City* still reads like a fresh and necessary corrective – in parts like a slap in the face – mostly due to the fluent urgency of Rotbard’s prose, and the continual visual scrim that accompanies the text. This text-image dance is even more impressive in the original Hebrew version, which was one of the first volumes published by Rotbard’s own independent press, Babel. The book’s narrative folds on the fuzzy, threadbare seam that is the historical boundary between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, a border that – like all borders – is more about political exigencies than physical topography.

The term “white city” stems from the moniker that has shaped discourse about Tel Aviv since the 1980s, and references the city’s abundance of “international style” or Bauhaus constructions from the interwar period. “Black City” is all Rotbard’s invention – though, as he notes, examples may be found all over the world (p. 176). He means the term in the Morrisonian sense: in her classic study

¹ See “Tel Aviv at 100: Notes Towards a New Cultural History,” in *Jewish Social Studies*, 16/2 (2010): 93-110.

of American literature, *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison argues that it is only against [African-American] black, that [American] whiteness becomes visible; Herman Melville – especially, *Moby Dick*, with the elusive “whale’s whiteness” – is her grand case study.² Rotbard’s argument rests on a similar dynamic: beginning in 1909 or so, and moving through the interwar period, Tel Aviv is “born” (or grounds its origins story) as a ring of neighborhoods, essentially gated communities posing as new suburbs – a land grab on the part of a mixed group of Jewish immigrant investors, whose strategy effectively stymied Jaffa’s own urban growth (p. 72 and following, 79-80). Tel Aviv is “born again,” in the 1980s, with the stories with which Israeli architects began to explain the significance of the city’s predominant early architectural style, variously tagged as “International” or Bauhaus. In both instances – “birth” and “rebirth” – Tel Aviv depended on a selective rendering of the facts (e.g. how many Jewish architects working in Palestine in the 1930s really studied at the Bauhaus school in Berlin), and – more profoundly – a particular version of Jaffa for its self-definition, even as it turned a blind eye to, and eventually destroyed, traces of the latter’s physical existence, as well as its presence in historical memory:

“Much more than a physical location boxed in by calcified geographical frontiers, the Black City as a condition. And it is a condition which exists only in relation to the White City. Without it, the Black city is invisible; it is everything hidden by the long, dark shadow of the White City, everything Tel Aviv does not see and everything it does not want to see.”³

With this historical blindspot, and with Jaffa’s continuing gentrification, Tel Aviv has not only staged itself as Jaffa’s opposite; it has also attempted to erase any evidence of this process. In Rotbard’s view, the “white” version of the city’s origins, which began to emerge in its professional (architectural/municipal/creative/business) classes in the mid-1980s, was eventually embraced by a citizenry longing for a “clean” version of its own beginnings. This version of Tel Aviv’s progressive, liberal origins – its modernity – appealed to a Jewish-Israeli audience grown weary of the nightly television news’ steady diet of *Intifada*. It gave them something good to believe in, and strengthened the notion of Tel Aviv as a “bubble,” aloof towards the ongoing violence and political conflict (“the situation”) that so powerfully shapes Israeli

² On page 52, Rotbard references an interview with Morrison. See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

³ *White City, Black City*, 66.

life. This narrative reached an apex of sorts in 2003 when Tel Aviv was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for its architectural distinctiveness and abundance of interwar structures, specifically – its “synthesis of... the various trends of the Modern Movement in architecture and town planning in the early part of the 20th century”.⁴ There is, as Rotbard suggests, a direct line from the economic windfall of this award to the city’s more recent emergence as a gay-friendly global destination. But before we jump to the present, it is worth lingering on that moment when Tel Aviv happened, and the meaning of its establishment precisely in relation to Europe.

Indeed, the abundance of interwar structures that connect Tel Aviv to its European past, also implicitly recalls the war’s enormous physical destruction and diminishment of Eastern European Jewish life. While, as Rotbard claims “much more than a Zionist project or a Jewish project, Tel Aviv was a white, European project” (p. 142), these same Jewish entrepreneurs also viewed Europe as a *negative* space, whose broken promises of acculturation and political equity laid the foundation for national aspirations, including – but not only – Zionism. The utopianism of architecture as a tool of social engineering may also shape the enlightenment’s darker side, but Jews have arguably stood on both sides of its dialectic, on both ends of power.

Rotbard himself implicitly raises the *Shoah* when he introduces the figure of Albert Speer, Hitler’s architect, and the symbolic importance of ruins for a national tradition. Rotbard concludes: “there is no doubt that any building, of any form, is also, by default, a pattern of the destruction which may await it” (p. 131). One could extend this profound statement to the enterprise of Israeliness that seems to be at the center of this book (pp. 35-36). Is there something inherently, “organically” combustible about Jewish national autonomy?

In the years since Rotbard’s book first appeared, groups such as *Zochrot* – in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and throughout Israel/Palestine – have addressed some of the historical and material *lacunae* he describes.⁵ Raising public awareness through publications, public forums and artistic installations that draw attention to physical traces of pre-state Palestinian life in Jaffa and elsewhere, their actions also contextualize the contemporaneous efforts of community organizers in Tel Aviv-Jaffa to create solidarity among historically neglected neighborhoods and

⁴ See Rotbard 2 and <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/decree03.htm#dec8-c-23>.

⁵ For example, the recent *They say there is a land: Guidebook* (Sedek/Pardes-Zochrot: Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 2012) [Hebrew-Arabic].

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their disenfranchised populations. One can only read Tel Aviv-Jaffa's streets with more open eyes, with a more sober a tread, with Rotbard's book in hand.

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Bartulin Nevenko, *Honorary Aryans: National–Racial Identity and Protected Jews in the Independent State of Croatia*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 99.

by Vjera Duić

In *Honorary Aryans: National-Racial Identity and Protected Jews in the Independent State of Croatia* [henceforth NDH], the author, Nevenko Bartulin, sets out to develop and demonstrate the idea that race ideology played a more important role in events, particularly during the Ustasha movement, than most scholars of this field and period care to consider or admit.

Nevenko Bartulin, born in Hobart, completed his PhD in History at the University of New South Wales in 2006. He then lectured Modern European and World History at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Split. He devoted his research to race theory, racial anthropology, nationalism, fascism and National Socialism with a focus on the area of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. Being engaged in that field and having recently authored two books on the subjects of race theory and racial policies in the Independent State of Croatia, it was only reasonable to anticipate one more work to follow.

Honorary Aryans is divided into three main chapters, apart from the introduction and the conclusion. Throughout the introduction, the author takes the reader down and through a broader historical approach and contextualizes the theme of race ideology. At the same time he states why, in his opinion, scholars should take a more relevant approach to the role of race ideology. Bartulin points out that, with very few exceptions, this matter has not been addressed over the years, at least with the proper amount of depth. As an example, Bartulin explains that “historiography on the NDH has reduced the question of Ustasha anti-Semitism to: a) a matter of political pragmatism and opportunism on the part of the Ustashas, i.e. introducing anti-Semitic laws and policies in order to receive further favour and sympathy of the Third Reich; b) the need to protect members of the Ustasha movement who were of Jewish descent; and c) economic greed, in other words, pursuing anti-Semitic policy merely in order to acquire Jewish property. Although these factors should not be ignored or overlooked in a study of Ustasha anti-Semitism, historians of the NDH have tended to dismiss Ustasha ideas on race in general as little more than a carbon copy of National Socialist ideological views. In line with that historiographical position, the existence of Jewish honorary Aryans could easily

be seen as a contradiction of race theory, which thereby highlights the supposed ideological shallowness of the Ustashas, as well as their willingness to exempt certain Jews purely in return for economic gain.” (p. 3)

He carries on arguing that “historians have not, however, subjected Ustasha racial ideology – including anti-Semitic ideas – to a serious historiographical analysis, preferring instead to downplay or ignore race theory as an important legal, political and ideological factor in the NDH” (p. 5).

The author explains his point of view, confronts the mainstream version of the narrative on this subject and presents his own arguments. “Chapters 1 and 2 chart the development of racial theory, nationalism and anti-Semitism in Croatia from the late eighteenth century to the Second World War.” (p. 11) In other words, in the first two chapters Bartulin enters chronologically and more deeply into the subject of race ideology, along with its ramifications and consequences, namely what it meant, why and how it developed. In parallel, he connects these ideology/ies with groups of people that started being targeted by them, namely the Jews. Chapter 3 bears the same title as the book. It is the natural corollary of the previous settings and appears as the core subject of this work. After the Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed, Ustasha racial laws were decreed. The chapter deals with the consequences of these decrees for those who enforced them and for those who were prosecuted by them, since they were now a part of the legal framework of the state. These decrees are thoroughly examined, particularly “the honorary Aryan paragraph”, their purposes and their consequences.

As said in the beginning of this review, the aim of the book is to elucidate how racial ideology played a much more significant role in the events of that time, specifically the period in between 1941-45, than most of the people who deal with this matter care or are willing to admit. Independently of the reasons why these people choose to do so, apparently for the author it is clear that racial motivation comes alongside other motives – political, relational and economical, for some authors even religious, ties. As an example, the author dissects the case of the honorary Aryans. Although possible and attainable by law, this status only provided legal and citizenship rights, but not the right to be a “true” Croat in the racial sense, to the people who asked for it. This aspect, tied to the fact that such a small minority of Jews were actually granted this “legal right”, supports the idea that this was deeply racially motivated, and that even the few ones that were granted these “rights” were supposed to be biologically assimilated as a race, as part of a structured plan. This contradicts the idea that this legal procedure could

be viewed as a way to actually “save” some Jews, and therefore it could be perceived as a “softer” carbon copy of the Nazi experience. This seems to be the main drive of the author. Continuing to support his point of view, Bartulin presents the example of Mussolini in Italy to further stress the fact that racial ideology in Croatia had already fertile ground to grow upon. Although obviously influenced and sparked by external factors, like racial ideologies in Europe and particularly in neighboring Italy and Germany, the author argues that there was already an endogenous ideology. “As the late American historian George L. Mosse noted, one needs ‘tradition to activate thought or else it cannot be activated’. For example, the Fascist *Duce* Benito Mussolini found it difficult to ‘activate’ an imported Aryan–Nordic racial theory, which traditionally had little or no influence on Italian nationalism. Accordingly, ‘when Italian racism was introduced, it had to be invented and you get a crude transposition from the German Aryan man to the Mediterranean Aryan man [...]’ In contrast to Italian Fascism, the Ustashe did have particular intellectual, ideological and cultural traditions to draw upon in the articulation of their own Aryan/Indo–European/Indo–Germanic race theory.” (p. 8)

Following the author’s exposition, one is led to agree with the fact that race was a strong motivational issue, and that ideology was effectively transposed to state law, affecting the events of that epoch. Having said that, one can quote, like the author did twice, Max Weber’s words – “with race theories you can prove or disprove anything you want” (p. 8). So another question arises, and that is to what degree the race ideology had an impact in the events. Surely, like Bartulin suggests, further scholarly interest should be given to this particular matter, but the question remains whether it is a matter that stands out on its own in the same way as the ones already mentioned above - political, relational, economic or religious ties. Not less of a matter, and by the same reason not more of a matter, since it is obviously difficult to rank this kind of subjects. These decrees were actually part of the legal framework of the Independent State of Croatia, were thought and developed by scholars and ideologues, and surely had hardcore followers and true believers. So, there may still be the question if, besides what the original goal was, the decrees were an instrument to achieve different goals for different people more than an ideological mass concept shared by a whole and defined group of people, the “true Croatian ethnic group”. Apart from the ethnic cleansing that did take place, some of the discrepancies, contradictions, inconsistencies, arbitrariness and exceptions to the rule strategically woven, that were also shared by the author in this book, may eventually, and only eventually, explain the downplay of this factor in comparison with other authors. One could

always ask why this particular aspect of events did not happen earlier, if it was so ingrained in collective thinking. Is it possible that this “honorary citizenship”, which was not a “true Croatian title”, served as a mean to control and keep them under a tight leash, without having to simply annihilate them? Is it possible that the biological assimilation would result, in the end, as a solution to the problem almost by itself, again without having to engage in physical annihilation? Was it a mere coincidence that it all happened at the time it did and, very importantly, in the way it did? Could that particular moment in European history have been the ultimate trigger? What would have happened if external circumstances had been different? Obviously these are questions that nobody can answer without a significant amount of uncertainty, and that is why this work opens the path for further discussion, investigation and analysis.

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Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Bd. 235), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), pp. 410.

by *Elisabeth Weber*

The First World War Centenary in 2014 might not have brought great changes to the master narrative of the First World War, but generated a new interest in its history, which was long time overshadowed by the memory of the conflict. This intensified preoccupation made itself felt also in the field of Jewish Studies. Several exhibitions, conferences and new publications acknowledged once again the significance of the First World War as a turning point for Jewish history. However, analysis comparing the war experience of Jews in different countries is still scarce. Therefore Sarah Panter's book, published in 2014 and based on the author's dissertation, is of considerable importance due to its transnational and comparative approach.

The war was perceived by many as a "war of brothers" as Jews were not only fighting on both sides of the conflict but, because of migration, were indeed likely to have familial and cultural ties to other belligerent nations. Moreover, the situation of Jewish civilians in Eastern Europe called more than ever for Jewish solidarity and transnational humanitarian aid, thus challenging the self-understanding of European and American Jewry. Based on these observations, the book focuses on the impact of the First World War on concepts of Jewish identity on both sides of the conflict, comparing the war experience of German, Austrian, British and American Jewry. The book stems from a Jewish perspective, analyzing the interplay of competing Jewish factions, such as liberal, Orthodox and Zionist groups, as well as the impact of external factors such as the war's course and general discussions on internal Jewish debates on identity. It is divided in four more or less chronologically structured sections. The first section focuses on the outbreak of the conflict and examines if, and how, European and American Jews were torn between their loyalty as citizens and their solidarity as Jews. The second section focuses on the situation of Eastern European Jews and its impact on Western Jewish notions of identity during the years 1915 and 1916. The third section compares the war experiences of Jewish soldiers and military rabbis in the four countries, and examines how experiences of social inclusion and exclusion shaped notions of Jewish identity and community. The last section focuses on the last two years of the war and shows how events such as the Balfour Declaration, or the Russian Revolution shaped the self-understanding of

European and American Jewry. Every section is subdivided into four chapters, with each being dedicated to one of the four countries. The sections are followed by *interim* conclusions, connecting and comparing the findings in each country. In the first section the author shows how Jews in Germany and Austria-Hungary welcomed the war as an opportunity to fight against Russia and for the “liberation” of Russian Jews, which they expected would improve also their own situation back home. British Jews, in turn, were far less enthusiastic than their German and Austrian counterparts, mainly because of Britain’s alliance with Russia. As to legitimize the war against Germany, some started to blame the situation of Russian Jewry on the influence of Prussian militarism. Despite all attempts to distance themselves from everything German, British Jews were widely suspected of pro-German sympathies and disloyalty ever since the war broke out. American Jews, again, were engaged in a sort of proxy war until 1917, when the country entered the war. Here, Jews had their sympathies torn between the Central Powers and the Allies, despite the demand for strict neutrality. As Jews, they felt more inclined to support the war against Russia, as American citizens they gravitated towards the Allied Powers. Both belligerent parties tried to take advantage of this Jewish conflict and started to compete for the sympathies of the American Jewish public, supported by Jewish intermediaries. In the following sections the author shows how the war increasingly ethnicized the notion of citizenship. Anti-Semitic groups gained influence in Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1915-1916 over the question of Eastern Jewish immigrants and Jewish refugees from Galicia, which were depicted as a threat to society. These prejudices were soon to be extended to “domestic” Jews as well, the most visible expression of this growing distrust being the “Jewish census” in Germany in 1916. Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe became a target in the debate over the Military Service Act 1916 in Great Britain, too. As non-citizens they were exempted from military service and subsequently accused by both the British society and “domestic” Jews of neglecting their duty. After the United States entered the war, Jews there also became more vulnerable to claims of disloyalty. If initially they were more likely to be charged with pro-German sympathies, this changed after the Russian Revolution, when especially Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe started to be suspected of “Bolshevism.” As some feared American Jews might collectively be accused of un-American behavior, they started to dissociate themselves from the Eastern European immigrants. Jews did experience distrust not only at home, but also at the front, as the author shows in section three. The fact that all four Jewish communities collected their own statistics displaying the Jewish war effort, is taken by the author as evidence that Jews everywhere felt the need to defend themselves against accusations of

disloyalty and to identify in a positive way. However, the degree to which Jews felt included or excluded by their comrades varied depending not only on the army they were enlisted in, but also according to their personal beliefs and ideologies.

A major strength of the book is that it pays attention to all the different Jewish factions and analyzes how their respective notions of identity changed through interaction. As the author contends, the war led to an intensified preoccupation with Jews in and from the East. This gave rise to an unprecedented reconsideration of Jewish identity concepts in the West, as it reopened fundamental questions over how to define this sense of solidarity: religiously, culturally, or nationally. The renegotiation of identity concepts went hand in hand with a renegotiation of power structures, as every faction tried to gain influence by winning over the sympathies of Jews living in Eastern Europe. Thus, liberal, Orthodox and Zionist groups as well as German and American organizations vied with one another in providing humanitarian aid and political support to their brethren.

Despite this new wave of solidarity, ascriptions and self-ascriptions from the outer Jewish sphere were soon to be reproduced in the inner Jewish sphere. When directly confronted with “Ostjuden,” that are the Jewish refugees from Galicia or Russian Jewish immigrants, German, Austrian, British, and American Jews themselves started to draw a line of distinction between “friend” and “foe,” “native” and “foreign,” “them” and “us,” as the author convincingly argues. This, in turn, led to a growing dissatisfaction with the “native” Jewish political establishment in all of the four countries, as a growing number of immigrants and Zionists felt unrepresented and called for a democratization of representational structures and co-determination. This development was especially obvious in Great Britain, where the Zionist movement gained influence and prestige mainly due to the fact that their aims matched those of British foreign policy in Palestine, but became seizable also in the Jewish Congress movement in the United States and Austria. Consequently, the war led to a politicization, democratization and Zionization of Jewish communities in the four countries, thus reflecting a global trend, as the author concludes.

Although some findings might sound familiar to historians acquainted with First World War in Jewish history, the true originality and great strength of the book lies in its transnational, comparative and multi-perspective approach. The analysis of the multi-faceted connections between the different Jewish factions in the different countries is nuanced, thorough, and provides new and convincing

insights. By comparing the war experience of German, Austrian, British and American Jewry the author is able to reassess the reductionist depiction of Jewish history in Britain and the United States as being a continuous “story of success” as against a one-sided “story of doom” in Germany and Austria.

However, the book has also some minor problems. As it focuses on the Western Jewish perception of the war in the East, Eastern Europe is treated somewhat as an amorphous whole. Indeed, while the book does speak of Polish, Russian and Galician Jews, it entirely ignores Romanian Jews and events concerning them, such as the Bucharest Treaty in 1918, which surely did have an impact on Western Jewish debates as well. Also, the book’s argument would have been stronger, had the author made it clearer what her understanding of Eastern Europe is. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the accomplishments of this work. Overall, it offers a stimulating and original take on the topic and is a highly valuable contribution to scholarship.

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Keren Friedman-Peleg, *Ha-‘am ‘al-ha-sapah: ha-politiqah shel ha-traumah be-Israel* [A Nation on the Couch: The Politics of Trauma in Israel] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2014), pp. 183.

by *Tamar Katriel*

The notion of trauma has become increasingly naturalized in Western professional and vernacular therapeutic discourses. As a pivotal term in a discursive formation that has originated in American post-Vietnam War discussions of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), it has travelled to different parts of the world and figures prominently in discourses regarding psychological responses to social and political victimization and abuses of human rights. Anthropological studies have explored both the institutional and discursive processes that are involved in the globalization of the culture of trauma and the social and cultural negotiations that attend its appropriation in particular socio-cultural settings. Keren Friedman-Peleg’s book on the cultural politics of trauma in Israel makes a valuable contribution to this line of anthropological research concerning the spread and deployment of the Western therapeutic ethos in local cultures. It does so through an in-depth study of the discursive and organizational practices of professional organizations devoted to the alleviation of trauma in Israeli society.

By exploring local deployments and interpretations of the medicalized and de-politicized global discourse of trauma among mental health professionals, their patrons and the donors on whose financial support they depend, Friedman-Peleg provides a nuanced analysis of the Israeli version of the discourse of trauma as a highly politicized cultural site in which competing notions of subjectivity (liberal-individual vs. communal) and different conceptions of trauma (as generated by unsettling events or structurally induced injustices) are articulated and negotiated by various stakeholders.

As the book’s title suggests, while the notion of trauma was originally grounded in individual psychology, the particular focus of this study is on its migration to the Israeli public sphere through the emergence of the notion of “national trauma.” This term denotes trauma that is in one way or another associated with the psychological torments emanating from the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the hostilities associated with it, including shell-shocked soldiers, civilians suffering deep anxieties in response to missile assaults or recurrent suicide bombings, and more. The expanded scope of the discourse of trauma

from the enclosed clinical context to the public domain has given rise to a range of therapeutic practices designed to help the Israeli population to cope with traumas associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as both a personal and collective predicament. Two organizations involving clinically-oriented caretakers, *Natal* - Israeli Trauma Center for Victims of Terror and War and *ICT*, Israel Trauma Coalition, whose mission is to develop interventions designed to enhance the resilience of individuals and groups of people vulnerable to security-related tensions, provide the empirical sites for the multi-sited ethnographic investigation that makes up this book.

Thus, based on wide-ranging fieldwork in these trauma-centered contexts, which consisted of participant observation in routine organizational activities and meetings, in-depth interviews and analyses of relevant documents, the book details the ways in which the culture of trauma has been constructed in the Israeli public sphere. Addressing the ongoing social negotiations over the professional authority and organizational arrangements responsible for ratifying and treating mental distress as involving a “national trauma” that deserves public recognition and support, the study highlights the multiple ways in which the trauma theme intersects with issues of power relations and social stratification.

These issues are explored in an introductory chapter that deals with the politics of trauma in global discourse and a chapter that traces its sedimentation in the Israeli scene through the discussion of the establishment of the two aforementioned trauma-centered organizations (chapter 1). The six chapters that follow offer richly-textured empirical accounts of a variety of contexts and practices in and through which the trauma frame finds its localized articulation. The first of these discuss relations between mental health professionals and potential donors who are members of the business elite. Encounters between professionals and donors mark organizational moments in which the dark weight of the victims’ traumatic experience needs to be ‘marketed’ to supporters, mobilizing the donors’ forward-looking perspective and their empathy (chapter 2). Chapter 3 addresses another organizational angle - relations between mental health professionals, donors and media specialists who find themselves negotiating the ‘branding of trauma’ as they collaborate in choosing a name for the organization or in producing a promotional film. The next four chapters go back to the original clinical setting associated with trauma and explore various ways in which its original mandate of alleviating psychological distress has evolved in different cultural arenas through new social practices.

Chapter 4 begins with the clinical core of soldiers' trauma by discussing the stories of two soldiers deeply shaken – emotionally and morally – by PTSD and the professionals who treated them. The rest of the chapter expands the scope of the clinical discussion of traumatic experiences from a classical therapeutic to other non-therapeutic practices. These include branching of trauma discourses in the form of a psycho-historical project involving video documentation of soldiers' retrospective accounts of their military experiences initiated by *Natal*; a *Natal*-generated research project based on focus groups whose members were identified as traumatized perpetrators through their complicity in the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories; and a *Natal* collaboration with a university-based service that involved a telephone survey about general well-being among students who had served in the second Lebanon War a year earlier (2006). The fifth chapter explores another branching of the discourse of trauma sponsored by *Natal* – the secondary trauma of the female spouses of men suffering from military-related PTSD, all of them mothers of young children, who participated in *ad hoc* group therapy sessions. Chapter 6 takes the discussion further afield with analyses of a range of *Natal* interventions. These include workshops designed for populations considered 'at risk' in terms of their vulnerability to trauma as well as their caretakers, including young adult *yeshivah* students from Bnei Brak, Jewish and Bedouin social workers from Beer-Sheva, bereaved Druze parents from Daliat al-Carmel, and *kibbutz* children from the rocket-threatened south. Through the juxtaposition of these diverse cases, the author's illuminating analysis brings out the localized inflections attending the reinterpretation of the trauma frame in these contexts. In a move that further expands the scope of the trauma notion from actual responses to emotionally destabilizing events to their potential emergence, the seventh chapter addresses preventive practices designed to enhance resilience in order to offset the prospect of traumatization.

The book concludes with a chapter that brings together the various strands of analysis presented throughout and discusses the network of social actors and practices that have shaped the emergence of a culture of trauma in the Israeli context. Most significantly, it argues that - contrary to other anthropological studies of the localization of global trauma discourses - in the Israeli case power relations and lines of division are not demarcated along national trajectories but along demographically marked internal lines of division within Israeli society itself - religious, ethnic and class-based. Illuminating as this finding is, the author also acknowledges in passing (p. 17) that trauma discourses have been applied to

the Palestinian responses to the conflict as well. The acknowledgment of Palestinian psychological distress is largely absent from Israeli trauma discourses concerned with the conflict, and is at times actively suppressed in the Israeli public discourse (as in the cancellation by the municipality of a scheduled screenings in Sderot and Beer-Sheva of an Amnesty International film entitled *Shivering in Gaza* that documents a post-trauma intervention project in Gaza in the wake of the summer 2014 Israeli bombings¹). This suggests that national lines, too, play a role in delineating the outer scope of Israeli trauma discourse.

The contact between a professionally-grounded, globalized trauma discourse and the local discourses of distress and resilience employed in various indigenous arenas in Israel foregrounds the very different cultural premises that animate the life-worlds of Western-liberal meaning frameworks grounded in the notion of the individual and a variety of local community-oriented frameworks. The evidence-based argument the author develops concerning the prevalence and pull of such communal frameworks in contemporary Israel, and the challenge they pose to mainstream neoliberal ideologies, is indeed an intriguing and important insight of this study. It puts into question commonly encountered commentaries in social science scholarship that describe Israeli society as relentlessly moving from a collectivist to an individualistic ethos.

This book is indeed a heartening example of critical ethnography at its best – an ethnography that recognizes and carefully traces the discursive construction of cultural categories in social interactions and seminal texts, is attentive to the multiple voices and cultural strands found in the particular social field it investigates, is open to both the official tonalities of formal organizations and the intimate tones of distressed individuals, and holds a promise for a better understanding of the society it studies by addressing fundamental cultural categories of personhood and sociality. It will be of great interest to anyone interested in Israel Studies, in the anthropology of trauma and resilience, and in the cross-cultural exploration of globalizing processes.

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¹ As reported in *Ha-Aretz* 12 July 2015; see <http://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/cinema/1.2682090> (last accessed, 24 July 2015)

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Emanuele D'Antonio, *La società udinese e gli ebrei fra la Restaurazione e l'età unitaria. Mondi cattolici, emancipazione e integrazione della minoranza ebraica a Udine 1830-1866/70* (Udine: Istituto Pio Paschini per la Storia della Chiesa in Friuli, 2012), pp. 284.

by Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti

This very good work by Emanuele D'Antonio has not received the attention it deserves. It is not a mere analysis of local dynamics. On the contrary, the volume is a good example of how the accurate reconstruction of a specific scenario can shed light on broad methodological and interpretative issues. Moreover, it adds an important piece to the history of Italian Jewry/ies in the pre-Emancipation and pre-Unification period, and it does so in a moment when Italian Jewish scholarship is certainly not flourishing (at least when the nineteenth century is concerned). After two/three very productive decades, begun in the late 1980s, the Italian debate has come to a point of stagnation, where only Fascism and the racial persecution seem to attract some interest. I am pleased that we can now add this book to the not very long list of in-depth studies of Jewish communities in nineteenth century Italy (pre- and post-Unification). This list is made of a set of works very varied in terms of chronology, methodology, sources, scholarly value, thus not easily comparable with one another. Nonetheless, every addition is welcome.

The book is divided in two parts, dedicated respectively to *La Chiesa udinese e gli ebrei fra l'età della Restaurazione e l'Unità* [The Church of Udine and the Jews between the age of the Restoration and the Unification] (pp. 39-150) and *La società udinese e la "questione ebraica" 1848-1866* [Civil society and the "Jewish question" in Udine 1848-1866] (pp. 151-233). Brief conclusions (pp. 235-237), an appendix (pp. 239-247), a few images and a detailed bibliography close the book, that is prefaced by Maddalena Del Bianco Cotrozzi (pp. 13-19). The periodization frames forty years when the Jewish presence in Udine can be considered relevant in demographic, social, economic and cultural terms. The annexation of the Veneto to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866 represented a turning point: the Jews were granted full legal emancipation and a new phase opened for the Catholics of Friuli, that changed their «traits, their social base, their political and religious positions»¹ (p. 35).

¹ Translations from the book are mine.

The point of departure of the analysis is presented in the first page, and is, in its simplicity, relatively new: the study of the relation between the majority society and the Jews in Udine “requires a focus on Catholicism” (p. 23). This statement is based on the idea that until the 1860s “in Udine the great majority of society sees Catholicism as a pillar of the collective — both “Italian” and local — identity” (pp. 23-24). This assumption develops into a reconstruction of the dynamic relation between the attitude of the local Church towards Judaism/the Jews, intended both as a socio-economic reality and as a theoretical/ideological opponent, and the integration of the minority in the life of the city. D’Antonio very rightly reminds us that the Church is not a monolithic entity but a complex structure whose ideologies and practices evolve with time, and that there is a dialectical relationship between the centre (Rome) and the periphery/ies. Local Churches need to negotiate their operative practices with the Papacy, but first and foremost with their specific socio-economic and cultural environments and with political authorities, which in the case of Udine meant Venice, Vienna and later the Italian government. Throughout the text, the author manages to effectively link these dynamics to the evolving relationship between the Church and the Jews, reading the latter as one of the possible keys to understand Catholic reactions to modernity. He accomplishes this task by analyzing a series of issues (conversions and the debates on the emancipation among others) and specific episodes. In this review, I chose to focus on a few examples to give an idea of the book’s methodology, strengths and weaknesses.

After the Restoration, Austrian authorities pursued their policy of subjecting ecclesiastical institutions to the control of civil power, and of tolerating non-Catholics and non-Christians. In agreement with such a policy, the Venetian government decided to maintain civil marriage: one of the most important symbols of a new balance between civil and religious power, that was met with great hostility by the clergy in Udine. D’Antonio unfortunately does not expand on this point, but I think that an in-depth analysis and comparison between Catholic and Jewish reactions to this decision would be illuminating. Conversions and conversionism — a different but by no means less important topic — are on the contrary studied and used to highlight the changes in the relationships between Rome and the local Church, between the Udinese clergy and the Jews. D’Antonio does not limit his analysis to official statements, very aware that practices are often more complex and nuanced than public declarations. In the first part of the timeframe considered the clergy of Udine — always a supporter of a strict separation between Catholic and Jewish societies and ferociously disappointed by the policy of toleration adopted by Austrian

authorities even after the Restoration — did nonetheless allow neophytes to keep their Jewish surnames and to stay with their Jewish family even after baptism. These practices have not been adequately studied by a historiography that, when considering conversions, has focused mostly on separations, lacerations, and anti-Semitism. D’Antonio states that at the time the integration of the Jews in the majority society was deemed by the clergy to offer «ample proof of their moral integrity» (p. 136): a convincing argument, but one that would have benefited from further development because it highlights a striking contradiction between official positions and practices. He concludes that overall «the Church of Udine during the period of the Restoration was neither a medium of anti-Jewish hostility, nor a relevant obstacle to the integration of the Jews» (p. 66). For «reasons of political and social opportunity» (p. 67), it did not discourage the formation of inter-religious networks among members of the urban bourgeoisie. The Jewish élite, after all, took active part in the economic and social life of the city, and did not hesitate to support Catholic philanthropic associations and to be involved in various initiatives led by Catholic institutions. The failure of the brief revolutionary interlude of 1848 resulted in the decline of the neo-Guelph movement and in the condemnation, on the part of the clergy of Veneto, of Austrian emancipationist policies (see decrees 25 April 1848 and 4 March 1849). Afterwards, Catholic conversionist activities underwent a profound change, according to D’Antonio. Once a very private occasion, the religious ritual became increasingly public, part of the fight brought by a weakened Church against social and political modernity. Analyzing the local Catholic periodicals and reading them in the context of the most influential Catholic publications — such as “La Civiltà Cattolica” — the author highlights the radicalization of anti-Jewish rhetoric after the Unification of Italy, and more so after the conquest of Rome in 1870. The imagined Jew evolves into an intrinsically and immutably negative figure, whose evil characteristics inhibit the salvific and regenerative power of conversion.

At the level of social interactions, the official hostility between the Church and the Jews did not prevent individual clergymen from building or maintaining very close connections to individual Jews, typically members of the urban bourgeoisie with whom they formed long-lasting collaborations in fostering philanthropic activities. In other instances, controversies opposing bourgeois Jews and the local Church could generate an inter-religious solidarity between Jewish and non-Jewish members of the local élite, especially when the defence of private property was concerned. I am thinking in particular of a case described by D’Antonio (pp. 80-97) and regarding the Venturas, a Jewish family that in 1836 purchased a villa

in Moruzzo, in the vicinities of Udine. The property comprised of a small church: a Catholic church had from that moment a Jewish owner. In the debate and legal battle that followed, the Venturas managed to «mobilize the solidarity of their peers, even Catholics, against the ecclesiastical institutions» (p. 92). This kind of solidarity was nourished by a shared way of life, and by a familiarity built through the daily encounters in the same *salons*, circles and theatres. Through the analysis of specific episodes, we are presented with a very vivid picture of the complexity of the minority/majority interactions, and we are confronted with the necessity to rethink (once again) the categories of emancipation and integration.

In the context of this analytical framework, the chapter about an alleged case of ritual murder is particularly relevant (pp. 187-208). In June 1855 a peasant woman from Badia Polesine declared that she had been kidnapped by a Jewish merchant together with a girl, that they had been repeatedly tortured and their blood drawn multiple times, and that only the intervention of a Christian servant had saved them from certain death. The Jewish merchant was put to trial but declared completely innocent, while his accuser was condemned for her false accusations. On the one hand, this episode shows that the public discussion of the case in a civil tribunal allowed a rationalization of the event and guaranteed justice, but on the other hand it can be considered as the proof of how widespread the myth of ritual murder was in that time and place. To add a further layer of analysis, D'Antonio offers an interesting collection of various sources, mostly literary, that contain references connected to the blood libel imagery.

The research behind this volume is undoubtedly very rich and multi-layered, supported by a wide and varied range of sources, both archival and printed, and by a thorough knowledge of the relevant historiography. A more explicit conceptualization of the author's interpretative stance, in dialogue with the Italian and international debate, is the only missing element in an otherwise valid contribution to the scholarship on Italian Jewry between the Restoration, the Risorgimento and national Unification.

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