

by *Werner Bergmann and Ulrich Wyrwa*

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**The Making of Antisemitism as a Political Movement.
Political History as Cultural History (1879-1914). An Introduction***

by *Werner Bergmann and Ulrich Wyrwa*

The new dimension of antisemitism in contrast to the traditional religious animosity towards Jews, was in first instance not so much in the first instance its racist orientation but that the fact this hostility assumed the form of a political or social movement.¹ The reason for its emergence must be seen in the larger transformations taking place in 19th Century Europe,² in the social conflicts, economic upheavals, cultural dislocations and social-moral crises. Antisemitism, therefore, was not caused by religious conflicts; on the contrary this new kind of hatred against Jews originated from the “great transformation,” the upheaval of the whole way of living in the formation of the industrial world.³ This transformation led to a ‘clash of economic mentalities,’⁴ and parts of the middle classes and of the peasant population adhered to the “moral economy” of the traditional world.⁵ Unable to grasp the new capitalist mentality, they accused the Jews of being responsible for this transformation.⁶ The religious tradition of animosity towards Jews in this context served as legitimacy for the new antisemitic rage.⁷ Moreover Catholic, Protestant as well as Orthodox clergyman, fearing the cultural upheaval, accused the Jews of being responsible for the social and political conflicts of

* We thank Christian Bardtke for preparing the footnotes of all articles and for researching documents necessary for this issue. We also would like to express our thanks to Steven Englund for his comments and linguistic corrections.

¹ For more details, see Werner Bergmann, Ulrich Wyrwa, *Antisemitismus in Zentraleuropa. Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011).

² Jürgen Osterhammel has presented the global aspects of this transformation in his impressive volume: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, (München: C. H. Beck, 2009).

³ As Karl Polanyi has described this process in his still unrivalled book: Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation, The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944). For the topicality of the work of Polanyi see: Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market*, (Cambridge: Moulden 2010)..

⁴ David Peal, *Anti-Semitism and Rural Transformation in Kurhessen: The Rise and Fall of the Böckel Movement*, (New York: Columbia University, 1985), 102.

⁵ Edward P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century”, *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), 76-136.

⁶ Moishe Postone, “Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to ‘Holocaust’”, *New German Critique* 19 (1980), 97-115.

⁷ Werner Bergmann, Ulrich Wyrwa, *Antisemitismus in Zentraleuropa*, 15; Christhard Hoffmann, “Christlicher Antijudaismus und moderner Antisemitismus. Zusammenhänge und Differenzen als Problem der historischen Antisemitismusforschung”, *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus. Theologische und kirchliche Programme deutscher Christen*, ed. Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz, (Frankfurt /M.: Haag und Herchen, 1994), 293-317.

the 19th Century. Paradoxically, in this way, the Christian Churches played an important part in the making of the new non-religious and secular political movement of antisemitism.⁸

The protagonists of the antisemitic movement were primarily concerned with the political mobilization of people harboring feelings of hatred towards Jews. The movement openly demonstrated its arrival on the political stage, forming itself into a community sharing the same cast of mind, establishing its own organizations, fostering political networks, employing the various media of political publicity to agitate against Jews, and through sensationalist campaigns they attempted to pervade society with antisemitic positions. Despite their diverse and indeed at times divergent political organizations and forms of activity, most of the protagonists were galvanized into a unified worldview through their resentments and aversions against Jews.⁹

In historical studies it has remained unclear however how strong antisemitism actually was as a political movement, what impact the political agitation by the antisemites actually had on society, what kind of support antisemitism enjoyed in the various social groups, and to what extent antisemitic positions were taken up by and absorbed into kindred political camps. But above all, historical studies have only tentatively explored if antisemitism appeared as a political movement in other European countries in similar ways to Germany and Austria, how strongly it was anchored in these countries politically, and wherein laid the similarities and differences to political antisemitism in Central Europe. This issue will therefore examine political antisemitism between 1879

⁸ Giovanni Miccoli, "Santa Sede, questione ebraica e antisemitismo fra Otto e Novecento," *Storia d'Italia. Annali 11, Gli Ebrei in Italia., Vol. 2, Dall'emancipazione a oggi*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), 1371-1574. For the German case this process has been analyzed by Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), and Wolfgang E. Heinrichs, *Das Judenbild im Protestantismus des deutschen Kaiserreichs. Ein Beitrag zur Mentalitätsgeschichte des deutschen Bürgertums in der Krise der Moderne*, (Köln, Rheinland Verlag, 2000).

For the Orthodox Churches however, this topic is still unexplored. Dissatisfying is the chapter in the handbook *Kirche und Synagoge*. Peter Hauptmann, "Russische Christenheit und Ostjudentum," *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden. Darstellung und Quellen*, eds. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, Siegfried von Kortzfleisch, (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970), Vol. 2, 639-667. Significantly the new *Encyclopedia of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin, 2 Vols., (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), has no entry on Antisemitism, and the entry on Judaism by Eugen J. Pentiu, (Vol., 1, 355-358) is rather blank in this respect.

⁹ Included in this definition are motifs and aspects which have been elaborated for a concept of what constitutes a social movement. See Joachim Raschke, *Soziale Bewegungen. Ein historisch-systematischer Grundriss*, (Frankfurt am Main - New York: Campus Verlag, 1985); Friedhelm Neidhardt, "Einige Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Theorie sozialer Bewegungen", *Sozialstruktur im Umbruch. Karl Martin Bolte zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Stefan Hradil (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985), 193-204.

and 1914 in a European-wide context, taking a comparative perspective.¹⁰ This period is chosen because it must be seen as the formative age of antisemitism. Originating in the age of emancipation,¹¹ this new hostility had gained cultural hegemony using the neologism ‘antisemitism’, which spread rapidly in all the European languages. This period lasted until the First World War, which led to a fundamental radicalization of antisemitism.

Historical research on the rise of antisemitism has focused overwhelmingly on Germany. As part of the comprehensive research project undertaken by the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, which had relocated to the United States in 1935, Paul W. Massing presented a study entitled *Rehearsal for Destruction*, a work on the rise of political antisemitism in Germany that even today is thought-provoking and by no means outdated.¹² Decisive in antisemitism’s becoming a factor in German politics was the fact, according to Massing, that conservative-clerical forces maintained cultural hegemony in state and society. From the mid-1890s, however, through to 1914, as Massing explains, political antisemitism lost its attraction. But with the onset of the First World War it re-emerged stronger and more virulent than ever.¹³

Immediately after the publication of Paul Massing’s pioneer study Eva G. Reichmann, who worked for the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* before immigrating to Britain, completed her study *Hostages of Civilization. The Social Sources of National Socialist Anti-Semitism*.¹⁴ Reichmann saw the social tensions generated in Germany after the Jews achieved emancipation and legal equality as decisive to any attempt to explain the rise of antisemitism. According to Reichmann, those latent social animosities directed against Jews turned into open aggression once a crisis took hold in the late 19th century. The social disintegration triggered by the First World War and the problems besetting the postwar years had then set off such a far-reaching crisis that people took “flight into hatred” (this the heading given to the chapter devoted to the year 1933 and also the title of the German translation).

Besides the works of Massing and Reichmann, the third foundational study on the origins and rise of political antisemitism that needs to be mentioned is the

¹⁰ See the chapter on theory and practice of antisemitism in Victor Karady, *Gewalterfahrung und Utopie. Juden in der europäischen Moderne*, (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Verlag, 1999), 203-226; a European panorama of the epoch is given by Philipp Blom, *Der taumelnde Kontinent. Europa 1900-1914*, (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 2009).

¹¹ Werner Bergmann, Rainer Erb, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation. Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland 1780-1860*, (Berlin: Metropol, 1989).

¹² Paul W. Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949). For the research projects on antisemitism undertaken by the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, see Eva Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie. Die Frankfurter Schule im Amerikanischen Exil*, (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2009).

¹³ Regarding the radicalisation of antisemitism in Europe during the First World War and the early post-war crisis a new Research Group led by Werner Bergmann and Ulrich Wyrwa has been established at the Center for Research on Antisemitism in Berlin in 2012.

¹⁴ Eva Reichmann, *Hostages of Civilisation. A Study of the Social Causes of Antisemitism*, (London: Gollancz, 1950).

dissertation by Peter Pulzer completed in 1964, which also included the development in Austria.¹⁵ Pulzer elaborates how the rejection of liberalism by large sections of bourgeois society was a key problem in the political development of both the German Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. This unwillingness to embrace liberalism was crucial for the development of the political antisemitism. In 1914, Pulzer concludes, the antisemitic parties in both countries had permeated broad sections of the population with antisemitic ideas, but in terms of their impact as a political force they had not succeeded in having even one of their legislative proposals accepted.

In the 1970s, the Berlin historian Reinhard Rürup published a number of groundbreaking and widely cited articles, primarily regarding the close relationship between political antisemitism and the emancipation of the Jews and the change of the civil society in nineteenth century Germany.¹⁶ Together with Thomas Nipperdey he wrote a profound article on the emergence and function of the term antisemitism for the handbook on the social and political language in Germany.¹⁷

Just how little the study by Peter Pulzer has lost in topicality and explanatory power is underlined by the publication of a new edition in 2004 for which Pulzer added a critical essay on antisemitism research since the 1960s.¹⁸ As Pulzer sees it, more recent studies have provided a better understanding of the rise of political antisemitism and antisemitic movements and more clearly delineated the relationship between the emergence of antisemitism and the transformation taking place in the cultural climate of the time, resulting in a sudden shift in public opinion in both the German Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. This enables a more precise answer to the question as to what extent antisemitism was not only an instrument of political conflict, but also the symptom of a particular mental state within certain groups of the civil society.

Following Pulzer's study, Dutch historian Dirk van Arkel has presented his dissertation thesis on political antisemitism in Austria at the University of Leiden,¹⁹ and Bruce F. Pauley has given an overall presentation of the history of Austrian antisemitism.²⁰ Furthermore John W. Boyer published not only a profound study on the emergence of antisemitism in the Austrian Christian

¹⁵ Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964, rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.- London: Peter Halban Publishers, 1988).

¹⁶ Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975)

¹⁷ Thomas Nipperdey, Reinhard Rürup, "Antisemitismus," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, Vol. 1, (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag 1972), 129-153.

¹⁸ Peter G. J. Pulzer, *Die Entstehung des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland und Österreich 1867 bis 1914. Mit einem Forschungsbericht des Autors*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

¹⁹ Dirk (alias Dik) van Arkel. *Antisemitism in Austria*. Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor, Rijkuniversiteit te Leiden, 1966.

²⁰ Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1992)

Social Party,²¹ but also - most recently - a thoughtful biography of the most important Austrian antisemite Karl Lueger.²²

Next to Germany and Austria no other European country has attract more attention in historical research than France, and the huge number of studies range for example from Robert Byrnes overview,²³ over Sternhell's²⁴ and Zobel's studies on the extreme right,²⁵ up to the various publications of Pierre Birnbaum.²⁶ Obviously, the Dreyfus-Affair stood at the forefront of historical interest. Just two huge publications are subtitled 'A Documentary History', first Louis L. Snyder's 'The Dreyfus Case' form 1973,²⁷ and second the volume edited by Michael Burns published in 1999.²⁸ Among the huge number of studies on the Dreyfus Affair are those of Stephen Wilson,²⁹ Michael Burns,³⁰ Pierre Birnbaum,³¹ or Vincent Duclert,³² to name at least some of them. Furthermore this Dreyfus case has even been studied by James F. Brennan as a symptom of a European public opinion.³³ In recent years a new generation of young scholars like Laurent Joly or Bertrand Joly have opened new perspectives of the historical impact of Antisemitism on the French society by re-studying the 'Action française' and the French nationalistic and conservative faction,³⁴ and Gregoire Kauffmann has thrown new light on the biography of

²¹ John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna. Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

²² John W. Boyer, *Karl Lueger (1844-1910). Christlichsoziale Politik als Beruf. Eine Biografie*, (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau 2010).

²³ Robert Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, (New York: Rutgers Univ. Press 1950).

²⁴ Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire (1885 - 1914). Les origines françaises du fascisme*, (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1978).

²⁵ Andreas Zobel, *Frankreichs extreme Rechte vor dem ersten Weltkrieg unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der "Action française". Ein empirischer Beitrag zur Bestimmung des Begriffs Präfaschismus*, (Berlin: Dissertation Freie Universität Berlin, 1982).

²⁶ Pierre Birnbaum, *Antisemitism in France. A Political History from Leon Blum to the Present*, (Oxford: Blackwell 1992); Pierre Birnbaum, *Le moment antisémite. Un tour de la France en 1898*, (Paris: Fayard, 1998).

²⁷ Louis L. Snyder, *The Dreyfus Case. A Documentary History*, (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973).

²⁸ *France and the Dreyfus Affair. A Documentary History*, ed. Michael Burns, (New York: St. Martin's College Publishing Group, 1999).

²⁹ Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience. Antisemitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair*, (London: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1982).

³⁰ Michael Burns, *Rural Society and French Politics. Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, 1886-1900*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Michael Burns, *Dreyfus A Family Affair, 1789-1945*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

³¹ Pierre Birnbaum, *L'Affaire Dreyfus. La République en péril*, (Paris, Découvertes Gallimard, 1994).

³² Vincent Duclert, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, (Paris: Ed. la Découverte, 1994).

³³ James F. Brennan, *The Reflection of the Dreyfus-Affair in the European Press, 1897-1899*, (Bern, Frankfurt/M., Boston: Lang 1998).

³⁴ Laurent Joly, "Les débuts de l'Action Française (1899-1914) ou l'élaboration d'un nationalisme anti-Semite", *Revue historique*, 2006/3 (n. 639), 695-718; Bertrand Joly, *Nationalistes et conservateurs en France, 1885-1902*, (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2008).

the most influential French antisemite, Edouard Drumont,³⁵ while Damien Guillaume is concluding at the 'École des hautes études en sciences sociales' in Paris his dissertation project on the beginning of the antisemitic agitation in France from 1879 to 1892, promising new insights into specific features of French antisemitism.³⁶

In recent decades fundamental works on the rise of antisemitism in other European countries have been published too, including Russia³⁷, Britain³⁸, Poland³⁹ and Hungary⁴⁰; a comparative perspective however is still lacking.⁴¹ Revealing insights into the cultural and political dimensions of European antisemitism can be expected from the forthcoming *Antisemitism in a Comparative Perspective: Germany, Austria-Hungary and France (1800-1920)* by Steven Englund, which will offer a comparative study of the simultaneous and reciprocal insertion of the 'new' politics of antisemitism into three different polities and societies.⁴²

Already in 1993 on the other hand, the founding director of the Center for Research on Antisemitism, Herbert A. Strauss, had opened the focus to Europe as a whole and edited a two-volume collection of seminal essays on the history of antisemitism which was no longer limited to the German-speaking regions, but provided an overview of historical research on antisemitism in Britain, France, Hungary, Poland and Russia from 1870 to the outbreak of the Second World War.⁴³ Programmatically taking up the key term from the title of Eva Reichmann's study, with the title *Hostages of Modernization*, Strauss was elaborating a concept of modern antisemitic movements as the "results of crises in interrelated modernization processes" of the Jewish minority and the

³⁵ Grégoire Kauffmann, *Edouard Drumont*, (Paris: Perrin, 2008).

³⁶ We would like to thank Damien Guillaume for the hints to these new French publications.

³⁷ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus und reaktionäre Utopie. Russischer Konservatismus im Kampf gegen den Wandel in Staat und Gesellschaft 1890-1917*, (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe 1978).

³⁸ Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876-1939*, (London: Arnold, 1979); David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1994); Susanne Terwey, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Großbritannien 1899-1914. Über die Funktion von Vorurteilen sowie Einwanderung und nationale Identität*, (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006).

³⁹ Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881-1922. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa*, (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1981); Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ Rolf Fischer, *Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn 1867-1939* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988).

⁴¹ Despite the rather dissatisfying study of William I. Brustein, *Roots of Hate. Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and the ambitious volume of Albert S. Lindemann, *Esaus's Tears. Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997) which is not so much written by a European comparative perspective as consisting of single national or regional chapters.

⁴² A notion of his ideas may give his article: Steven Englund, "Antisemitism, Judeophobia, and the Republic", *The French Republic. History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert, Christophe Prochasson, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 278-288.

⁴³ *Hostages of Modernisation. Studies on Modern Antisemitism 1870-1933/39*, ed. Herbert A. Strauss, 2 vols. (Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993).

larger Christian society. Of particular importance for this perspective, serving as guiding hypotheses, were theories, taken from social and political sciences, on the mechanisms at work in group conflicts, the creation of stereotypes, discrimination and political mobilization as well as economic crises and social change. In his introduction on the “Possibilities and Limits of Comparison”, Strauss reflected how history has changed in terms of methodological approaches and subjects, moving from a political history of institutions and ideologies towards “social, group, and regional histories”. This shift in orientation reveals the new concern with social tensions, economic dislocations, political mobilizations and how conflicts of interests are decided. He saw the specific history of the conflict between the Jewish minority and the majority society as embedded in the wider history of selected European states, in other words he understood antisemitic social and political movements to be “reflections of critical developments in European societies”, of conflicts which the elites proved unable to solve or which they did not want to solve. In his introductory, interpretative texts to each of the countries, Strauss developed “comparisons between the national patterns documented [...] on a tentative basis, it being understood that structural comparisons should reveal differences among the objects compared as well as placing them into a common framework.”⁴⁴

Taking up the issues and themes broached in this essay collection, under the direction of Werner Bergmann and Ulrich Wyrwa, the Center for Research on Antisemitism set up a research seminar devoted to Antisemitism in Europe (1879–1914) for the purpose of specifically examining the various manifestations of this new hostility towards Jews, essential to the rise of Antisemitism, from a comparative perspective.⁴⁵ In the spring of 2010 the Center held an international conference that concentrated fully on the political aspects key to the rise and development of European antisemitism and resulted in the essays of the present issue.⁴⁶

Three questions take centre stage: firstly, the presence and impact of antisemitic networks and the role played by the media in the political public sphere. The issue here is to determine in which countries and in which political

⁴⁴ Herbert A. Strauss, “Introduction: Possibilities and Limits of Comparison”, Ibid. Vol. 1, 7.

⁴⁵ This research seminar was mainly funded by the Volkswagenstiftung and also by the Fritz-Thyssen-Stiftung. For a survey for the research seminar see Ulrich Wyrwa, “Anti-Semitism in Europe (1879-1914). Lines of Inquiry, Conception and Objectives of the Research Seminar at the Center for Research on Antisemitism”, *Analele Universității București. Științe Politice*, anul XIII, no. 1, 2011, 3-17.

⁴⁶ This conference was sponsored by the *Volkswagenstiftung*. See the conference reports: Eva-Maria Ziege, “Die Entstehung und Entwicklung des Antisemitismus als politische Bewegung im europäischen Vergleich. Ein Konferenzbericht”, *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte* 11 (2010), 205-212; Sabine Seiffert, “Tagungsbericht: Die Entstehung und Entwicklung des Antisemitismus als politische Bewegung im europäischen Vergleich (1879-1914), 24.03.2010-26.03.2010, Berlin”, *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 19.04.2010, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3073>>.

constellations antisemitism could become a political force, in which concrete situations it proved popular and found an echo in society, and what were the causes for its failure.

Secondly, aspects of social history are to be discussed on the basis of a European comparison. The key focus here is to ask in which strata of society and in which cultural milieus the language of antisemitism found approval and where was it rejected, which social groups were the pillars of the antisemitic movement, and to what extent antisemitism needs to be understood as a social movement. In the case of Germany, it has already been established that the antisemitic movement was primarily made up of the old and new middle classes (*Mittelstand*), sections of the bourgeoisie holding socially conservative views, together with parts of the rural population who were susceptible to antisemitic propaganda. For the comparative perspective this means asking if and under which conditions these social classes also gravitated towards political antisemitism in other countries, or if and why there were other supporting groups.

The third problem is the specific social practice, including anti-Jewish violence, which is an aspect that has increasingly attracted the attention of research in recent years.⁴⁷ Here case studies are employed in the attempt to embed the practice of violence in the concrete local social context of Jewish- non-Jewish relations, which in turn generates an insight into the conditions facilitating the emergence of this collective violence as well as its subsequent course and repercussions.

Besides these thematic aspects, this issue is also concerned with addressing the debates taking place in historical studies on whether a new political history is required, or whether the established political version needs to be complemented by cultural history, and how these debates can be made fruitful for research into antisemitism.⁴⁸

When antisemitism is seen as a political movement from cultural historical perspective then the conventional themes associated with political history are of less concern. Thus for instance the political ideas of antisemites or the

⁴⁷ Werner Bergmann, "Ethnic Riots in Situations of Loss of Control: Revolution, Civil War, and Regime Change as Opportunity Structures for Anti-Jewish Violence in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe", in: *Control of Violence. Historical and International Perspectives on Violence in Modern Societies*, eds. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Stefan Malthaner, Andrea Kirschner, (New York: Springer 2010), 487-516; *Exclusionary Violence. Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, eds. Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, Helmut Walser Smith, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002); on Russia, see John Doyle Klier, *Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁸ Thomas Mergel, "Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Politik", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 574-606; *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot), 2005; *Neue Politikgeschichte. Perspektiven einer historischen Politikforschung*, eds. Ute Frevert, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, (Frankfurt/M., New York: Campus, 2005).

antisemitic political parties, as the conventional approach undertook to do, will not be inquired. Moreover, this new approach is not mainly concerned with describing antisemitic incidents, discussing decrees and laws, or portraying the 'leading figures' of the antisemitic movement. What is at issue rather is to determine if and to what extent the new concepts and lines of inquiry emerging from such an interpolation of traditional political history with dimensions gleaned from cultural and micro-historical perspective can actually contribute to gain a new understanding of the phenomenon of antisemitism. The new focus on a cultural history of the political sphere or of politics sees politics primarily as a process of communication; politics is understood as a process of negotiations, of negotiating positions in a public arena, and as such, the new perspective includes a performative dimension. Regarding antisemitism this means analyzing any antisemitic expression or presence in the public realm as a form of communicative action. Moreover, this new perspective on political history emphasizes the ritual character of the political and the significance of signs and symbols. For examining the rise of antisemitism, this involves determining how antisemites socially constitute their antisemitic worldview – that is, which signs and symbols were drawn on to express it.

Here politics and language enter into a relationship that is mutually determining, with one educating the other and vice versa; this means that in the new approach to political history the two manifestations of antisemitism – as historical semantic and socio-political movement – are seen as correlated and inextricably tied to one another. The new language of antisemitism enabled new antisemitic experiences, and the rhetoric of antisemitism spawned a new antisemitic political culture.⁴⁹ Language became an experimental field for a new set of antisemitic practices, while any speech act in the political field became a political act. Antisemitic words and phrases became antisemitic politics.⁵⁰ The rhetoric of antisemitism – and this shows how fruitful speech act theory can be for a new political history – not only postulated antisemitic claims and assertions, but further, the expression of them was akin to performing an antisemitic act. Antisemitism was expressed in concrete speech acts just as much as in social practices and performative acts; it was given expression in open actions as in wordless reservations. New political history perspectives not only enable a new definition of what is political, they make it possible to determine what is political in antisemitism, and to perceive how social, economic, religious, cultural and moral issues are all transformed into political ones. Therefore in antisemitic rhetoric Jews could be stigmatized as

⁴⁹ Ideas from the linguistic turn in historical studies play a role here, see Georg G. Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert. Ein kritischer Überblick im internationalen Zusammenhang*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 87-96; Benjamin Ziemann, "Linguistische Wende" und 'Kultureller Code' in der Geschichtsschreibung zum modernen Antisemitismus", in: *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 14 (2005), 301-322.

⁵⁰ For the importance of speech-acts in the history of antisemitism see: Helmut Walser Smith, *Continuities of German History. Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), 245.

scapegoats for social conflicts, and they had become the target of the antisemitic political movement.

Politics in the sense of the new approach in historical research is to be essentially defined as communication, as a process of positioning and negotiating as well as the communicative shaping of collectively binding values and norms. In the case of antisemitism this allows us to reconstruct immanently how antisemites arrived at their antisemitic values and norms, namely through their own communication processes.

Seeking to determine the political dimension of antisemitism does not mean limiting the inquiry solely to antisemites. The new political history aims to explain how antisemites influenced and shaped the whole political culture of their society with their language and public presence – and not just their own antisemitic milieu. The goal of the essays in this issue is thus to make the concept of political culture fruitful for research on antisemitism.⁵¹ They seek to plot how antisemitic worldviews, antisemitic political and cultural codes, and programmatic antisemitic statements interacted and reciprocally conditioned one another. The scholarly interest is focused on whether, and if so in which sense, we may speak of an antisemitic faction, if the fabric of its milieu was coherent and unified, or whether internal divisions and divergences predominated amongst the antisemites. At the same time, the way in which the language of antisemitism left its mark on the respective political culture as a whole is explored.

Along with the cultural historical dimensions of political antisemitism, the European dimensions are also of chief concern in examining the development of antisemitism into a political movement. In this respect the key issue is to determine what was specific about antisemitism in Germany. Not only was the new term coined here in 1879, but the new form of animosity towards Jews first crystallized, too, into a political movement in Germany. What was singular in German antisemitism can only be discerned by way of a comparative analysis of antisemitism in other European countries. Achieving this entails asking if German antisemitism had come to prominence already in the formative phase of antisemitism thanks to specific characteristics, or if rather a set of features prevailed across Europe in this phase.

Our interest was thus focused on the European character of antisemitism, namely the questions if and to what extent this occurrence was genuinely European, and to what extent antisemitism needs to be understood as a European phenomenon. This involves identifying the contacts, the processes of intellectual exchange and ideological transfer between the antisemites of the various countries, how antisemites from different language and cultural regions interacted, how key writings by German-speaking antisemites – for instance Adolf Stöcker, Wilhelm Marr and Georg Ritter von Schönerer – were

⁵¹ Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

received in other European countries, and if a political figure such as Karl Lueger served as a source of inspiration in other countries.

This special issue thus also represents an initial approach to the writing of a history of Europe,

specifically a Europe that is more than a mere addition of distinct political entities. Europe is a community linked together by multifaceted experiences, and as such, our concern is to determine if and to what extent the antisemitic political movement operated in a European public sphere, and how the various national and regional spheres overlapped or what separated them.

In a remarkably short time the new catchphrase of antisemitism was circulating in all European languages, while almost all of the new editions of the various national encyclopedias since 1879 included an entry on antisemitism.⁵² One of the most precise and informative of these entries is in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1910, where the British Jewish historian Lucien Wolf provided a decidedly European survey of the development of antisemitism. Wolf showed how the political antisemitism forming in the 1880s became a European movement. From its starting point in Germany the movement spread to various regions of the Habsburg Monarchy, took hold in France, before assuming particularly violent forms in Russia and Romania. In the context of the Dreyfus Affair, so Wolf's assessment, this new political form of hostility towards Jews turns into a "European antisemitism".⁵³

Despite this early diagnosis by Wolf, there is still a striking lack of works taking a comparative approach on a European scale or studies focusing on the European dimensions of antisemitism. In particular there is no attempt to undertake a European-wide synthesis of the origins and rise of antisemitism, nor on the question of the unity and diversity in its development.

These desiderata are all the more astonishing considering that, following their first public appearances in the Berlin movement and the subsequent process of political party formation in Germany and Europe, the antisemitic agitators of the 1880s undertook attempts to establish themselves as a European movement. The "Tiszaeszlár" affair presented them with the opportunity, the accusations of ritual murder in the Hungarian town of the same name, which generated great interest across Europe and forms an ideal context for observing the emergence of a European public.⁵⁴ Above all Hungarian and German antisemites sought to exploit this European-wide attention for their

⁵² Ulrich Wyrwa, "[Die Internationalen Antijüdischen Kongresse von 1882 und 1883 in Dresden und Chemnitz. Zum Antisemitismus als europäischer Bewegung](http://www.europa.clio-online.de/site/lang_de/ItemID_362/mid_11428/40208214/default.aspx)", *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2009). http://www.europa.clio-online.de/site/lang_de/ItemID_362/mid_11428/40208214/default.aspx

⁵³ Lucien Wolf, "Anti-Semitism," *The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, and General Information*, 11th edition, vol. 2, (New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, 1910), 134-146.

⁵⁴ Edith Stern, *The Glorious Victory of Truth. The Tiszaeszlár Blood Libel Trial 1882-83. A Historical Legal Medical Research*, (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass., 1998).

own purposes and expand the reach of their localized antisemitic movements into a pan-European one. Although they ultimately failed and the European congresses they organized ended in disaster, the question remains if this failure did not after all display European features and the antisemitic movement nonetheless bore a pan-European signature.⁵⁵

Just how European was political antisemitism? The essays collected here are to serve as building blocks for an answer to the question whether we need to speak of a European antisemitism or of different paths of antisemitism in Europe. Are we dealing with several national and regional antisemitic movements, or may we speak of an antisemitic movement in Europe? Is the phenomenon of this new hostility towards Jews in fact a sum of several national antisemitisms, where emphasis must be placed on the differences and the similarities assigned less importance, or is it a genuinely European antisemitism? Furthermore, the essays represent an initial attempt to answer the question of whether the European-wide reception of the term antisemitism and the debates on the new hostility observable in all European countries are to be understood as a moment when a European public was formed. The question is: is antisemitism to be seen as a collective European syndrome?

Naturally enough the following essays cannot cover all of the aforementioned dimensions of political antisemitism. As already indicated this includes issues emerging from conventional political history, the formation of political parties or political ideas. For Germany, this new cultural historical perspective on antisemitism has been presented in a huge amount of studies.

Already in the mid 50s, Hans-Christian Gerlach studied some of these cultural aspects regarding the political antisemitism in Imperial Germany in his unpublished dissertation.⁵⁶ Shulamit Volkov's many studies have contributed tremendously to a new understanding of political antisemitism in Germany, in particular her essay 'Antisemitism as a cultural code'.⁵⁷ Stefan Scheil, then, has given a precise analysis of the election results of the antisemitic parties in Imperial Germany.⁵⁸ New cultural historical aspects of political antisemitism have been presented by Till van Rhaden for the example on Breslau.⁵⁹ Andrea Hopp has looked thoroughly at the election campaigns in Germany in the age

⁵⁵ Wyrwa, "[Die Internationalen Antijüdischen Kongresse](#)".

⁵⁶ Hans-Christian Gerlach, *Agitation und parlamentarische Wirksamkeit der deutschen Antisemitenparteien 1873–1895*, unpublished Dissertation Thesis, Kiel 1956.

⁵⁷ 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; Shulamit Volkov, *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, (München: C. H. Beck 1990; Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites. Trials in Emancipation*, (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press 2006).

⁵⁸ Stefan Scheil, *Die Entwicklung des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland zwischen 1891 und 1912. Eine wahlgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1999).

⁵⁹ Till van Rhaden, "Words and Actions: Rethinking the Social History of German Antisemitism—Breslau, 1870 - 1914", *German History* 18 (2000), 413-438.

of Bismarck,⁶⁰ and Siegfried Heimann has presented the role of antisemitism in the Prussian parliament.⁶¹ Furthermore the role of physical violence against Jews and its relationship to political culture was the subject of a volume edited by Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann und Helmut W. Smith.⁶² Particular attention has been given in local and regional studies to political antisemitism in Imperial Germany. Baden, for example, has been studied by different authors,⁶³ while one of the centres of political antisemitism in Germany, Sachsen, has been substantively addressed by Mathias Piefel in the context of the political praxis of the antisemitic movement.⁶⁴ Beyond regional studies, including comparative ones,⁶⁵ urban contexts of political antisemitism like Stuttgart or Frankfurt on the Main have also been examined from a cultural historical perspective.⁶⁶ The cultural aspects of Catholic antisemitism are considered by Olaf Blaschke who analyses both the anti-capitalistic mentality and the civil exclusion of Jews.⁶⁷ Uffa Jensen, on the other hand, has given a comprehensive picture of the antisemitic attitudes and the behaviour of Protestant intellectuals in Germany.⁶⁸ Regarding the case of a ritual murder accusation in the small German town Konitz in 1900 no fewer than two different volumes present detailed and insightful interpretations.⁶⁹ Picking up the debate regarding a new visual history, Isabel Enzenbach and Wolfgang Haney have recently published a new volume on everyday culture of antisemitism from the nineteenth century up the Nazi Germany using small

⁶⁰ Andrea Hopp, "Auf Stimmenfang mit dem Vorurteil: Antisemitismus im Wahlkampf," in: *Regierung, Parlament und Öffentlichkeit im Zeitalter Bismarcks. Politikstile im Wandel*, ed. Lothar Gall, (Paderborn – München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), 263-280.

⁶¹ Siegfried Heimann, *Der Preußische Landtag 1899-1947. Eine politische Geschichte*, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2011), 347-360.

⁶² *Exclusionary Violence. Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*.

⁶³ Helmut Walser Smith, "Alltag und politischer Antisemitismus in Baden, 1890-1900", *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 141 (1993), 280-303; James Retallack, "Conservatives and Antisemites in Baden and Saxony," *German History* 17/4 (1999), 507- 526.

⁶⁴ Matthias Piefel, *Antisemitismus und völkische Bewegung im Königreich Sachsen 1879-1914*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004).

⁶⁵ Hansjörg Pötzsch, *Antisemitismus in der Region. Antisemitische Erscheinungsformen in Sachsen, Hessen, Hessen-Nassau und Braunschweig 1870 - 1914*, (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 2000)

⁶⁶ Martin Ulmer, *Antisemitismus in Stuttgart 1871-1933. Studien zum öffentlichen Diskurs und Alltag*, (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2011), Inge Schlotzhauer, *Ideologie und Organisation des politischen Antisemitismus in Frankfurt am Main 1880-1914*, (Frankfurt/M.: Verlag Waldemar Kramer, 1989).

⁶⁷ Olaf Blaschke, "Antikapitalismus und Antisemitismus. Die Wirtschaftsmentalität der Katholiken im Wilhelminischen Deutschland", *Shylock? Zinsverbot und Geldverleih in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition*, eds. Johannes Heil, Bernd Wacker, (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997), 113-146; Olaf Blaschke, "Das Judentum isolieren! Antisemitismus und Ausgrenzung in Breslau", *In Breslau zu Hause? Juden in einer mitteleuropäischen Metropole der Neuzeit*, eds. Manfred Hettling, Andreas Reineke, Norbert Conrads, (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz. 2003), 167-184.

⁶⁸ Uffa Jensen, *Gebildete Doppelgänger. Bürgerliche Juden und Protestantismus im 19. Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2005).

⁶⁹ Christoph Nonn, *Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder. Gerücht, Gewalt und Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 2002); Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale. Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

vignettes or stickers as a so far overlooked historical source.⁷⁰ This instructive material provides a deeper understanding of antisemitism as a social practice in everyday life. It shows what use ordinary people made of antisemitic propaganda material and illuminates the antisemitic mentality within the society of Imperial Germany.

Our primary interest is to contribute to a European comparative perspective on the making of political antisemitism. Given the huge number of studies on the cultural aspects of political antisemitism in Germany just discussed, it does not seem necessary to add further contributions on the topic in this issue. Even German speaking Austria and France have been widely studied in recent years, so that these two countries will also not be taken into account.

The essays presented in this issue have been written by various historians at different points in their careers. Some of the papers are by established historians and experienced experts in the field of research on antisemitism, others are by younger scholars who have lately finished their 'first books' (i.e., their dissertation theses). Some authors have already finished their 'second books', and yet others are still working on their dissertations. All the papers have delved deeply into and pondered new archival sources, which have been heretofore more or less disregarded, as they also covered aspects that had hitherto not attracted scholarly attention. Furthermore some of the contributions present regions completely ignored in historical research on the emergence of Antisemitism in Europe until now.

The essays concentrate on different thematic areas: after an introductory essay of Viktor Karady on the religious antecedents of political antisemitism, parliamentary debates regarding the 'Jewish Question' will be presented on the example of Rumania. As Rumania has been seen by contemporary observers as one of the most problematic countries in Europe, it is presented here by two articles (Silvia Marton and Julia Onac). They are followed by a presentation of the public discourse in the mass media on Jews and antisemitism in Bulgaria (Veselina Kulenska), Congress Poland (Maciej Moszyński) and Great Britain (Susanne Terwey). Furthermore, antisemitism in political culture is explored, both in the national context of Russia (Theodore R. Weeks) as well as the narrower framework of urban and rural areas, as in Swedish Göteborg (Christoph Leiska), in Slovakian Upper Hungary (Miloslav Szabó) and rural Lithuania (Klaus Richter). Other papers are dedicated to antisemitism in political Catholicism with papers on Croatia-Slavonia (Marija Vulesica), Habsburg Galicia (Tim Buchen) and Italian Mantua (Ulrich Wyrwa). The last articles examine the politics of anti-Jewish violence, using the examples of Russian Pogroms of 1905 (Stefan Wiese) and the ritual murder riots in Greek Corfu in 1891 (Maria Margaroni). Finally in his concluding remarks Reinhard Rürup - based on his deep understanding of the German case, summarizing

⁷⁰ *Alltagskultur des Antisemitismus im Kleinformat. Vignetten der Sammlung Wolfgang Haney ab 1880*, eds. Isabel Enzenbach, Wolfgang Haney, (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2012).

the results, formulating open questions and outlining critical aspects - presents a comparative European perspective on political antisemitism from the 1870s until the First World War. At the end of the 'focus' in a first Gallery, the just mentioned antisemitic stickers will be presented. A second Gallery offers a collection of caricatures, not antisemitic cartoons but rather caricatures drawn by German and Austrian opponents of.

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Political antisemitism and its christian antecedent. Trying to make sense of nonsense

by *Victor Karady*

Abstract

The central thesis of this paper is that political antisemitism cannot be understood without taking into account what should be regarded as its Christian foundation proper, the perception and stigmatization of Jews as dangerous aliens. By introducing the differentiation between an 'chimerical anti-Semitism', a product of the pre-modern mental set-up, often generated by Christian religious phantasmagoria, and a modern anti-Semitism with concrete references to social relations in industrial and post-industrial societies with a trend to associate exclusively Jews to societal ills, it is argued that the latter can be regarded as an ideological construction which represent the rationalization of deeply inbred preconceptions about Jews as radical aliens and as bearers of a set of negative characteristics. The article presents a reflection on the Christian origins, the development of Jew-hatred during the Middle Ages and the early modern period and discusses the extension of secularized anti-Semitic conceptions in various European societies as well as the main observable topical patterns of judeophobia in modern times. Three forms of exclusion can be identified: the exclusion of Jews from emergent national communities during the nation building process as 'national aliens' of an extreme sort; racist anti-Semitism, based on the phantasm of Jews as 'racial aliens' and grounded in the idea of the racial division of humanity; and a picture of the Jews as a monstrous - because consciously hidden - other as an reaction to the process Jewish 'assimilation'. The paper comes to the conclusion that concrete references to social relations and social functions of judeophobia do not suffice to explain it in a satisfactory manner. This cannot be accomplished without reference to the discussed Christian historical foundations.

Introduction

Nonsense in the title of this paper¹ would mean something resisting to rational interpretation, that is statements which cannot be understood via standards of a normal intellectual procedure, and this for at least two rather specific reasons. Antisemitic discourses attempt the explanation of various facts of social life with reference to a societal phenomenology of sorts based allegedly on historical reality related to Jews. The latter are regularly accused of spectacular forms of misbehavior, as judged by established norms of social coexistence,

¹ I used already this subtitle in the chapter dedicated to "The Road to the Shoah" of my book: *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era. A Socio-Historical Outline*, (Budapest - New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 299-386. The reflections hereafter owe a lot to insights gained from the research project funded by the European Research Council in Bruxelles on the 'Formation of educated elites in multi-cultural East Central European societies' (2009-2011).

which either belong to quite imaginary constructions, lacking any empirical foundation or proof, or – on the contrary - apply (or might apply) to non Jews as well. In the last case Jews are affected by various formulations of (antisemitic) ignominy while non Jews of similar status and condition are not. There is a highly selective depreciation of Jews as malefactors, while non Jews of comparable standing are exempted from similar infamy.

The first case can be qualified as ‘chimerical anti-Semitism’,² typical of pre-industrial societies, a product of the pre-modern mental set-up, often (indeed overwhelmingly) generated by Christian religious phantasmagoria (such as the blood libel calumny, the accusation of the desecration of the holy host, the reproach of Jews poisoning wells and causing illnesses, like the plague, etc.). The second case has concrete references to social relations in industrial and post-industrial societies with a trend to associate exclusively Jews to societal ills. Chimerical antisemitism is beyond argument. It is not falsifiable in rational terms, depending as it is on unquestionable, common convictions, shared by a number of people in contact with each other, beliefs in extravagant and nasty fairy tales of sorts. (What is the content of truth of ideas about Jews needing the blood of Christian youngsters for Passover rituals?) The second one could be discussed in terms of social science categories if they were seriously applied to realities in modern times without pre-formed anti-Jewish bias. The share of Jews in capitalism or communism may be and has indeed been already studied in the framework of its due socio-historical setting, contexts, conditions and motivations without justifying any of the antisemitic preconceptions. All the accusations addressed to Jews as capitalists or communists – when sustainable – can be addressed to Gentiles as well. Those who draw such anti-Jewish conclusions, appear to be clearly guided by pre-established judgments. The problem here is linked to the quite general observation that the ‘chimerical’ motifs and the alleged social references are usually intricately mixed in this matter. Apparently modernist justifications of antisemitism carry heavily archaic elements recognized or accepted by their adepts as historical givens.

Hence my initial statement that antisemitism can be regarded as ideological constructions which represent the rationalization of deeply inbred preconceptions (inherited or transmitted over generations) about Jews grounded in two types of propositions. The first ones concern the fundamental difference between Jews and non Jews in social space – the distinction of Jews as radical aliens. The second ones attribute a set of negative characteristics and nefarious collective agency to Jews as such. None of these convictions can be interpreted in causal terms as regards social reality. Rather they belong to the category of obsessions, beliefs, self-fulfilling prophecies or constitutive pieces of mental and dispositional *habitus* (in Bourdieu’s sense) as unquestionable convictions generating attitudes and various forms of (anti-Jewish) actions and

² This highly illustrative expression was suggested by Gavin L. Langmuir opposing chimerical, realistic and xenophobic statements about outgroups, like Jews. See his book Gavin L. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), especially 326-357.

behaviors.³ One author proposed the term ‘social code’ for the latter situation, when *judeophobia* turns into a consensual marker of membership in a social cluster, like in nationalist middle class circles of Wilhelmine Germany.⁴

Once this said one cannot dispense with a reflection on the historical origins of how such habitus could develop, gain wide range influence and become a dominant ideological pattern in some historical junctures of modern European and even extra-European societies. A reflection on the Christian origins will introduce the discussion of the extension of antisemitic conceptions in various European societies as well as the main observable topical patterns of *judeophobia* in modern times.⁵

The Christian heritage⁶

Christianity emerged initially in ethnically Jewish populations of the near East as a Jewish sect with an obvious need to distinguish itself from traditional Judaism. The very importance of the spiritual affiliation of Christianity with Judaism – the conservation of the Hebrew Bible as a central source of the faith with the development of the idea that the Church represented the ‘Second alliance’ of God with humanity via Jesus Christ, after the ‘First alliance’ struck with the Jewish people – enhanced the need of the fixation of firm theological frontiers between Judaism and Christianity. Given such ‘Semitic spiritual origins’ of Christianity, ritually maintained in the canonical sanctification of and recourse to the Hebrew Bible (the ‘Old Testament’) as a fundamental holy reference, a recognition particularly stressed since the Reformation and the

³ See for example Pierre Bourdieu et Jean-Claude Passeron, *La reproduction, éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*, (Paris: les Éditions de Minuit, 1970), 46-47. The *habitus* in this sense refers precisely to a product of some sort of inculcation (pedagogical action) which must last sufficiently long in order to produce the interiorisation of arbitrary cultural properties capable of self-perpetuation even after the cessation of the pedagogical action.

⁴ See Shulamit Volkov, “Antisemitism as a Cultural code. Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXIII (1978): 25-45.

⁵ For a seminal and concise interpretation see Helen Fein, “Explanations of the Origin and Evolution of Antisemitism”, in *The Persisting Question. Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein, (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), 3-23.

⁶ Given the fact that the present essay is a modest contribution to a general theory of *judeophobia*, historical references will be limited and only specially targeted in this presentation, with only occasional references to the current literature, the scope of which – immense – would frustrate any attempt at representativity. Most of the factual historical evocations can be documented – among other sources – in the recent, second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit, New York, etc.: Thomson and Gale, 2007) or *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol I-II, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven – London: The Yale University Press, 2008). To these sources must be added classical treatises like the works of the late Léon Poliakov. I mostly used the original editions of his *Histoire de l'antisémitisme*, vol. I-II, (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1981), (3d edition) and *Le mythe aryen*, (Paris: Complexe (new edition), 1987). See also Jerome A. Chanes, *Antisemitism. A reference handbook*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004) and *Antisemitism. A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution*, 2 vol., ed. Richard S. Levy, (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2005).

Counter-Reformation by all the Christian Churches, the formal self-differentiation and self-distinction of Christianity against Judaism was from the outset a theological necessity of sorts. But this would not inevitably involve *judeophobia*, as has been amply proved by a number of Christian initiatives going back to the Middle Ages and more specifically, with sometimes long-lasting effects, since the Reformation. This elaboration of the difference from Judaism was indeed specifically embodied in several sects (often considered as 'Judaizing' ones by other Christian Churches), notably among the Anti-Trinitarians. Such kind of *judeophilia* of various intensity and nature could be restricted to the sense of the importance granted to the Hebrew spiritual background (hence the spread of Biblical culture via translations of the Testaments into vernaculars), but could also reach (like in some Eastern European Protestant groups) a level of identification to Jewry as a persecuted religious minority. There have been even cases of collective conversion to Judaism among radical Protestants. The friendship with Jews or – failing this – the condemnation of antisemitism as an obligatory Christian commitment has come to be more or less systematically and officially proclaimed (or at least paid lip service to) as a basic tenet, by most established Christian Churches since the Second World War, especially in the *aggiornamento* of the Catholic Church following the Council of Vatican II (1962-65). But this must be interpreted as a belated reaction to and compensation for Christian complicities with Nazism. In fact, originally and by and large throughout its history, the mainstream ideological message of Christianity was heavily anti-Jewish. In many ways most often the Christian Churches at best tolerated, promoted and supplied a set of motivations for anti-Jewish discourses and behaviors, and, at worst, supported, initiated and organized anti-Jewish movements and persecutions.

The foundations of Christian anti-Judaism were laid already by the early Church Fathers (like Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine – as early as in the 4th and 5th century) in their definition of the Christian faith in clearly *judeophobic* terms.⁷ Jews were taxed as outcasts among Christians on two scores. They carried the heritage of their 'original crime' as Christ killers on the one hand and, further on, they refused the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. This theological 'blindness of the Synagogue', a strong theme in the Catholic message since the early Middle Ages, exposed them to be set apart in an uncommon, abnormal or illegitimate social status of sorts, hence despised, looked down upon and separated from the rest of the given society. Still their position as a diaspora in European societies remained marked by a dual status. This was made up by submission and dominated status matched with a heavy set of prohibitions, accompanied by a more or less constant menace of repression, let alone exposure to mob violence, on the one hand. But, on the other hand, the Church hierarchy tended to protect the Jews (in whatever

⁷ See Werner J. Cahnman, *Jews and Gentiles, A Historical Sociology of their Relations*, (New Brunswick – London: Transactions Publishers, 2004), 15-16.

miserable situation they may have been) with the theological argument that they must survive as the ultimate witnesses to the truth of Christian doctrine at the expected final return of the Messiah at the end of times. Fundamentally anti-Jewish in its social practice, the Church preserved nevertheless a basic ambiguity in its theological standing vis-à-vis Jews in general.⁸

Since Christianity between the outgoing 4th century (Christianization of the Roman Empire) and the 11th century became progressively dominant and achieved in fact the status of a monopolistic and mandatory faith, though under two separate hierarchies (the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Catholic Christianity), in the big majority of European populations, the Jewish condition in Europe continued to be essentially determined by this duality of Christian *Judeophobia* grounded in theological considerations. But the Church was not the only public power in medieval and post-medieval Europe, even if its policies and ideological instructions remained highly influential in this respect as in others till well after the age of enlightenment. The destiny of Jews was consequently strongly marked by the social, political and economic relations of interest local Jewish communities could negotiate with the worldly powers of feudal and post-feudal states, including the princes, the landed aristocracies and (more and more after the 12th century) the patriciate of free cities. The conduct of the representatives of the Church hierarchy was part of this indeed complex and constantly evolving power structure. It could in local issues, strike or upset the balance between policies, movements and collective actions favorable or unfavorable to Jews. Hence the actual treatment of Jews under Christian religious hegemony varied by tremendously in time, historical junctures and countries with often extremely contrasting outcome. However strong were these differences and variations, some generalizations can be still attempted. More often than not the ruling princes and the landowning class behaved tolerantly to Jews, essentially since they could benefit from the special taxation levied on Jews and the commercial and financial services Jews could perform for them. This was the typical situation under Merovingian and Carolingian rule. The city patriciate on the contrary usually regarded Jews as undesirable competitors in trade and handicraft activities. The low clergy was regularly the most anti-Jewish sector of the Churches, inclined to adopt the *judeophobic* tenets of traditional Christian theology. The high hierarchy opted generally for a more balanced attitude, liable to oscillate between a combination of acts of humiliation, exploitation and protection. Beyond these generalizations the reality of how the 'Jewish Question' was managed by those in power in pre-modern times proved to be changing with the reigns and the historical junctures against a set of rather permanent features. The latter can be analyzed under a few headings: forced separation and isolation, professional prohibitions, collective exploitation and (often bloody) persecutions. The latter were mostly due to self-justifying religious fanaticism or/and 'chimerical'

⁸ For details see Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide. The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, (New York: Seaburg Press, 1974).

(invented, imagined) motivations, notably via the ‘scapegoat effect’ - responsibility laid on Jews for the ills of life.

Christian policies, implemented for the forceful isolation and exclusion of Jews from Christian society, met of course the practices of Jewish self-separation, a major strategic scheme for community maintenance, survival, reproduction and sometimes even self-defense. This applied clearly to residence, which for observant Jews must be at walking distance from prayer houses for obvious ritual reasons. But this self-imposed residential discipline was systematically subject to restrictions enforced from outside either through measures of compelled concentration in ‘Jewish streets’, in town centers (since the 16th century ghettos, especially in Western and Southern Europe) or exclusion proper outside city limits. Most of the times residential rights, that is, toleration of settlement, had to be negotiated by Jewish communities with the landlords that be, more often with the king or the aristocracy against special taxation. Permission of residence was even then only a concession, since Jews were more or less systematically denied the right of ownership of immobile property up to the period of emancipation on the one hand, permission of settlement could be (and was often) withdrawn without notice, on the other hand. The same exclusionism applied to matrimonial mixing, sexuality in general, schooling, the use of public services (like hospitals) and conviviality in everyday life. Even the admission to and physical presence at market places was strictly and restrictively regulated for Jews. Jewish temples and prayer houses were generally allowed in backstreets and in Jewish neighborhoods only, often without distinctive facades suitable to a place of cult. But forced social isolation could (and was frequently) imposed also by mandatory clothing or other derogatory signs of being Jewish. All this has amounted to transforming Jews into aliens, radical aliens at that, irreducibly inferior to ‘normal’ Christian people.

The system of professional prohibitions was an essential complementary mechanism of constrained isolation. After many and long historical variations, by the high middle ages Jews were practically everywhere excluded from the main economic occupations of the rank and file Christian population (agriculture, corporate industries, civil service) and assigned to very few activities, like certain forms of trade, craftsmanship (outside established corporations, especially restricted to the market of the very Jewish community), management of landed properties, tax-farming, money businesses (usury, change, pawnbroking, etc.), medical profession. Since, following precepts elaborated among others by Thomas Aquinas, Christians were not allowed to engage in monetary dealings, banking services became a Jewish specialty, even if this theologically grounded prohibition was not strictly observed in every quarter of Christendom. The ‘usury privilege’, though often observed, was never exclusively reserved for Jews.⁹

Anyhow, the professional restrictions had at least three kinds of visible

⁹ See Cahnman, “Jews and Gentiles”, 45-63.

consequences. Due to their often strong position as distributors of credit, Jewish financiers could occasionally accumulate huge amounts of mobile capital, so as to serve as indispensable fundraisers for feudal states, aristocrats or even Church dignitaries (court Jews, *Hoffaktoren*). Second, thanks to their funds, Jewish bankers could sometimes intervene to help their communities against their enemies (*stadlanut*). But this often exposed them to blackmailing in the crudest manner (by threats of expulsion or extermination), an art in which some of the feudal powers behaved as past masters. Thirdly, the association of Jews with activities as ‘intermediaries’, especially money business, left a strong imprint in Christian imaginations about the richness (and the greediness) of Jews as well as their particular capacity to make money. More importantly, since ‘honest Christians’ would not get involved in similar dealings, usual Jewish economic activities came to be marked by a halo of illegitimacy, fraud, recourse to occult practices. Trade itself, especially outside corporate tracks, was branded as derogatory, certainly not worthy of a gentleman, thus left over to aliens, like Jews. The professional specialization of the latter could thus add to their stigmatization as Jews. Hence a set of stereotypical preconceptions about “treacherous”, “cheating”, “unreliable”, double-dealing, etc. Jews.

But Jews were more or less everywhere systematically over-exploited as Jews in traditional Christian societies. The quite general rule was that Jews should pay special taxes in most countries simply for their existence, to be ‘tolerated’ – a concession considered as a ‘protection’ by those in power. Such taxes could be due to landlords allowing Jewish communities to get established, build a temple or organize public festivities. States could impose such taxes or cities to admit Jews to markets, to stay temporarily in its walls or to settle down. Blackmailing Jews with the menace (or the practice) of arbitrary annulment of bills of debt (*totbrief, lettre morte*) was a habitual exercise of feudal rulers. Such threats to extort money from Jews could comprise expulsion, implication in blood libel or other ‘chimerical accusations, withdrawal of legal protection against mob rule, exposure to the inquisition (since the 13th century). Jews were exposed to tallage ruthlessly at will. Such practices could be implemented and generalized also because Jewish communities were reputed to readily bring assistance to their brethren in need. All this has contributed to generate or confirm the image of Jews as liable to be over-exploited on two counts. He is powerless and cannot resist even the most irregular or illegal measures to make him pay. So it is not mandatory that moral conventions or even the common law of Christian society should apply to Jews and non Jews alike. He can always mobilize assets when necessary out of unknown and supposedly illegitimate sources, since “he has money even under his skin”. If not, he can count on collective ‘solidarity’. In these preconceptions the stereotypical ingredients of powerlessness and super-power (or occult power) attributed to Jews achieved a subtle combination.

Finally the actual persecution of Jews in various forms – pogroms, organized mass murder, inquisitorial trials, destruction of prayer houses or Jewish literature (burning of the Talmud), arbitrary expulsion, confiscation of

property, extortion of money under menace, forced baptism under mortal threats, etc. –, if not permanently operated, remained always at the horizon of what was possible to do to Jews in Christian societies. Expulsion from Western states and cities became a general practice touching most of the old Jewish communities established in Europe since the early Middle Ages, starting in England (1290) and completed in Spain (1492) and most Germanic cities in the 16th century, hence the progressive resettlement of the vast majority of European Jews from the West to the Polish-Lituanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire. This pattern of forced population transfers were maintained and often resorted to up to the 20th century in countries where the emancipation of Jews was delayed (Russia, Romania) or cancelled (as in Nazi Germany and its acolytes). But by the late Middle Ages (since the 12-13th centuries) Christian Europe had produced a set of new ‘chimerical’ accusations wielded indiscriminately against Jews and gaining wide range popular support. The main reference for these calumnies, soon achieving standardized formulations, was a number of collective phantasms about the dangerousness of Jews as enemies of Christianity. Christian imagination had in a way reattributed its own prejudiced mental products to Jews, especially under two forms. Since Jews were allegedly hostile to Christians, this must be expressed in various acts of antagonism against or destruction of Christian symbols or people. Hence the anti-Jewish libels of the ritual murder, the poisoning of wells or the desecration of the holy host. But more generally, Jews were also made responsible of all the ills nature happened to inflict upon the rank and file population (whether they were Jewish or Christian, by the way), like the plagues, floods, earthquakes, etc. Jews thus became universal scapegoats for human suffering. By this, insidiously, the Christian representation of Jews accomplished its final anti-Jewish objective, to stigmatize Jews in a universalist register.

Secularisation of the Christian heritage

The term itself is dated from the years around 1873 (copyright owing, supposedly, to the German political journalist and agitator Wilhelm Marr), but secularized patterns of anti-Jewish discourses and actions occurred much earlier, going back to the period of the Enlightenment, when the ideological foundations of modern nation states had been laid. The nation building process was accompanied in the central zones of the continent – from France to Russia – by outbursts of anti-Jewish violence with utterly or mostly secular references. Still, and this is the central thesis of this paper, modern secular *judeophobia* cannot be interpreted and understood without taking into account what should be regarded as its Christian foundation proper, the quasi-universal diffusion of the perception and stigmatization of Jews as dangerous aliens and – as such – social outcasts, an attitude apparently prevalent in pre-modern Christian societies only. It does not appear to have existed in the Muslim world

in any comparable manner. Moreover, it has proved to be historically much less visible in Christian societies under Ottoman occupation up to the 19th century (like in the Balkans). Closer scrutiny would actually show this radically negative image of Jews varying a lot in social space and geopolitical setting throughout the contemporary era, so much so that, generally speaking, it had incomparably less impact in the European periphery (the perimeter of the Mediterranean – outside the European colonial populations –, Britain or Scandinavia) than in the continental core countries.¹⁰

If one tries to introduce the customary socio-historical factors of interpretation of similar ideological constructions (the local proportions of Jews in the population, religion, ethnicity, levels of urbanization, degrees of modernity in terms of literacy and education, economic development, etc. of the host society), the conclusion would be that they explain little or nothing at all about prevalence of inherited anti-Judaism. Such investigations (and many have been undertaken) yield equally ambiguous results about the temporal-chronological variations of anti-Jewish outbursts in modern times. They may be – as they indeed often were – but also not at all connected to social crisis situations. More importantly it is easy to identify transnational geopolitical relationships between antisemitic movements, circles, parties, organizations with convergent, though not always identical objectives, proclaimed motivations and modes of action.

Whatever such diversity might have been, its major condition of possibility could be only the ‘Christian heritage’ in his respect, the historical construction of the image of Jews as those of primordial culprits of sorts elaborated by almost two millenaries of Christian anti-Judaism. More than that, this fundamental *judeophobic* tenet included in practical terms the popular idea that normal rules of social togetherness should not necessarily apply to Jews, since they are ‘radically others’ indeed. They can be always struck by suspicion of anti-social, extravagant or disruptive behavior, thus Jews can be just as well exempted from ‘normal’ morally and even legally correct treatment.

This idea of stigmatized ‘social exceptionalism’ of Jews, based on in-bred Christian preconceptions– should have become obsolete in the post feudal era with the progressive secularization of European societies that ensued from parallel processes of industrialization, social and cultural modernization and the legal equality (objectified also by the emancipation of Jews everywhere in Europe by the 1870s – except in Romania and Russia), which was established and guaranteed under parliamentary nation states. The multiplicity of reasons why this did not happen may be reduced to two, of which it is not difficult to trace the direct or indirect connections with traditional Christian anti-Judaism, indeed sometimes to its most archaic forms.

The first such reason for the remanence of anti-Judaism to be taken into account is simply the slow progress, incomplete nature and insufficient degree

¹⁰ For a classical overview see Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur ‘Judenfrage’ der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), especially 93-119.

of secularization (in terms of a total change of the mental set-up of erstwhile Christian religious clusters).¹¹ In many ways the Christian Churches have continued to diffuse the old anti-Jewish precepts habitual in feudal times, in some places up to the present. In the political controversies accompanying the emancipation process of Jews and the secularization of European societies, the Churches took regularly position (even before the French Revolution) for the maintenance of their public influence (including matters non religious) – which meant often an anti-Jewish stance. The historic examples can be multiplied, ranging from the Dreyfus Affair in France to the laws of religious policy in Hungary (1894-96) or the *Kulturkampf* in Wilhelmine Germany or the unification movement of Italy. As a consequence, in spite of the *aggiornamento* of Roman Catholicism and the official friendly conduct to Jews of other Christian confessions, it may occur in the early 21st century that Jewish kids suffer from aggression as descendents of ‘Christ-killers’ in various parts of Europe. The Christian references groups may still act as factors of anti-Jewish attitudes, prejudices and conduct in otherwise modern social environments, as shown by various contemporary surveys.¹² Modern antisemitism has still a large number of archaic, ‘chimerical’ references, like the blood libel, given credit to in apparently secular and allegedly highly developed societies (like the ‘*rumeur d’Orléans*’ in France of the 1960s). Moreover, much after the formal proclamation of civic equality of Jews, most modern European parliamentary states – let alone those which did not endorse the policy of emancipation – continued to discriminate against Jews on formally religious grounds in various fields, however illegal it could prove to be following the legislation in force. This applied particularly to the admission to the civil service, political mandates, the army officer corps, decision making positions in state run economic enterprises or at least some of the branches of the latter (the diplomatic corps, army staff, representative personnel of civil administration, etc.). Modern states like the very liberal Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, proclaiming and for all practical purposes realizing the equality of citizens before the law, maintained that Jews should get baptized in order to make advanced careers in public employment. This operated as an official recognition that in spite of legal equality (the Hungarian parliament granted in 1895 even to the Israelite confessional community full collective rights and state support like to ‘historic’ Christian Churches), the state maintained unofficial but efficacious discrimination in the job market under its control. The old Christian rejection of Jews as social outsiders and religious aliens, as

¹¹ Such continuity was also stressed in a classical study by Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction, Antisemitism, 1770-1933*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 318-327.

¹² See for example Walter R. Heinz, Steven R. Geiser, “Eine kognitive Theorie des Antisemitismus im Kontext religiöser Ideologie”, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 23, (1971): 519-543. Harold E. Quinley, Charles Y. Glock, “Christian Sources of Anti-Semitism”, *Anti-Semitism in America*, eds. Harold E. Quinley, Charles Y. Glock, (New York: Free Press, 1979).

well as confession based subtle forms of discrimination is implicitly, quasi unawares still in order, directed particularly against Jews even in some of the most advanced modern Western democracies at some level of public professional trajectories. Being Jewish by religion or descent could still be an argument against candidates to 'visible' or 'nationally sensitive' positions even in Communist countries displaying radically anti-religious dispositions. Paradoxical as it may appear, such secular and atheist dictatorships, feeding on an egalitarian state ideology, could capitalize on discriminatory preconceptions deriving originally from Christian prejudice.

The last example is conducive to the second main reason of the continued impact of Christian anti-Judaism in modern times. This has to do with the facility with which the traditional Christian version of the stigmatized Jewish religious difference could be transmuted into modern definitions of Jews as radical aliens. The communist case constitutes a borderline situation where discrimination (and in several instances the murderous persecution of Jews like after the Slansky trial in the 1950s in Czechoslovakia or in the Soviet Union during the last years of Stalin) on utterly secularized forms of a preconception about the distinctive 'Jewish difference' as well as the 'social danger' they represent. Such 'essentialisation' of sorts attributed inadvertently to the 'Jewish difference' could occur to be in the collective or institutional unconscious a mere transposition of Christian preconceptions. The discursive structure of the argument about Jews betraying the Communist party (as it came to the fore in the Slansky trial) is the perfect equivalent to the idea surviving in Christian rituals about Jews having betrayed Jesus Christ.

In modern constitutional democracies at least three other different formulations of stigmatized Jewish otherness have received accreditation as a follow-up of the Christian definition of Jewish alterity.

First Jews have tended to be excluded from emergent national communities during the nation building process as 'national aliens' of an extreme sort and – precisely for that reason - not liable to become members of the nation. In limit cases, like in Romania or Russia during the long 19th century, this state ideological tenet prevailed consensually during the long 19th century even in circles of political liberalism. Elsewhere states with assimilationist policies (like in the West or in Hungary) fought uphill battles in the 19th century against this preconception with more or less success. A halo of suspicion that Jews were not (and could not become) 'real Frenchmen' or 'real Hungarians' just like others is still haunting their public image with at least tacitly *völkisch* references. In modern settings this could be regarded as a late avatar of the requirement of the *purezza del sangue* (purely Christian origin) of members of the state service centuries after the forced mass conversion of Jews in Spain or Portugal around 1500. Nationals were alleged to need common physical, demographic, residential and cultural 'roots' which the Jews could not display. Such *Blut und Boden* ideology pops up even in political discourses or off record utterances of 'democratic' politicians, especially since the establishment of the Israeli state, demonstrating the deep penetration and reception of the preconception in the

collective subconscious of elites in otherwise egalitarian societies. (After an anti-Jewish terror act in the 1970s a French prime minister spoke - apparently without actual second thoughts - about 'Jewish and innocent French victims' of the aggression...). Rightist nationalists of the *Action Française* proclaimed in the inter-war years openly that Jews were not part of the French nation on religious grounds. They shared though this qualification of aliens (*métèques*) with Protestants and Freemasons...By the outgoing decades of the 19th century (since the 1870s) nationalist *judeophobia* started to be reorganized and reformulated in movements of political antisemitism with reference to the arguments that Jews were not only aliens, but also enemies of European nations. We must return below to this, since it came to represent in various disguises the most widespread reference for anti-Jewish discourses, agitations and actions in the 20th century.

The second formulation is grounded in the idea of the racial division of humanity which – via social Darwinism –, started to be exploited in a *judeophobic* direction since as early as the second part of the 19th century. Racist antisemitism, based on the phantasm of Jews as 'racial aliens' and, as such, supposedly enemies of 'normal' (non Jewish, that is, Christian) society, had achieved its full fledged ideological perfection with wide range public success all over Europe even before Nazism turned it into a murderous state doctrine, later justifying the *Shoah*. It constitutes the most elaborate form of anti-Jewish prejudice in modern societies, which can be regarded as a simple naturalization of the age old Christian representations of the radical otherness of Jews. One can consider discriminative *judeophobic* racism as a version of 'chimerical anti-Semitism', with the difference though that the physical (or genetic) particularities of Jews, or at least some Jewish populations, emanating from closed-in demographic isolates, may prove to be scientifically demonstrable, just like those of any other groups with similarly segregated background. Physical differences, however real they may be – they visibly exist between rank and file Greeks, Slaves or Swedes inside Europe - could not though justify anti-Jewish discriminations without the pre-constructed image of the Jew as dangerous radical alien belonging to the Christian heritage. Anyhow, racist antisemitism was the most accomplished alter ego of Christian anti-Judaism in secular terms, strong with the apparent authority of reputedly 'scientific' justifications.

The public success of antisemitic racism achieved its most complete formulation by the end of the 19th century precisely in the period when – by their language, in their way of life, via their economic or social standing and behavior, even in their weakening confessional commitment thanks to advanced secularism - Jews tended to be less and less distinct from Gentiles in the public space of modern nation states. This was due to the long process of their 'assimilation', acculturation, social and political integration as normal citizens following (sometimes even preceding) their civic emancipation and cultural modernization. Precisely in this period, besides the racist rejection, the less and less significant distinctiveness of Jews in terms of their anthropological

culture, tended to be reinterpreted as more or less monstrous - because consciously hidden - forms of otherness. This could happen, once again, on the strength of the survival or unconscious take-over of Christian anti-Jewish preconceptions and their projections into traces of remaining perceptible Jewish difference. Insufficient secularization could play here, obviously enough, a substantial role. The subsistence of cohesive anthropological traits of even highly assimilated Jewry in various terms – whether in gastronomy, verbal culture, bodily techniques, the expression of emotions, educational investments, habitat, tastes, family relations, child rearing patterns, proclaimed inter-group solidarity, etc. – could also contribute to set Jews apart in the eyes of prejudiced observers. Jew-hatred, generated through such excessive extension of the significance of perceived (supposed or projected) tiny differences, could actually operate even without the demonstrable existence of such differences, due to pre-established prejudice. A perfectly ‘assimilated’ Jew – speaking and behaving exactly like any other citizen - could be spotted as ‘unduly normal’ : looking like others was liable to be regarded as simple mimicry, not ‘fit to Jews’, an enactment or a mockery of sorts which, on its turn, could reinforce *judeophobic* suspicions against Jews as ‘dissimulators’, ‘infiltrators’, ‘born traitors’, ‘usurpers’, etc. Such prejudice based perception of Jews draws directly on the established stock of Christian anti-Judaic preconceptions in the disguise of projections of essentialist negative distinctions on collective traits which would, otherwise, be considered as socially meaningless.

The logic and the references of secular antisemitism

Without easily acceptable and communicable arguments such projections could not be efficient and gain in some milieus, strata, historic junctures and societies wide range recognition – offering motifs of mobilization for anti-Jewish actions and movements. These arguments, contrary to the purely ‘chimerical’ (imagined, invented or theologically constructed) Christian accusations leveled against Jews, had usually two sides. One of them was a reflection on recognizable characteristics of at least some Jews. Thus there was here some relationship with socio-historical realities. The second consisted of a generalization, a blowing up of sorts of the collective traits referred to on the one hand, an often monstrously negative interpretation of it on the other hand. The latter could not be developed though, once again, without established Christian preconceptions of Jews as suspicious social outsiders. This can be proved by the fact that – whatever the anti-Jewish conclusion drawn from the argument may have been – the same derogatory accusations would usually not be formulated against non Jews with similar givens or of identical social standing. Modern antisemitism justifies the hatred of Jews by the phantasmagorical aggrandizement of the specific (often just alleged) cause from which it draws rational arguments and by its exclusive association with Jews.

Jew-hatred in modern times displays a (not quite closed) list of references which can be summarized, though inexhaustibly, as follows.

The first one, political antisemitism, has been mentioned already above as the by-product (or infantile disorder) of romantic nationalism typical of the early phase of national awakening and nation-building. It was not unknown in the West but it was much more emphasized in late emerging nations states of East Central Europe (Germany included). It came to full bloom in the 1870s when a number of local parties and movements espoused its tenets, giving rise even to transnational antisemitic associations and organizations, but some of its origins go back to the period of the French Revolution and its aftermaths. Among its multiple patterns, besides the allegation (already discussed) that Jews could not become full-fledged members of would-be nations because of their fundamental otherness, Several could claim long standing popular success.

The first one consisted of various fantastic theories of the Jewish conspiracy against society or even the world. The earliest formulations of such preconceptions date from the French Revolution, supported by the fact that the revolutionary National Assembly was the first in history to grant formal civic equality to individual Jews (1790-1791) - following to be sure the implicit implementation of Jewish emancipation in the constitution of the United States (1787). This was enough to develop throughout the 19th century a number speculations about the subversive inclinations of Jews and their occult power directed against Christian society and established social order. The most extravagant incarnation of such complot theories was a forgery of the Tsarist secret police *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Sion* (1905), an infamous fake, achieving world wide distribution. (Its publication in America was funded by Henri Ford and the script is still at present a popular reading in Arab countries, serving the purposes of Anti-Israeli propaganda).

Racist antisemitism, as dealt with above, can also be classified in the category of political antisemitism, since it became a major mobilizing theme of reference for the extreme right in many countries (even if far from all, especially in post-1945 West) during the 20th century. It was formulated in its most achieved version by Richard Wagner's son-in-law Chamberlain (a born Englishman turned into a Pan-German ideologue), preparing the ideological infrastructure for Adolf Hitler's future National Socialist Workers' Party.

But political antisemitism could be backed up by less phantasmagoric arguments, more concrete objectives and realistic targets since the 19th century, when in most European countries Jews entered into public life, notably in the political arena. Due to the fact that the demand for the emancipation of Jews and the preservation of their civic rights was, in modern times, mostly on the agenda of leftist or liberal opinion makers or those in conservative circles which proclaimed the same principles (like in Disraeli's Britain). Jews tended to side with similar movements and parties all over Europe. This could trigger off anti-Jewish reactions in opposite camps, whereby preformed antipathies against Jews could be combined with the representation of strictly political interests and options. With the crisis of classical parliamentary democracies or

the failure to realize such regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, the search for new societal projects multiplied by the end of the 19th century. This was the period of the emergence of a number of social utopias attracting Jews because they promised – among other things – the final elimination of the rest of anti-Jewish discriminations. Some Jews became active agents of the spread of such programs all the more because they had acquired – thanks to the very process of ‘assimilation’ – a more modern mental set-up than their rank and file Gentile counterparts. This made them free to espouse or even invent or contribute to the construction of the doctrines of ultimate modernization, be it connected to humanist freemasonry, feminism, esperantism, socialism or communism.¹³ The enemies of these movements did not have a hard time to combine their hostility with Jew-hatred, drawing part of their political capital from anti-Jewish prejudices. The re-qualification of leftist and liberal parties in East Central Europe as properly ‘Jewish’ was already far advanced in Eastern and Central European authoritarian regimes of the inter-war years, though not in every versions of fascism. The fact that Italian fascism or, for that matter, most similar regimes around the Mediterranean hardly indulged (or only in a soft way and lately, once entering in alliance with Nazi Germany) in political or racist antisemitism, this seems to prove that such exploitation of latent Jew-hatred or the official sponsoring of *judeophobia* depended strongly on local cultural and political traditions. Anyhow, precisely on the strength of such traditions, when and where they existed, anti-Bolshevik trends in the 20th century regularly developed antisemitic elaborations. Some of the crisis situations after World War I (and the loss of the war itself) was imputed to Jewish machinations (the *Dolchstoß*-legend) in defeated Central Europe. Such political conceptions survive even today in form of anti-Jewish sensitivities (sometimes achieving publicity in public discourses as well) in several post-socialist countries, including those without any sizable Jewish populations whatsoever (Poland, Romania). This fact does by no means imply that – historically, up to the present – antisemitism could not be instrumentalized in strategies of mass mobilization or scapegoating for social ills in leftist movements and, most institutionally, in the Stalinist machinery of fight against arbitrarily targeted ‘enemies of socialism’.

The most paramount anti-Jewish charge in modern times was indeed grounded in anti-capitalism. It had elaborations of quite contrasting political shades, leftist and rightist or conservative as well. The equation Jews = capitalists was proposed already by the young Marx (himself of Jewish descent). It was largely taken over by the early ideologues of ‘utopian socialism’ or even the French syndicalist socialists (starting with the founding fathers like Blanqui and Proudhon) up to the Dreyfus Affair. The high level of Jewish participation in socialist movements, especially since the second part of the 19th century, and the ensuing *judeophobic* accusations, did far from discredit the parallel

¹³ See my study “Les Juifs, la modernité et la tentation communiste. Esquisse d’une problématique d’histoire sociale”, *Le communisme et les élites en Europe Centrale*, eds. Nicolas Bauquet and Francois Bocholier, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 85-105.

accusations, often emanating from the same political quarters, that Jews had 'invented' and developed capitalism with all its misdeeds to their own benefit. This was epitomized by the interwar years in the parallel public outrage manifested by Central European authoritarian regimes against 'Jewish plutocracy' and 'Judeo-Bolshevism'. Both had indeed elements of social reality, still none of them were lacking 'chimerical' (monstrously imagined) ingredients. The credibility of the anti-Jewish target of anti-capitalist opinion had obvious references. Since the Jewish financial oligarchy of feudal states had often performed, thanks to their forced professional specialization, major functions in public funding (as *Hoffaktoren*), their descendents not infrequently succeeded in the establishment of the network of modern credit institutions, indispensable for economic modernization. Some of these bankers' dynasties (like the Rothschild) became emblematic figures in Europe (much less in America) of the 'monetary power of Jews'. More generally many entrepreneurial Jews shared the burden and the profits of what Marxists would call 'the primitive accumulation of capital' in the early decades of industrialization. Among their initial advantages enabling them to do so one can count their know-how in rational economic calculation (developed through centuries of financial practices - the positive outcome of the professional prohibitions they were exposed to), their proto-bourgeois mental set-up and social stratification (same cause), their high level of literacy (a produce of the traditional 'religious intellectualism' of their faith), their readiness to geographic mobility (forcefully acquired via centuries of often constrained migrations) which facilitated their settlement in cities serving as centres of modern economy, as well as the fact that - not entitled to invest in immobile property before emancipation - they had easily mobilizable assets only at their disposal (when they had assets at all) in the capitalist *Gründerzeit*. All this has indeed produced some spectacular cases of success due to the entrepreneurship of highly gifted Jews, especially in financial markets and trade, but also - more particularly in Central and Eastern Europe - in the foundation activities of big industry and modern cultural infrastructures (the press, publishing, film making, etc.). But in all these activities Jews had only a minority participation most of the time in most places, while they often had to shoulder exclusively the responsibility for the social disruptions attributed to capitalism. Such selective stigmatization of 'Jewish capitalism' both in socialist or anti-modernist circles could not help being invested with a strong element of scapegoating. The above (in a shortcut) enumerated socio-historical conditions of distinctive economic mobility among Jews - distinctive *embourgeoisement* proper, the target of the anti-capitalist *judeophobia* - was matched by their exceptionally rapid intellectual modernization on the highest available level. This could serve as reference to all kinds of anti-modernist crystalizations of Jew hatred, especially in the underdeveloped Eastern part of the continent. Late emerging national societies or states (above all those with Catholic or Orthodox majorities) remained indeed marked by what should be qualified as a serious deficit in terms of under-education in titular rank and file ethnic groups. Some level of

literacy was common among Jewish males even before modern times, due to religious needs and rules. This was accompanied by an often advanced degree of learned (book based) confessional culture, as a central collective value in Jewish communities. Such traditional habit of learning could easily be converted into secular education when public schooling became accessible for Jews and were Jews were motivated to acquire secular knowledge. This happened usually much before the achievement of civic equality, in most of Europe by the late 18th, early 19th centuries. Jews started to invest heavily in public education, though not without resistance opposed by traditionalist Israelite authorities. Their educational proclivities were manifestly dependent upon the liability of success of ‘assimilationist’ strategies in societies open to the social integration of Jews. Advanced education was indeed an essential asset in the success of such existential choices. By the period of high capitalism at the end of the 19th century the educational superiority of Jews against their Gentile counterparts (as indicated by the respective proportions of the younger age groups attending secondary schools or universities) became spectacular all over Europe (wherever there were data for demonstration). This brought about a significant restructuration of middle class social brackets. After a few decades following their emancipation, in some professional branches (like medicine, engineering, journalism or at the Bar) Jewish professionals could take over leading market positions and even constitute locally the majority of their cluster (especially in Central European cities). Thus the educated middle class part became the largest sector of the socio-professional set up in several Jewish populations, while among Gentile equivalents the same strata made up a tiny minority only. A number of consequences ensued from this crass inequality, giving cause for ant-Semitic recriminations.

Manifest Jewish over-schooling was regarded as a positive development in liberal milieus (like in pre-1919 Hungary), but received utterly negative interpretations in rightist authoritarian regimes or circles (as in the ‘Christian course’ of the Hungarian rump state born from the Peace Treaty of Trianon). The latter would consider Jewish advancement in matters cultural and professional as a confirmation of their tenets about the dangerousness of Jews. The ‘Smart Jew’ – a common stereotype among philo- and anti-Semites – was regarded as even more threatening, since he could supposedly cheat upon easier and gain power over Gentiles... Their fast professional career and their entry into fields of activity which, formerly, had been considered as Gentile occupations (like the Bar), tended to exacerbate anti-Jewish hostilities precisely in the very middle class clusters in which Jews were seeking integration via heavy assimilationist efforts. Their success was easily reinterpreted as an intrusion, the illegitimate ‘invasion’ of Gentile middle class positions. Even when there was no congestion of the occupational markets in question, like in early 20th century Germany, student riots against the growing number of foreign students - mostly Jews from Eastern Europe - took on clearly antisemitic overtones. In the inter-war years, with the growth of unemployment of certified intellectuals, anti-Jewish violence became rampant

everywhere in Central European universities (even in the Czechoslovakian model democracy, let alone in Poland, Austria, Romania or Hungary). Hungary actually introduced as early as 1920 an academic *numerus clausus* law to bar the gross majority of Jewish candidates from higher studies in their home country. (This can be regarded as the first ever formally anti-Jewish law in a European country of early emancipation.) Since the 1880s student corporations of the Central and Eastern parts of the continent tended to exclude Jews, even in otherwise liberal Vienna (as it was witnessed in the diaries of Theodor Herzl). By the inter-war years the same corporations or their acolytes turned into paragons of the anti-Jewish agitation and aggressions. In the same period antisemitic organizations also multiplied in the professional middle classes, demonstrating a nasty pattern of sectorial competition for market shares. To this effect the right wing Hungarian National Medical Association went in the early 1940s as far as pressing the (pro-German) government to ban Jews from medical practice. The measure would have deprived the health services of the country of one third of their practitioners...Moreover, higher educational investments, better knowledge of foreign languages and the subsequent open-mindedness as to intellectual innovations, all this rendered educated Jews more attracted to the upcoming ideologies of modernity. But on its turn, this distinctive modernity of many members of the educated Jewish middle class could be and was often translated in rightist interpretations as an objectification of the image of Jews as that of ‘cultural aliens’ of sorts. Anti-Jewish *ressentiments* could hence be justified, generating xenophobic invectives and attacks by conservative circles. The latter analyses, however multifaceted they seem to be, can be summarized under the aegis of a fundamental ‘relative deficit’ of modernity in Gentile elites as against the more rapidly and decisively modernizing middle strata of Jewish communities.

In this rapid overview of the stock of secular references of modern antisemitism the most general, multi-functional motivation – scapegoating for all the miseries of suffering humanity – cannot be treated in all its dimensions.¹⁴ Let it be just mentioned as a reminder of the extraordinary inventiveness of the xenophobic as well as – by implication this times – *judeophobic* mind.

Conclusion

Antisemitism could not elaborate, develop, legitimate and gain accreditation for its multifarious paraphernalia without a number of important social functions this murderous ideology fulfilled for its adherents. Among these functions, some have been incidentally evoked already above. Political antagonisms disguised in antisemitism, competition for market shares of Jewish and Gentile practitioners or entrepreneurs in various intellectual or

¹⁴ See to this an interesting recent overview of the Hungarian historian Attila Pók, *The Politics of Hatred in the Middle of Europe. Scapegoating in Twentieth Century Hungary: History and Historiography*, (Szombathely: Savaria University Press, 2009).

economic activities, efforts at collective self-distinction of social underdogs, the enforcement of a form of symbolic purity of titular ethnic elites in would-be nation states, the implication of Jews in xenophobic reactions against real or imagined attacks coming from outside established national societies, a universalist interpretation of social crises and the ills of modern civilization – all this can be counted in the line of these sociologically demonstrable functions.¹⁵ If there is no space here to offer an even summary analysis of the latter, it is important to remember that, following the basic statement of this essay, such social uses of *judeophobia* do not suffice to explain it in a satisfactory manner. This cannot be accomplished without reference to the above discussed Christian historical foundations, which served for a kind of primitive accumulation of ideological capital, constantly reinvested in contemporary patterns of Jew-hatred, whatever new references the latter could mobilize, added to the old ones. The actual new social functions in question can be only regarded as contingent or supplementary conditions of possibility for the growth of anti-Jewish potential – by the way quite unequally distributed in various societies. They never operate as sufficient individual conditions for its expansion or success. To understand their alas amply attested efficiency, one cannot disregard the Christian origins of modern elaborations of Jew-hatred as a fundamental historical given.

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¹⁵ I tried to offer details of such a functional model of antisemitism in my book cited above, Karady, *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era*, 309-336.

Designing citizenship. The “Jewish question” in the debates of the Romanian parliament (1866-1869)

by *Silvia Marton*

Abstract

The paper analyzes the debates in the Romanian Constituent Assembly of 1866 on article 7 of the Constitution that excludes non-Christians (notably Jews) from political rights. By drawing mainly on the parliamentary archives and the press, it also examines governmental regulations, legislation, questions to ministers and parliamentary deliberations on the discriminations and violence against Jews during the years 1867-1869. The legislative and administrative measures following the adoption of article 7 of the Constitution create the ‘Jewish question’, that is anti-Jewishness as expression of anti-alien sentiment and of national preservation, elevate it to an international issue, and account for much of the internal governmental instability of the period. Anti-Semitism in that period is as much about Romanians and how they can consolidate their nation-state, as it is about the Jews and those who hate them. The paper holds that during the 1860s-1870s, anti-Jewish sentiment, not yet coherent and programmatic, tells less about anti-Semitism, and more about the nature of Romanian nationalism, as a modern variant of state-led xenophobia, eager to demonstrate state capacity. Romanian politicians want to build very quickly both the state and a homogenous nation, and the Jews (and other foreigners) are there to show that none is yet ready.

1866 opens the period leading to the *de jure* recognition of the independence so much desired by the Romanian political class, and introduces major policies and institutional measures for the affirmation of the new state. In 1866 a constitution is adopted which will remain in force, with some modifications, until the Second World War; rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed; the principles of liberal constitutionalism are at the base of institutions; a new dynasty and the principle of inheritance of the throne are introduced, and a foreign prince, Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, is invited to the throne; the political, administrative, ideological and cultural bases of the Romanian nation state start to be consolidated. Until the Eastern Crisis of 1875 to 1878 which leads to independence, Romania is legally dependent on the Ottoman Empire. In March 1881, Romania becomes a kingdom.

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account for much of the internal governmental instability of the period. Antisemitism in that period is as much about Romanians and how they can consolidate their nation-state, as it is about the Jews and those who hate them.¹ The purpose of the paper is to expose the reasons for which the members of the various 'liberal factions' (notably the radical liberals and the Independent liberal fraction from Iași) come to defend strongly antisemitic and nationalist legislation and discourse in the parliament. The paper holds that the liberal MPs' xenophobia and antisemitism is rather the expression of nationalism as a modern way of understanding what binds a political community together, and not of medieval pogroms that persecute Christians and Jews because of religious differences. During the 1860s-1870s, anti-Jewish sentiment, not yet coherent and programmatic, tells less about antisemitism, and more about the nature of Romanian nationalism, as a modern variant of state-led xenophobia, eager to demonstrate state capacity. The 1860s-1870s are more about xenophobia and judeophobia (the latter quite traditional in its forms of expression based on economic and religious prejudice) and modernization: politicians are convinced that by defending the Romanian identity and state *against* foreigners (all foreigners are criticized since all have allegedly opposed interests to those of the Romanians), they are 'modern' because they are so eager to demonstrate that there is a state capacity (in Weberian terms). The weaker the state, the greater the obsession to form a solid national identity. Romanian politicians want to build up very quickly both the state *and* a homogenous nation, and the Jews (and other foreigners) are there to show that none is yet ready. During the 19th century, antisemitism and xenophobia reveal the political and social tensions within the states the Jews live in. They also reveal the difficult state- and nation building process of the recently formed Romania. They highlight the limitations of Romanian liberalism, its incapacity to endorse cultural diversity, and its willingness to define the nation as homogenous. Antisemitism and xenophobia also expose the way the Romanian state conceives its relationship to its subjects-citizens. The paper starts from the assumption that political modernity in Easter Europe was based on the idea of a state that legitimizes itself in front of its ethnic-nation and of an ethnic identity that binds individuals to one another and to the state they share.

The 1860s lay the basis for what is subsequently to become in the 1880s the more coherent and doctrinaire nationalist antisemitism, that incorporates antisemitism into the very nature of being a Romanian and into the Romanian national identity itself.² The peace of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin in

¹ I share this assumption put forward by Marcel Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation and the Jews. The Antisemitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany*, (Lincoln&London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 3.

² William O. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth Century Romania*, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991); Dietmar Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf. Juden und Muslime als Alteritätspartner im rumänischen und serbischen Nationscode. Ethnonationale Staatsbürgerschaftskonzepte 1878-1941*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005);

1877-1878 conditions Romania's acquiring state independence by granting citizenship and political rights to Jews by amending art. 7 of the 1866 Constitution: foreign pressures on the Romanian government to address discrimination against the Jews create strong resentment and elevate antisemitism to the rank of state policy and to a matter of national pride and defense.

"The national sentiment is a barrier stronger than any laws"

If the members of the Constituent Assembly are more open to give civil rights to Jews (and to foreigners in general) – art. 11 of the 1866 Constitution deals with these issues – they are inflexible with regard to their exclusion from political rights, by their categorical exclusion of naturalization, despite some very few pro-naturalization opinions.

The views of some members of the Constituent Assembly in favor of the naturalization of Jews stress the fact that they are assets from an economic standpoint, and that they contribute to the general wealth primarily through capital. The second set of arguments places the problem of Jews in the sphere of rights (indeed, the arguments against come from the same direction, but reach different conclusions). Since the constitution consecrated freedoms and rights, the Jews cannot be excluded as they are part of "humanity," with the same rights, say some MPs. Since Jews have duties as all other citizens, they should be granted rights to the same extent. Moreover, by giving them political rights, they would no longer be perceived as "enemies" of the Romanians, and they thus could be integrated. While stressing that they do not want to harm national interests, these members of the Assembly are trying to give the debate a broader scope. Religion can no longer be an obstacle to naturalization, says N. Racoviță, because the constitution has already included the most extensive human rights and freedoms.³ The conservative D. Ghica-Comăneșteanu considers that the Jews have the right to ask to be included in citizenship as they have resided for a long time in the country and obeyed all the obligations of citizens (such as army recruitment); including them in the sphere of political rights would develop their patriotic feelings.⁴ And as the Romanians are more numerous, better educated and more civilized than the Jews, there is no risk that they "eat our nationality"; on the contrary, they represent a hard working population that is beneficial for any state or nation.⁵

Manolache Costache Epureanu, the president of the Constituent Assembly, is also developing economic arguments in favor of the Jews: they have capital,

Constantin Iordachi, "The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of 'Non-Citizens' in Romania, 1866-1918," *Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 8/2 (2001): 157-86.

³ *Dezbatările Adunării Constituante din anul 1866 asupra constituțiunii și legii electorale din România*, publicate din nou în edițiune oficială de Alexandru Pencovici (thereafter *D.A.C.*) (Curtea Șerban-Vodă: Tipografia statului, 1883), 94.

⁴ *D.A.C.*, 96-7.

⁵ *Idem.*

and it is only capital that brings “prosperity in a country,” that creates “a strong Romanian state,”⁶ he says. In his view, the prominent role of Jews in trade in Moldova can be explained by the fact that Romanians have not dealt with savings, they have failed to treat money as a commodity, and have progressively moved from business to hunting privileges and public employment (“*le venea mania de a se face boieri*”), while the Jews have formed a class of traders and exporters in an agrarian country.⁷ Epureanu adds that isolating of Jews amidst the Romanian population and their political exclusion will nourish the Romanians’ hatred against them and transform the two populations into enemies; “all humanity has the same right,” concludes the president of the Constituent Assembly.⁸

The idea that the emancipation of the Jews would cure the Jews of their ‘exclusive spirit’ is in the end rejected.⁹ The prevailing arguments reject the possibility for the Jews to be included in the political nation, while the will to transform them into ‘good citizens’ is hardly discussed at all.

The *rapporteur* of the committee on art. 7 of the Constituent Assembly, Aristide Pascal, explains the position of the majority of the MPs. Reaffirming the egalitarian and liberal spirit of all Romanians, Pascal states in his report that “the Romanian people, very jealous of its nationality, has always been reluctant to any legislation that would have jeopardized its nationality.”¹⁰ It is the reason art. 6.1 (“The quality of Romanian is acquired, retained and lost in accordance with rules established by the civil laws”) and art. 6.2 (“Religion can no longer be an obstacle to naturalization”)¹¹ of the draft constitution have been radically amended by the committee, which recommends that a special law regulates the gradual admission of Jews to naturalization.¹² But the final wording of the article on the naturalization of Jews (art. 7 in the final text, “The quality of Romanian is acquired, preserved and lost according to rules determined by civil law. Only foreigners belonging to the Christian faith can gain naturalization”) is unequivocal. The chronicler of Charles I in his memoirs recorded the restrictive vote with this comment: “It became impossible for the Romanian Jews to receive political rights, even in the harshest of conditions.”¹³

Jews were excluded from political rights, continues the *rapporteur*, Aristide Pascal, because they are “the cause of diseases” of the Romanian nation, its “enemies from within,” and “they are hostile to its beliefs, religion and independence.”¹⁴ To forbid by law any naturalization of Jews (“who form an

⁶ D.A.C., 104-5.

⁷ D.A.C., 104-6.

⁸ D.A.C., 103-4.

⁹ Unlike in Britain prior to the 1880s, Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 150.

¹⁰ Arhivele Naționale, Bucharest (thereafter Arh. Naț.), file 354/1865-66: 25; D.A.C., 25.

¹¹ D.A.C., 2; Arh. Naț., file 354/1865-66: 30.

¹² D.A.C., 34.

¹³ *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României de un martor ocular*, vol. I, 1866-1869, ed. Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest: Scripta, 1992), 79.

¹⁴ Arh. Naț., file 354/1865-66: 25; D.A.C., 25.

uneducated population totally lacking the lights of the century's civilization") and any access to political and civil rights "means that Jews do not injure our national development."¹⁵

To give political rights to Jews would amount to accept "dualism" in national representation. MPs also emphasize that, according to tradition, representation is one and indivisible, and that there is the risk that Jews form "a state within the state." This is what Nicolae Ionescu, leader of the Independent liberal fraction, states during the debates in the committee (prior to the opening of the plenary discussion). He just summarizes the views of the majority. While stressing the highly liberal character of the Constitution, Ionescu says that the government, in formulating art. 6 of the draft constitution (which becomes art. 7 in the final text), should not have separated "freedom and the homeland. We can lend freedom, just as we lend ideas or religion [...], but what we cannot lend, is the homeland. Because, gentlemen, in the traditions of the homeland, there is [illegible] one indivisible representation."¹⁶ The sphere of political rights includes only those who share the same tradition, says Ionescu. Moreover, there are inalienable and unchanged rights of the Romanian nation, inherited from its ancestors.

Art. 6 is discussed in the plenary meeting on June 18, 1866. The discussion is interrupted because a large crowd gathers at the gates of the Constituent Assembly and protests against the admission of Jews to political equality (as envisaged in the draft submitted by the government to the Assembly). Faced with these pressures, the government withdraws art. 6. Ion C. Brătianu, the Minister of Finance, reads to the Assembly the government's decision.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the crowd moves to the synagogue and destroys it.¹⁸ After the intervention of the National Guard, peace is restored during the night. The next day, the Council of Ministers issues a call to the people of Bucharest where the negative consequences of anti-Semitic movements are explained, while Charles offers a significant sum from his personal resources for the restoration of the synagogue.¹⁹ Stimulated by art. 6 of the constitutional draft, the "Jewish question," to quote *Trompeta Carpaților*,²⁰ is born during the months of May to June 1866, primarily because the Jews of Romania seek the support of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, an organization, *Trompeta Carpaților* underlined, with headquarters in Paris. The president of the *Alliance* himself, Isaac Adolphe Crémieux, arrives in Romania, but without any success in obtaining firm assurances from the government in the benefit of the Jews.²¹

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ Arh. Naț., file 355/1865-66: 524, 525.

¹⁷ D.A.C., 58.

¹⁸ "Memoriile regelui Carol I", 78; Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919). De la excludere la emancipare*, (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1996), 69-72.

¹⁹ Ibid., 78-9.

²⁰ *Trompeta Carpaților*, n. 432, July 2, 1866, 1722.

²¹ Sorin Liviu Damean, *Carol I al României*, vol. I, 1866-1881 (Bucharest: Paideia, 2000), 172-4. After the final vote on art. 7, Crémieux writes in *Le Siècle* on July 28, 1866: "En Roumanie, le

Edda Binder-Iijima convincingly suggests that, through the popular demonstrations of June 18, the Jewish problem was instrumentalized mainly by the liberal radicals from Wallachia, as a weapon against the prince. The author stresses that the two camps, the radical liberals and the conservatives, differently take advantage of the manifestations in the streets: the first strategically delimit themselves from the openly anti-Semitic Moldavian party, the Independent liberal fraction; while the conservatives take the popular events as a reason for postponing the vote on the Constitution and for prolonging the debates.²² The main lines of these strategies are confirmed during the subsequent years. What is initially presented in June 1866 as a political maneuver later becomes a major political and social mortgage for the Romanian political class.²³

Although art. 6 is withdrawn by the government on June 18, many members of the Constituent Assembly continue to combat this article and to express their negative views about the Jews. It is striking that these MPs are mainly liberals representing Wallachian and Moldavian constituencies. The conservatives are not absent either in the debate when it comes to vote against the rights of the Jews. The Jews constitute a threat to “national interest,” say all these MPs, because they have captured all branches of economy and trade, and they are engaged in various “speculations;”²⁴ because they defend their own interests against the interests of the Romanian nation.²⁵ The most important reason why they represent such a danger is the fact that they bought “our lands” (“*moșiile noastre*”).²⁶ Some liberal MPs even propose an amendment that expressly prohibits them the right to own land.²⁷ Exclusive ownership over the national territory is stressed again, because, say these MPs, it is the national land which allowed the conservation of the Romanian nationality over the centuries: without property over its own land “the nationality dies” and the nation becomes a “fiction.”

According to the majority of the anti-Jewish MPs, the “Jewish question” is in fact a national issue and not a religious issue. Ion Strat, for example, says with conviction that the aversion of Romanians against Jews is not religious (in Romania there has never been religious persecution, he says, an idea supported

parti libéral, qui proclame avec bruit les opinions les plus avancées et qui sympathise le plus avec la révolution de 1848, ce parti – je dois le dire – se trouve encore, en ce qui concerne les questions religieuses et sociales, au XV^e et au XVI^e siècles,” see Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 73.

²² Edda Binder-Iijima, *Die Institutionalisierung der rumänischen Monarchie unter Carol I. 1866-1881*, (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), 69.

²³ Ibid., 70. See also Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Politics, 1859-1871. From Prince Cuza to Prince Carol*, (Iasj, Oxford, Portland: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1998), 184-5.

²⁴ Ion Strat, *D.A.C.*, 98-100; Ion C. Brătianu, *D.A.C.*, 108.

²⁵ P. Buescu, *D.A.C.*, 101-2; D. Tacu, 114-5.

²⁶ Voinescu, *D.A.C.*, 110-12; T. Lateș, 128-9.

²⁷ On June 22, 1866, amendment signed by I. Leca, Lateș, Lupașcu, Plesnilă, D. Tacu, D. Racoviță (*D.A.C.*, 126), finally rejected (*D.A.C.*, 132).

by all his colleagues²⁸), but it arises from the fact that Jews have taken over trade and industry and they exploit the Romanians.²⁹ Finance Minister Ion C. Brătianu, a former 1848 liberal and militant republican, summarizes the key argument in the Assembly. The Jews are a “social scourge for the Romanians,” they are the causes of their “social suffering” and they form a poor proletariat;³⁰ which is why “our citizenship is threatened by the Jews and when the nation is threatened, it wakes up and it becomes preemptive, instead of tolerant.”³¹ The government had to withdraw art. 6 of the draft constitution, explains the minister, in order “to stop the immigration of all proletarians, not only of Jews,” so that “our country does not become a colony for all the lazy people [...], for all proletarians of Europe.” In his opinion, the government and the Assembly have the task of encouraging “the arrival of science” and of “individuals who would become the initiators of agriculture and commerce;” it is only by raising barriers to the “foreign proletariat” that a Romanian middle class will form and then “we will become strong, and when we will be strong, then you can be sure we will be as tolerant as all nations are.”³² Just as the Minister of Finance, Voinescu warns: since in Moldova all properties are mortgaged to the Jews, “a nation that has no territory, no properties is no longer a nation, it is a fiction, and we have become a fiction, while the Jews have become a powerful nation on our ancestral land.”³³

On June 22, Brătianu intervenes again to reassure the MPs that “the sense of national conservation” is “so powerful” that the art. 16 of the Civil Code – article that regulates the naturalization of all foreigners – “has no application” because “the national sentiment is a barrier stronger than any laws.”³⁴ A group of Moldavian liberal MPs even proposes an amendment that prohibits the establishment of the Jews on Romanian territory,³⁵ supported also by N. Ionescu and A. Sihleanu.

The MPs’ arguments against the political rights of Jews are echoed by the two main liberal newspapers, *Românul* and *Trompeta Carpaților*. Foreigners, writes *Românul* without naming them, have violated “the most vital interests of Romania;” Romanians are not to be blamed for the violence on June 18, they have been victims of hostile foreign “instigators.” *Românul*, the official newspaper of the radical liberals, makes a distinction between religion and political rights, a distinction that will become a stereotype among the liberal radicals for years to come. To confuse the two areas, writes the newspaper, is the source of misunderstandings fed by the foreigners and the enemies who

²⁸ See also Voinescu, *D.A.C.*, 110; Nicolae Voinov, *D.A.C.*, 52.

²⁹ *D.A.C.*, 98-100.

³⁰ *D.A.C.*, 107-8.

³¹ *D.A.C.*, 107.

³² *D.A.C.*, 109.

³³ *D.A.C.*, 110-2.

³⁴ *D.A.C.*, 116.

³⁵ Signed by Lateș, Negură, D. Tacu, P. Cernătescu, I. Heliad, Nicolae Voinov, I. Leca (*D.A.C.*, 120), finally rejected (*D.A.C.*, 125-6).

“stop [our] nation in its glorious walk,” since there is no question of religious intolerance in the Romanian population; the Jewish question is only a constitutional and legal matter, and “of our social and national interests.”³⁶ As such, the journal defines itself as a defender of civil liberties and of nationality, against “the sworn enemies of freedom and of the Romanian nationality.” *Românul*, as most radical liberals, avoids religious arguments, since it strongly believes that religious tolerance is one of Romanians’ key virtues.

Trompeta Carpaților is outspokenly anti-Semitic.³⁷ It does not spare degrading qualifiers. It accuses the Assembly and the ministers for having created panic on June 18, while the violence at the synagogue in Bucharest is understandable and justifiable by “the hatred of the people:” the Jews are the real enemies. Art. 6 of the draft constitution is an “ultra-cosmopolitan proposal” and a proof of the desire to denationalize the Romanian nation. *Trompeta Carpaților* gives the same meaning to the Jewish question as *Românul*: it is not a “religious issue,” but “a matter of blood, a question of race,” as “Romanianess” and the Romanian lands are in danger. The paper repeatedly recommends the expulsion of the Jews. It also publishes many petitions from Moldova. Their terms are similar to those used by the press. The Constituent Assembly receives such petitions as well, such as the one of May 1866 signed by many inhabitants of Iași and of other Moldavian cities.³⁸ Their arguments are identical to the MPs’ economic and social arguments against the admission of Jews to political rights.

The accusation that the Jews represent a threat to the nationality of Romanians because of their significant demographic presence, because of their social and economic activities and because of their differences from the indigenous population is constantly repeated by the MPs. Jews are viewed as a source of national degeneration and they are cast as the antithesis of authentic “Romanianess.”³⁹ After the adoption of the constitutional article excluding Jews from political rights, the administrative measures during the 1860s-1870s issued by the government and the prefects for the expulsion of Jews are justified by the same arguments – expulsion is completely justified because it is seen as an effective way to defend the nationality of the Romanians.

Internal public law and “nation’s law”

Three highly controversial episodes in the late 1860s reveal that the debates do not differ from those in the Constituent Assembly during the summer 1866: questions to ministers in the Lower Chamber by A. Georgiu on March 24, 1868, by P.P. Carp on April 26, 1868, and by I. Codrescu on December 16,

³⁶ *Românul*, June 12-13-14, 1866: 369; June 15, 1866: 373; June 19-21, 1866: 373-4; June 23, 1866: 381.

³⁷ *Trompeta Carpaților* n. 424, May 31, 1866, 1693; n. 425, 4 June 5, 1866, 1693; n. 426, June 7, 1866, 1702; n. 431, June 28, 1866, 1721; n. 432, July 2, 1866, 1722-3.

³⁸ Arh. Naț., file 356/1865: 5-7.

³⁹ Unlike in Britain prior to the 1880s, Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 153.

1869. I followed, above all, the causes the MPs identify for the “evil,” as they call it; the type of measures in favor or against the Jews; and the arguments by which they justify them. The key to the “Jewish question” remains deeply national. The attitudes and the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the MPs’ highlight the way the law and administrative regulations are supposed to define and defend the Romanian nation, identify and remove foreigners (specifically, the Jews), and prove the effectiveness of administration and government control over the territory and its population – all discursively packed in arguments borrowed from the history of Romanians. It is mainly the radical liberals and the Independent liberal fraction who continue to oppose the granting of political rights to Jews in order to preserve the ethnic “Romanianness” perceived as homogeneous.

The most controversial document, which triggers the “Jewish question” after the relative calm following the adoption of the Constitution, is the circular sent by the liberal Minister of Interior, Ion C. Brătianu, to the prefects on March 21, 1867.⁴⁰ The minister calls for measures to ensure that authorities forbid vagabond aliens, undocumented, homeless or persons without occupation to settle in the villages of Moldova, or to rent inns and taverns.⁴¹ This circular is preceded by measures with fewer echoes.⁴² Similar documents – none of which uses explicitly the word “Jew” – addressing the “vagabonds” multiply during the spring of 1867. These restrictive measures are followed by several waves of expulsions and violence against Jews during March-July 1867. The international governments and press react.⁴³ Government actions in the spring of 1867 also create internal discontent. Fourteen conservative politicians from Moldova, including D.A. Sturdza, Vasile Pogor and Manolache Costache Epureanu, ask the government to withdraw the circular of March 21.⁴⁴ The conservatives denounce the government’s abuses invoking reasons of humanity, but also ask for Brătianu’s resignation.⁴⁵ Under such pressures, the government also publishes a statement to justify the measures imposed to the prefects by that circular. It explains that they are aimed at all vagrants and are taken for reasons of security and public order. The *communiqué* rejects the accusations of persecution against the Jews.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ See also Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Politics*, 212-21 on the external implications of the events.

⁴¹ Apostol Stan and Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România. De la origini până la 1918*, (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 1996), 129; Anastasie Iordache, *Instituirea monarhiei constituționale și a regimului parlamentar în România. 1866-1871* (Bucharest: Majadahonda, 1997), 165.

⁴² Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 74.

⁴³ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 74-8; Apostol Stan and Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România*, 129-31.

⁴⁴ Ion Mamina and Ion Bulei, *Guverne și guvernanți (1866-1916)* (Bucharest: Silex, 1994), 19.

⁴⁵ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. X (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia “Datina Românească,” 1939), 42.

⁴⁶ *Monitorul. Jurnal Oficial al Principatelor Unite Române* (thereafter M.O.) n. 112, May 19/31, 1867: 673.

Following the press campaign in Western Europe, prince Charles and the authorities are under pressure to stop the restrictions. Brătianu's resignation is also demanded. The minister is criticized not only for the measures against the Jews (even if the government continues to say they are within the law and not religious persecutions), but also because he is suspected of maintaining relations with the revolutionary and Mazzinian circles of Europe.⁴⁷ Brătianu resigns on August 16, 1867, and Ștefan Golescu becomes president of the new Council of Ministers, but the circulars are not revoked. According to the historian Carol Iancu (he cites, among others, Emile Picot's testimony, Charles' secretary), it seems that the prince, convinced by Brătianu, considers that the government's harsh measures are appropriate to the situation.⁴⁸ Expulsions continue in Moldova during autumn 1867, and during spring and summer 1868. Anti-Jewish revolts take place in other cities of Moldova, in Bârlad, Galați, then again in autumn 1868 in Galați.⁴⁹ From the legislative point of view, the climax is the draft bill signed by thirty-one members of the Moldovan Independent liberal fraction presented to the Assembly in March 1868. The bill⁵⁰ proposes that the Jews be excluded from civil rights: they are allowed to settle in towns only with the consent of the municipal councils; they are prohibited from establishing, under any pretext whatsoever, even provisionally, in the countryside, to acquire property in the city or the countryside, to rent or work land, vineyards, taverns, inns, distilleries, mills, etc., and have contracts with the state or with municipalities for supplies – and all these measures would have retroactive effects. The bill is not debated in the parliament, but the topic is addressed in the interpellation to the government by A. Georgiu in March 1868. Following pressures from the diplomatic agents of the great powers, who accuse the government of actions against the Jews, two radical liberal governments are forced to resign.⁵¹ Foreign interventions, with immediate consequences on government instability, do not stop the anti-Semitic policies which continue until 1879.⁵²

The subject of A. Georgiu's interpellation on March 24, 1868 is the National Guard from Iași. The Interior Minister Brătianu, in answering it, comments the bill of the thirty-one signed also by A. Georgiu. The minister does not provide new arguments in his answer: vagabonds and especially foreign Jews are an

⁴⁷ Apostol Stan and Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România*, 103; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 42.

⁴⁸ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 80-95; Catherine Durandin, *Istoria românilor* Liliana Buruiană-Popovici (Iași: Institutul European, 1999), 131-2.

⁴⁹ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 94, 96-8, 103-5.

⁵⁰ The bill is reproduced in Dumitru Ivănescu and Cătălin Turliuc, *Modernizare și construcție națională în România. Rolul factorului alogen, 1832-1918*, (Iași: Junimea, 2002), 187-8. See also Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 98-9; Edda Binder-Iijima, *Die Institutionalisierung der rumänischen Monarchie*, 179.

⁵¹ Ion Mamina, *Monarhia constituțională în România. Enciclopedie politică. 1866-1938*, (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2000), 193, 300-1.

⁵² Catherine Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 132-4.

“economic harm” to the Romanians; persecuted in neighboring countries, the Jews took refuge in large numbers in Romania known for its tolerant spirit.⁵³ He asserts that it is legitimate to take the necessary measures “to satisfy our moral and material interests” and to “ensure our nationality”; he also argues that the government, through its circulars, controls the situation; but he does not reject the philosophy of the bill, he only accuses the signatories not to have had prior consultation with the government and introduced some “barbarian” measures that raised international protests.⁵⁴ Ion Codrescu, a signatory of the bill, does not hesitate to justify even its harshest measures by using very strong words against the Jews, because it is “a matter of national survival,” since “our nation degenerates from day to day under their evil influence”; he also reminds that this is an economic issue, not religious persecution.⁵⁵ The signatories A. Georgiu and I. Codrescu are very unhappy that the government does not agree that the bill should follow the usual parliamentary procedure (sections, plenary session, debate, vote).⁵⁶

In November 1868 a coalition government composed of conservatives and moderate liberals is the successor of the two cabinets dominated by the liberal radicals. But until January 1869, the houses are dominated by the liberal radicals, the president of the Lower House being no other than Brătianu until May 1869. Given the composition of the government and the parliament, the tensions between the two institutions are frequent until the elections of March 1869, which are the consequence of the dissolution of the Assembly on January 29. Following the elections coordinated by the Minister of Interior Mihail Kogălniceanu, the moderate liberals who support him win the majority of the mandates.⁵⁷ For the radical liberals, these elections are a failure.

In the Lower House on December 16, 1869, I. Codrescu has the opportunity to display in great detail his vehemently anti-Semitic arguments, by asking questions to the government. On this occasion, other MPs of the Moldovan Fraction (all of the signatories of the bill) take the floor to highlight the anti-Semitic arguments they proudly defend. The conservative MPs will not have time to take the floor.

Ion Codrescu’s intervention describes in detail the arguments by which the Moldovan MPs justify their antisemitism and consider it as legitimate. All those who take the floor note the equivalence between “the Jewish question” and national interest. An important part of Codrescu’s intervention discusses the activity of the *Alliance Israélite* in Paris and in Romania. He bluntly accuses the Alliance to pursue its interests against the interests of the Romanian nation and

⁵³ M.O. n.75 March 30/April 11, 1868, session of March 24, 1868: 498.

⁵⁴ M.O. n.75 March 30/April 11, 1868, session of March 24, 1868: 498; M.O. n.76 March 31/April 12, 1868, session of 24 March, 1868: 504.

⁵⁵ M.O. n.76 March 31/April 12, 1868, session of March 24, 1868: 504.

⁵⁶ To their great disappointment, the debate stops and the discussion on the national guard is continued.

⁵⁷ Ion Mamina, *Monarhia constituțională în România*, 197-8, 301; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 101-3.

to resort to illegitimate interference in the affairs of the Romanian government. He has no doubts: the *Alliance* and the Jews want to conquer and subjugate the Romanian nation; the Jews accuse Romania of religious persecution, whereas in truth there is no such thing. As a good inheritor of the 1848 generation, Codrescu stresses that Romanians have the right to a stable and independent state due to their centuries-long history on this land, and that their role “in the Danube valley has been [the creation] of an eminently national and Christian state” based on common origin, ancestors, language, and religion. He also formulates the idea of the homogeneity of the nation, expressing, in fact, the desire to have this homogeneity, despite apparently contrary evidence. The national unity and homogeneity will no longer be valid in the future, he goes on, when “the great class of trade and industry” will be composed of “not assimilated and impossible to assimilate foreigners.”⁵⁸

After having emphasized in detail the illegitimate interference of the Alliance in domestic politics and its negative effects on the prestige of the Romanian state, Ion Codrescu continues his anti-Semitic accusations by mentioning figures to give an image of the scale of the demographic evolution of what he calls “the great threat.” He is convinced that the existing official figures are inaccurate compared to the much larger number of Jews, especially in Moldova. He is also concerned about the electoral consequences of this demographic presence: in his view, the third Electoral College (mainly an urban college) is threatened in its existence, especially in Moldova, because in some cities, according to him, the ratio is one Romanian to four Jews.⁵⁹ What worries Codrescu most is the legal status of Jews: since “the principle of conservation has always been the fundamental doctrine of the Romanian state,” the Romanian laws of all time have prohibited the naturalization of non-Christians because of the “instinct to keep unchanged the national and Christian character of the state,” and not because of religious intolerance.⁶⁰

Naturalization cannot be granted to foreigners for the same reasons: “Whatever the period of residence of a foreigner in the country, he cannot be considered before the civil and political law anything else but a foreigner. Because there is no such category in the ‘nation’s law’ (*drept național*)!”⁶¹ He rejects any territorial definition of citizenship. It is to him a privileged status reserved for the members of the ethno-national community and based solely on *jus sanguinis*. What Codrescu also says, is that the “nation’s law” and national consciousness are *supra legem*, and that civil and political rights depend on nationality.⁶² The meaning of the term “nation’s law” may well have its source in Simion Bărnuțiu’s writings who in his lectures at the University of Iași⁶³

⁵⁸ M.O. n. 281 December 21, 1869/January 2, 1870, session of December 16, 1869: 1298-9.

⁵⁹ Idem.

⁶⁰ Idem.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1299-1300.

⁶² Ibid.: 1300.

⁶³ Published as *Dreptul public al românilor*, (Iași, 1867). He is an émigré from Transylvania. G. Panu (in his *Amintiri de la “Junimea” din Iași*, vol. I, ed. Z. Ornea (Bucharest: Minerva, 1971)

during the 1850s-1860s sees the “the law of nations” (*drit al ginților*) as another branch of law aimed and preserving and defending the collective rights of the Romanian nation. All the liberal politicians from the mid-19th century Moldova are Bărnăuțiu’s disciples.

It is only at the end of his speech that Ion Codrescu asks the government specific questions. He requires an explanation on the results of the government policies regarding the expulsion of Jews from the villages; he wants answers concerning the land, buildings and taverns leased to the Jews, since the laws prohibit it; he accuses the Jews of slowing down the government’s attempts to cancel the consular jurisdictions to which the country is still subject.⁶⁴ The Interior Minister, M. Kogălniceanu, defends the administrative measures of the government and he adds that the latter is in control of both the internal situation of the Jews and the relations with foreign powers in this matter, while dismissing Codrescu’s charges regarding the government’s submission to the requirements of the *Alliance Israélite*.⁶⁵ The MPs who speak after Ion Codrescu only develop his ideas and accuse the government to take partial or inadequate measures against the Jews.⁶⁶

The terms of the interpellation addressed by the young conservative P.P. Carp in the Lower House on April 26, 1868 are very different compared to those used by A. Georgiu and Ion Codrescu. And not just in the language. Carp only uses the word *evrei* to speak of the Jews, while the two Moldavian MPs (and the majority of the MPs) use a pejorative synonym, *jidani*. According to Carp, “the Jewish question” should not be transformed into a nationality issue. The government, through its administrative decisions, fails to protect a series of rights – this is the most important accusation the young member of the “Junimea” literary and philosophical circle makes. He is the only one of the MPs from Moldova to denounce the harassment of the Jews. Hence his strident tone against the government and the radical liberal MPs. The latter and the members of the Independent fraction, who form the majority in the Assembly, close ranks when faced with Carp’s accusations.

P.P. Carp accuses the radical liberals and the members of the Independent fraction to have created “the Jewish question,” as the nation does not show anti-Jewish feelings, he says. It is Brătianu and his colleagues in government, the radical liberals, indicts Carp, who turned “the Jewish question” into a social

recorded Bărnăuțiu’s strong influence on his students in Iași, being perceived as an exemplary defender of the Romanian national cause and of the cultural development of Romanians, and as a defender of their Latin origins.

⁶⁴ M.O. n. 281 December 21, 1869/January 2, 1870, session of December 16, 1869: 1300.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 1300-1; M.O. n. 281 December 21, 1869/January 2, 1870, session of December 17, 1869: 1302.

⁶⁶ Nicolae Voinov, M.O. n. 281 December 21, 1869/January 2, 1870, session of December 17, 1869: 1302; Cezar Bolliac, M.O. n. 282 December 23, 1869/January 4, 1870, session of December 17, 1869: 1308; G. Chițu, M.O. n.282 December 23, 1869/January 4, 1870, session of December 17, 1869: 1309; Ion Heliade Rădulescu, M.O. n.283 December 24, 1869/January 5, 1870, session of December 18, 1869: 1317-9.

issue, by exploiting popular prejudices and, above all, by encouraging the creation of the Moldovan Fraction since the radical liberals had no support in Moldova. Carp accuses Brătianu and the liberal radicals to have played a double game, the result of a calculated political and electoral strategy: they left the openly anti-Jewish discourse and measures to the Fraction, while ensuring their support in the government, in the legislative and during elections; in parallel, the government continued the persecution by its “barbarian” administrative circulars, and it denied them when the European powers reacted. In his view, it is the government officials who are accountable for fueling social unrest and for the intensification of the population’s anti-Jewish feelings. The radical liberals used to their own advantage the situation in Moldova where, indeed, trade is dominated by Jews and where there is a real social and commercial rivalry between Jews and Romanians, he explains. Carp provides numerous examples of abuses committed against the Jews by the government and its representatives by “anarchic administrative measures.” The bill of the thirty-one MPs had, Carp says, Brătianu’s consent, the draft being nothing else but the translation of the measures enclosed in the government’s circulars⁶⁷. He asks the government to cease the administrative measures against the Jews which only reinforce the popular disorder and upset the European states. He asks this in the name of civilization, the perfectibility of human nature and natural law (although the latter term is not stated as such).⁶⁸ Even if Carp’s voice is isolated in the liberal majority of the Assembly during the session of 1867-1868, comparable views are expressed by representatives of the great powers.⁶⁹

The Minister of Interior, Ion C. Brătianu, rejects Carp’s accusations, and he underlines his national and peaceful credo.⁷⁰ In his view, Carp is profoundly wrong because a national issue is at stakes: the Jews and the foreigners have taken the place of the Romanians, tolerant and hospitable by nature, in many sectors of economy. He also repeats the idea that the economic and social aspects must be kept separated from the religious aspects. “The Jewish question” is a social, economic and security question.⁷¹ The minister also defends the administrative circulars that are legal, he says, being inspired by older Romanian regulations. He admits however that there were some “exaggerations” in their application.⁷²

“The Jewish question,” as indicative of Romanian nationalism

⁶⁷ M.O. n. 95 April 28/May 10, 1868, session of April 26: 595-6; Frédéric Damé, *Histoire de la Roumanie contemporaine depuis l'avènement des princes indigènes jusqu'à nos jours (1822-1900)*, (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1900), 190.

⁶⁸ M.O. n. 95 April 28/May 10, 1868, session of April 26: 596.

⁶⁹ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 75, 101.

⁷⁰ M.O. n. 95 April 28/May 10, 1868, session of April 26: 596.

⁷¹ Idem.

⁷² Ibid.: 597. f

The debates in the Constituent Assembly in 1866 on article 7 of the Constitution, the parliamentary questions to ministers and the administrative measures during the years 1867-1869 attest the nature of the antisemitism of that period, and illustrate the reasons the various 'liberal factions' come to defend strongly anti-Semitic and nationalist legislation in the name of progress. The antisemitism the majority of the MPs defend is a form of strong official xenophobia and judeophobia. The issue is less a form of antisemitism *per se*, than a form of official nationalism. "The Jewish question" is not the work of demagogues or political agitators, but a state policy of mainstream politicians whose aim is, already in 1866, to demonstrate that there *is* a state, with state-capacity, based on a homogenous nation.

Article 7 launches the discourse on the Romanian national identity based on anti-Semitic elements.⁷³ Until June 1866, the "Jewish question" is latent.⁷⁴ Public unrest on June 18, 1866 caused around art. 6 of the draft constitution is its founding violent episode. During the late 1860s and then during the 1870s, administrative decisions restrict the civil rights of Jews; it is also a time of anti-Jewish revolts and violence. As a consequence, from 1866 to 1878, the urban concentration of Jews increases, mainly because of their deportation from rural areas, which exacerbates the impoverishment of large segments of the Jewish population. Moreover, Jewish artisans, highly demanded during the 1860s, are gradually replaced by workers from Germany, Austria or France who are encouraged to settle in Romania.⁷⁵

The MPs underline that the Jews are a significant presence from a demographic and economic point of view, threatening to "denationalize" the Romanians, i.e. to endanger some rights and privileges that they consider to belong exclusively to the Romanians. Indeed, Jewish immigration intensified in the late eighteenth century, and during a short period of time the number of Jews increased significantly, especially from 1834 to 1847⁷⁶ (although the figures are contradictory and often inaccurate) mainly in urban areas where Jews were active in trade, industry, manufacturing, and money lending.⁷⁷ The MPs translate their contemporaries' fear of this recent influx of Jews, perceived as a rival population. The liberal MPs refer especially to these recently arrived

⁷³ Edda Binder-Iijima, *Die Institutionalisierung der rumänischen Monarchie*, 70.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁵ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 74-117, 167.

⁷⁶ The figures in Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 49, 161-4; Lloyd A. Cohen, "The Jewish question during the period of the Romanian national renaissance and the unification of the two Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, 1848-1866," eds. Stephen Fischer-Galati, Radu F. Florescu and George R. Ursul, *Romania Between East and West. Historical Essays in Memory of Constantin C. Giurescu* (New York: Boulder, Columbia University Press, 1982), 198; Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Geneza burgheziei în Principatele Române (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea – prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea). Preliminariile unei istorii*, (Iași: Ed. Universităţii "Al.I. Cuza", 1997), 314-7.

⁷⁷ Andrei Oișteanu, *Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central european*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004), 132-76; Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Geneza burgheziei în Principatele Române*, 318-21.

Jews. The protectionism they all manifest illustrates their fear of the economic and social competition of the Jews, particularly in urban areas, while they claim to respond to popular demands in Moldova. As in Russia, the Romanian government tries to take explicit measures in order to isolate Jews from contact with sections of the Romanian society considered too weak to resist their alleged depredations, and in order to limit Jewish economic activities.⁷⁸

Restrictions against the newly arrived Jews are not a novelty during the late 1860s. From the time of the Russian protectorate during the 1830s, restrictive measures were taken against them.⁷⁹ Following the model of the tsarist legislation, they were forbidden to settle in villages, to rent properties or to create industrial properties in cities.⁸⁰ The restriction of civil and political rights of Jews was justified by the same economic protectionism, since many Jews of the recent immigration chose to remain subjects of a foreign power in order to avoid tax and legal arbitrariness of officials in the Principalities⁸¹. For a short period of time, from 1859 to 1866, the Jews established in the Principalities for centuries (called “native” Jews) enjoyed full civil rights and some political rights subject to strict conditions. In the same period, Jews of the recent immigration were completely denied political rights, as well as some civil rights (the right to purchase property was a privilege reserved only to Christian foreigners). The idea that Jews are pernicious for the economy was widespread in the literature of that time.⁸²

The “Jewish question” is not understood in cultural terms. The language of cultural and religious differences is certainly present in the parliament, but it is rather a strategy to cast-off the economic, demographic, political and social competition. Significantly, knowledge of the Romanian language by the Jews or their level of mastery of the Romanian written culture are elements that are missing in the MPs’ speeches. They express only general considerations on the ignorance or the “barbarianism” of the Jews. Similarly, the MPs mention the difference in religion, but they do not even envisage the possibility of converting (mainly the newly arrived) Jews to Christianity, as a condition to help them acquire political rights and, implicitly, become Romanians, and they are not interested in their degree of integration and/or assimilation.

Since article 7 of the Constitution is, until the granting of independence in 1877-1878, the main reason for foreign pressures on the Romanian government, the anti-Semitic arguments of the various liberal MPs become associated with the rejection of foreign interference in the domestic affairs of

⁷⁸ For Russia, see Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 129.

⁷⁹ In 1821, there were three categories of Jews: native (established for centuries), *brisoveliți* (more recently arrived and established on the basis of a princely decision), and *sudiți* (subject to a foreign protection), Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 43; Catherine Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 130-4.

⁸⁰ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 50.

⁸¹ For the legal status of the Jews and their rights from 1800 to 1866, see Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 43-69; Lloyd A. Cohen, “The Jewish question during the period of the Romanian national renaissance.”

⁸² Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 63-4, 138-9.

the Romanian state. The MPs are ready to take all the necessary decisions to assert the Romanian nation among the other European states. They are concerned above all about the respect of internal political autonomy in the name of what they call “the nation’s law,” as an expression of the ancestral phobia to foreign intervention. As in I. Codrescu, A. Georgiu or G. Brătianu’s⁸³ arguments, “the Jewish question” is strictly a matter of domestic public law and of internal administration, and its transformation into a theme of relations with other states is illegitimate. In the name of the “nation’s law,” Jews should be excluded from the sphere of rights, but the “nation’s law,” despite its name, is a non-legal space. This law stems from Romanianness (*românism*) and from the Christian character of the Romanian nation, according to the Moldavian MPs, that has always been a paramount condition for the existence of the Romanian state. By invoking this law, they justify what they believe to be the traditional refusal to grant citizenship and political rights to non-Christians. They argue that rights and the state’s existence – i.e. all that can be described in political and legal terms – are conditioned by the characteristics of an ethnic body (Romanianness and Christianity), for the sake of national conservation. Foreigners, especially Jews, cannot have access to the sphere of civil and economic (and even less political) rights, if they do not belong to the Romanian nationality. Since foreigners are different in some aspects (especially religious), they cannot be accepted and integrated because of the supreme imperative, the conservation of the nation on which depends the state’s existence. Political, civil and economic rights are thus conditioned by nationality understood as belonging to the homogenous nation.

Nationalist debates play a role in generating and legitimating antisemitism. The parliamentary rhetoric on other ‘non-Romanians’ is indeed similar to that on Jews. For politicians, the issue is both nation formation and antisemitism. Liberal MPs and the liberal press criticize during the 1860s-1870s the various foreigners (not necessarily seen as “other” in popular imaginations) and their intrusion in domestic policies and in economy, hence the restrictive naturalization rules that are adopted as of 1866.⁸⁴ From 1866 to 1918 the elites use Romanian citizenship as an effective instrument of social closure in order to create national integration, to control social change and to reduce competition for resources from competing economic elites.⁸⁵

The liberal MPs do not hesitate to be anti-Semitic and xenophobic in the name of their wish to have a homogenous Romanian nation, which seems to them the most desirable model of political community both normatively and politically. In the name of the homogeneity of the nation, they have difficulties in conceiving political and social pluralism. They do not defend an

⁸³ George Brătianu supports Codrescu and Georgiu’s arguments, M.O. n. 281 December 21, 1869/January 2, 1870, session of December 16, 1869: 1301.

⁸⁴ Silvia Marton, *La construction politique de la nation. La nation dans les débats du Parlement de la Roumanie (1866-1871)*, (Iași: Institutul European, 2009), 184-224.

⁸⁵ Constantin Iordachi, “The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship”, 157-86.

individualistic understanding of citizenship since they reject plurality.⁸⁶ To prevent the permanent settlement of ethnically and religiously undesirable immigrants, it is essential to them to continue to prevent their naturalization. Their ethno-national assumption makes it impossible to consider the granting of nationality by *jus soli*. All the liberal MPs try to protect the indigenous people against the foreign Jew, and thereby they understand the modern nation as homogenous. This attitude shows them as the authors of the nationalist discourse, as direct followers of the 1848 narrative that stressed the continuity of the Romanian nation since time immemorial by the retroactive application of the idea of nation.

The MPs, whatever their political orientation, agree that the priority is to defend the “national interest,” for which they must formulate a restrictive legislation, avoiding at the same time criticism from the European powers. From this point onwards, however, the political cleavage appears: all the liberals are in favor of discriminative social and economic and political legislation against foreigners, particularly the Jews, while the conservatives oppose such radical policies. What unites them is the way they see the role of the unitary state, as well as the definition of the modern nation as homogeneous, hence their desire to protect nationality, i.e. the indigenous element confronted to the ‘others’ and notably to the Jewish otherness. All the politicians conceive the state as the agent of the nation and the creator of a political community and a political culture which must erase the cultural differences and the heterogeneity of the population.

The MPs use general cultural qualifiers when they talk about the Jews. They rather emphasize the unitary character of the Romanian nation, and they insist less on the description of the ‘enemies’ of the nation. Romanians, because they form a unitary people, must exclude the Jews, the most visible foreigners – they are too different and disturb the cultural and ethnic homogeneity of Romanians – from acquiring political rights. It is the dominant view in the parliament, although the idea that a foreigner could become Romanian by law is present, but it is an isolated idea. MPs are thus aware that the codification of the rights and obligations of all those who qualify to become citizens is a core element of state- and nation building.⁸⁷

During the 1860s-1870s, antisemitism is not yet a coherent ideology⁸⁸ and it is not a “cultural code” of a specific ideological milieu⁸⁹. Liberal MPs repeat an idea that is not new at all: the Jews are the indigenous’ competitors in the field of trade and crafts and they are thus detrimental to progress, and to the

⁸⁶ Unlike the American understanding of citizenship, see Frederic Cople Jaher, *The Jews and the Nation: Revolution, Emancipation, State Formation, and the Liberal Paradigm in America and France*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-building & Citizenship. Studies of Our Changing Social Order*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 90.

⁸⁸ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 151.

⁸⁹ I rely on the term “cultural code” as explained by Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 110-16.

national prosperity. This conviction was already present in a paragraph of the Organic Regulation of Moldova.⁹⁰ Jewish competition manifests chiefly through the fact that the Jews occupy – illegitimately, say the MPs – the place that is normally due to the national bourgeoisie. Moreover, the interior ministers justify the economic discriminations as directed, so they claim, against all foreign vagabonds, not just against Jews, in order to stop unwanted new immigration. The MPs and ministers express a strong social and economic antisemitism that includes the more traditional hatred against Jews based on economic and religious prejudice. Their speech is full of xenophobic attitudes and words, to which they add the painful (to them) awareness of obvious economic and social divisions between Romanians and Jews that they formulate as being a “national” issue. In this regard, they are not original; they often merely repeat the xenophobic arguments present in the vocabulary of the intelligentsia.⁹¹

The government continues to refuse to describe the “Jewish question” as a religious affair, despite strong accusations from abroad. They express a strong xenophobia against all foreigners and an ethnic and economic frustration. This is nationalism in its most modern understanding, as a means to protect ethnic homogeneity, not medieval pogrom (as described by Adolphe Crémieux and European governments). MPs intend to demonstrate that the Romanian state is sovereign domestically. The state must demonstrate that it is capable of ensuring internal order and stability and protecting ‘its’ nation-ethnie against unwanted new immigrants. One finds the same rejection of *jus soli*, the same ethno-national restrictive policy of naturalization, and the same desire to preserve nationality in the late nineteenth century in Eastern Prussia, when faced to what is perceived as the immigration of “undesirable elements,” the Poles and the Jews (“undesirable” in ethno-cultural terms). Very similar arguments to those of the Romanian government are raised by members of the Prussian government: in order to justify the highly restrictive naturalization, they dismiss the charges of antisemitism and religious persecution, and they rely on national arguments for the “conservation of the German nationality.”⁹² However, antisemitism as expression of political violence against a traditionally discriminated population starts to become an ideology of mobilization and political integration as of 1866. At the onset of mass politics, antisemitism is one of the key elements to trigger incipient popular support: liberals do not attempt to mobilize their electorate in the name of social or economic policies, but in the name of xenophobia and antisemitism. While peasants from the rural regions are still excluded from the political sphere, the majority of the

⁹⁰ Catherine Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 131.

⁹¹ Dinu Bălan, *Național, naționalism, xenofobie și antisemitism în societatea românească modernă (1831-1866)*, (Iași: Junimea, 2006).

⁹² Rogers Brubaker, *Citoyenneté et nationalité en France et en Allemagne*, transl. Jean-Pierre Bardos (Paris: Belin, 1997), 209-11.

urban population starts to be politically aware. The earliest actions⁹³ specific to grass roots politics are conducted by the radical liberals in 1866, the first to demonstrate the will to create a liberal party by taking advantage of the 1848 progressive idealism. Supported by the press (especially by *Românul*), they create the “Society of Friends of the Constitution,” which organizes public debates open mainly to the (small) bourgeoisie in towns and villages about the nature of the constitutional regime. The Society’s activity and its public or secret⁹⁴ meetings, and the other political manifestations of the radical liberals – electoral gatherings, public banquets, speeches in the street or in cafes – try to awaken the middle class and to mobilize it, and thus to help them electorally in Moldova (where their success is still limited in 1866). There is evidence of this type of political activities frequented by young people, as well as of the less orthodox ways (i.e. street fights) to convince voters in cities.⁹⁵

The radical liberals would like to achieve social unity in the country in order to consolidate their (desired) political hegemony. This wish is not without similarity to the liberals’ strategy in the Hapsburg monarchy: the nationalist discourse allows them to move from the traditional elitist liberal politics to a controlled form of mass politics under their careful supervision.⁹⁶ Like the Austrian liberals, Romanian liberals justify their claim to govern by describing themselves and the social groups they represent as the vanguard of economic, social and political progress, since they appropriated the 1848 popular idealism and the subsequent bureaucratic pragmatism during the 1850s-1860s.⁹⁷ In a period of reduced political participation and limited voting rights,⁹⁸ anti-Semitic and xenophobic discourse does not expect to form a movement, but it is a means for the liberal politicians to refine their ‘state philosophy’, their vision of the state and of the Romanian national identity.

Radical liberals advocate policies of homogenization. As such, they are modern in the sense that they are aware that modern politics requires an idea of the state which should justify its existence in the eyes of the nation and which should provide an identity in order to unite people and link them to the state

⁹³ Apostol Stan, *Grupări și curente politice în România între Unire și Independență (1859-1877)*, (Bucharest: Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979), 186-90.

⁹⁴ Apostol Stan, *Grupări și curente politice în România*, 191-6; Apostol Stan and Mircea Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România*, 116-7.

⁹⁵ C. Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată*, vol. I, 1871-1877, ed. Aristița and Tiberiu Avramescu (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1987), 21-2f, 101, 114-5.

⁹⁶ Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries. Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 69-115.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁹⁸ On voting rights and the limited role of public opinion in electoral campaigns, see Silvia Marton, “‘Faction’? ‘Coterie’? ‘Parti’? L’émergence des partis politiques roumains au XIX^e siècle,” *L’État en France et en Roumanie aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, eds. Silvia Marton, Anca Oroveanu and Florin Turcanu, Actes du colloque organisé au New Europe College – Institut d’études avancées les 26-27 février 2010 (Bucharest: Colegiul Noua Europă. București, Institut Français, 2011)

they share. The liberal discourse also shows that the national machinery has to be able to hold it all together and that, at the same time, it produces many differences. The liberals integrate the broader political and cultural reflection of the first half of the nineteenth century on the difference between the indigenous Romanians and ‘the foreigner’ – the comparison to otherness as a fundamental mechanism for building national identity under the impact of modernization. The priority is for them both the development of the state and its constitutional and institutional framework, and the definition of the nation, which exists through the state and its institutions. But modernization is exclusively conceived by the liberal MPs as an organization of the state placed under the rationale of the unity of territory and of the ethnic nation. They are all “modern” in that anti-Semitic discourse serves as a platform for social unity.

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Romanian Parliamentary Debate on the Decisions of the Congress of Berlin in the Years around 1878-1879

by Iulia Onac

Abstract

The Romanian parliamentary debate around the Congress of Berlin (1878-1879) offers a bird's eye view of the evolution of antisemitic speech in Romania. Naturalization of the Jews - an issue raised by the Great European Powers during this Congress - came into conflict with the wishes of the Romania political class, which presently exploded into a violent antisemitic campaign in the political debates and public speeches. The "Jewish danger" presented by many intellectuals and politicians will be accompanied by the accusation that the Jews constitute a state within the state, a nation within the nation, both devoted to world conspiracy. Amidst this welter of accusations, antisemitic discourse grew heavy with racial arguments. But by far the main characteristic of the Romanian variant of antisemitic discourse was the rapidity of its adoption in the parliamentary debates.

The more or less troubled history of Romania had also an impact on the history of Romanian Jewry. Orthodox Christian Romanians along with Jews have been the witnesses of major historical changes starting with second half of the 19th century.¹ This period is characterized by the creation of the national state, enabled due to the Paris Convention of 1858 after the Crimean War, and the invention of Romanian nationalism.² Its basic concepts (homeland, people, nation) have a "pre-history" with ancient roots in the collective mentality, but they were rewritten, on an intellectual and cultural level. Starting with the first half of the 19th century, an ideology emerged, which increasingly tended to dominate the political and social life in Romania.³

After the fulfillment of the national idea, the Union between the two principalities Moldova and Walachia in 1859, formerly tributary to the Ottoman Empire, and the independence declaration of 1877, the fear of a possible foreign intervention threatened the integrity and sovereignty of the

¹ According to a 1899 census 91.5% of the population were Orthodox Christians, 4.5% Jews and 2.5% Roman Catholics, see Dietmar Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf. Juden und Muslime als Alteritätspartner im rumänischen und serbischen Nationscode. Ethnonationale Staatsbürgerschaftskonzepte 1878-1941*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 286.

² Thomas J. Keil, *Romania's tortured road toward modernity*, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006); Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1994); Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă și "problema evreiască". Eseu despre formele antisemitismului intelectual în România anilor '30*, (București: Humanitas, 1995), 23 [English edition, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism. The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930's*, (London: Pergamon Press, 1994)].

³ Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă*, 23.

new Romanian state.⁴ Xenophobia and distrust towards internal and external foreigners originates from here,⁵ so too, the Romanian antisemitism.⁶

Starting with the 1878 Congress of Berlin, the Jews in the eyes of many Romanians represented an internal and external “danger,” which threatened the existence of the young state. This is the moment when antisemitism, although in its European beginnings, found ardent supporters in Romania, a fact that led to its immediate adoption in accordance with the Romanian context.⁷ In fact, Albert S. Lindemann’s chapter on Romania in his book on the emergence of antisemitism therefore held the title: “The Worst in Europe?”⁸

The Jewish Community in Romania in the last quarter of the 19th century was numerous and diversified.⁹ According to the 1899 census, a trustful one,¹⁰ the Jewish population counted a total of 269,015 persons of which 195,887 lived in Moldova and 68,852 in the Romanian Country. So the Jews represented 10% of the Moldavian and 1.8% of the Wallachian population and about 4.5% of the total population of Romania.¹¹ The same percentage of 4.52% is to be found in 1911, which put Romania at the top of the countries with the largest Jewish population, being exceeded only by Austria.¹²

The Jews were occupied primarily in the crafts and trade area, due to the restrictions on exerting certain occupations and professions that were imposed to them.¹³

Being in contact with Jews on a daily basis, Jews and non-Jews lived side by side and came in contact with each other through economic and social relationships of various kinds, making the so-called “Jewish danger” - conjured by many intellectuals and Romanian politicians – something to which the

⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For an overview on Rumania antisemitism see Mariana Hausleitner, “Antisemitism in Romania. Modes of Expression between 1866 and 2009,” *Antisemitism in Eastern Europe. History and Present in Comparison*, eds. Hans-Christian Petersen, Samuel Salzborn, (Frankfurt/M et al.: Lang, 2010), 199-226; William O. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth Century Romania*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1991).

⁷ For the image of the ‘Jew’ in Rumanian popular culture, see Andrei Oișteanu, *Konstruktionen des Judenbildes. Rumänische und Ostmitteleuropäische Stereotypen des Antisemitismus*, (Berlin: Frank und Timme 2010).

⁸ Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau’s Tears. Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 306-318.

⁹ In 1878 Romania included Moldova, The Romanian Country and Dobrogea, which was assigned to Romania after the Berlin Treaty.

¹⁰ Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919), De la excludere la emancipare*, (București: Hasefer, 2006), 148 [English edition, *Jews in Romania 1866-1919. From Exclusion to Emancipation*, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996)].

¹¹ Ibid., 149-150.

¹² *The American Jewish Year Book 5675*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication of America, 1914), 336-337.

¹³ Avram Andrei Băleanu, “Rumänien”, *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Europa. Länder und Regionen*, eds. Elke-Vera Kotowski, Julius H. Schoeps, Hiltrud Wallenborn, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2001) Vol. 1, 277-286.

common man could easily relate to. In fact the skills and abilities of the Jews did not always meet with sympathy of their Romanian neighbors, because some of them held the Jews to be responsible for their own difficult social condition.

The Berlin Congress: putting the situation of the Jews in Romania on the European political agenda

As we will see the hatred and the anti-Jewish agitations in the years around the Berlin Congress were strengthened by the interventions of Jewish organizations on behalf of the Romanian Jews, aiming at providing for them full civil and political rights.¹⁴ According to the 1866 Constitution, the Jews were denied full civic emancipation based on religious grounds: Article 7 of the Constitution stipulated that “The quality of being Romanian is acquired, conserved or lost according to the rules settled by civil laws. Only those who have no other than Christian rites can be naturalized.”¹⁵

Naturalization of the Jews in Romania, an issue raised by the Great European Powers during the Congress of Berlin came into conflict with the intentions of the Romanian political class, who unleashed a fierce antisemitic campaign in their political debates and public speeches.¹⁶

The reaction of the majority of the Romanian politicians to the claims raised during the Berlin Congress about the naturalization of the Jews was a very aggressive one and produced the total rejection of this idea. Personalities like Constantin Costa-Foru, Petre Carp or Titu Maiorescu who opted for a positive resolution, could not influence the overall climate, which remained hostile to the emancipation.¹⁷

The large majority of the intellectuals and the political class played an important role in spreading antisemitism through their speeches. A clear distinction between the two political parties that dominated the Romanian political scene, the National Liberal Party¹⁸ and the Conservatory Party¹⁹, with regard to their attitude about Jewish emancipation cannot be established.

¹⁴ For the commitment of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and above all of Adolphe Crémieux for the emancipation of the Jews in Romania see, Carol Iancu, *Bleichröder et Crémieux. Le combat pour l’émancipation des Juifs de Roumanie devant le Congrès de Berlin. Correspondance inédite (1878 - 1880)*, (Montpellier: Centre de Recherches et d’Études Juives et Hébraïques, 1987).

¹⁵ http://legislatie.resurse-pentru-democratie.org/const_1866.php (29.03.2011).

¹⁶ For the Berlin Congress see, *Der Berliner Kongreß 1878. Protokolle und Materialien*, ed. Imanuel Geiss, (Boppard: Boldt, 1978); for the Jewish question on the Congress see, Imanuel Geiss, “Die jüdische Frage auf dem Berliner Kongreß 1878,” *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 10 (1981), 413-422; Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*, 59-106.

¹⁷ Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă*, 27.

¹⁸ The *Partidul Național Liberal* [PNL] was the oldest political party. She was formed in 1875, originating from the 1848 movements and prince Cuza’s reign. Some of her representatives played an important role in obtaining Romania’s independence. She was founded on 24th of May 1875, under the leadership of Ion C. Brătianu. The members of the PNL mainly belong to the bourgeoisie and came primarily from the industrial and financial but also from the commercial sector. She also included landlords, freelancers, officials, lawyers, engineers,

Some politicians of that time, well-known as Romanian intellectuals, played an important role in spreading antisemitism. Among the most prominent Romanian intellectuals invoking antisemitic stereotypes were Vasile Conta, Vasile Alecsandri,²⁰ Cezar Bolliac,²¹ Mihai Eminescu, Ioan Slavici, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu,²² Vasile A. Urechia,²³ Alexandru D. Xenopol,²⁴ Nicolae Iorga, Alexandru C. Cuza,²⁵ Nicolae Istrati²⁶ and Nicolae Paulescu.²⁷

For most of them, the Jews represented a separate group, with traits and qualities different from that of a true Romanian. The Jews were seen and represented firstly as foreigners who threatened the existence of the young Romanian state.

medical doctors, professors. The main propaganda newspaper during the 1866-1884 period were *Românul* [The Romanian] and *Voința Națională* [The National Will] for the 1884-1914 period.

¹⁹ The *Partidul Conservator* [PC] was founded at the 3rd of February 1880, in Bucharest, having as president Emanoil Costache Epureanu. The core of the party was made out of landlords, the commercial and administrative bourgeoisie, and a big part of the intellectuals, and the main propaganda newspapers were *Timpul* [The Time] (1876-88/1880-1900), *Epoca* [Era] (1885-1889/ 1895-1901) and *Conservatorul* [The Conservatory] (1900-1914).¹⁹ Concerning her attitude toward social problems, PC started from the idea that in the Romanian society there were only two classes: the landlords and the peasants, between them there was the ethnical alienated bourgeoisie. The political doctrine of this party had its roots in traditionalism and evolutionism.

²⁰ Vasile Alecsandri (1821-1890) was a poet, folklorist, politician, minister, diplomat, Romanian academician, founder of the Romanian Academy, creator of the Romanian theater and dramatic literature in Romania. It was an outstanding personality of Moldova and Romania then throughout the nineteenth century.

²¹ Cezar Boliac (1813-1881) was one of the leaders of the 1848 revolution, protest lyric poet, journalist and promoter of Romanian archaeological studies.

²² Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, (1838-1907) born as Tadeu Hașdeu was a Romanian writer and philologist. He was considered one of the most prominent people of Romanian culture.

²³ Vasile Alexandrescu Urechia (1834-1901), was a Romanian historian and writer, politician, founding member of the Romanian Academy. He was professor at the University of Iasi and then the one in Bucharest.

²⁴ Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol (1847-1920), was a Romanian academic, historian, philosopher, economist, sociologist and writer. D. Alexander is author of the first major turn of synthesis of Romanian history, world-renowned philosopher of history, being considered the greatest Romanian historian after Nicolae Iorga.

²⁵ Alexandru Constantin Cuza, (1857-1946) was a Romanian national economist, writer and politician. Alexandru C. Cuza studied in Dresden and Brussels. Throughout his life, Cuza remained strongly engaged in Romanian public life, advocating extreme nationalist and antisemitic views in his lectures, speeches and journalism. Cuza published poetry, epigrams and essay on cultural topics in a number of influential Romanian language journals and literary periodicals. Western European writers, for example Eduard Drumont, Charles Maurras influenced his thinking. As a professor of political economy in Iași University from 1901 and as a authority on art, history and politics Cuza exercised immense influence over the generation of Romanian students, especially in the 1920s and 1930s.

²⁶ Nicolae Istrati (1818-1861), was a writer and Moldovan politician, who served as minister in Moldova during Nicholas Vogoride regency.

²⁷ Nicolae Paulescu, (1869-1931) was a Romanian scientist, physician and physiologist, professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest, found antidiabetic hormone released by the pancreas, called insulin later.

The “Jewish question” appears on the Romanian political agenda simultaneously with the formation of the unified Romanian state, when, inevitably the Jews’ statute had to be discussed.²⁸ The question of Jewish emancipation, as Leon Volovici mentioned, appeared not as an internal problem which should be part of the country’s autonomous political evolutions, but as imposed by the European powers, which in exchange for the recognition of the country’s independence required the emancipation of the Romanian Jews.

The 1878 Berlin Congress reopened the discussions about the “Jewish question,” giving birth to fierce debates in the Romanian Parliament. In almost any parliamentary session during this period the topic of Jewish citizenship was on the agenda. The political struggle was accompanied by detailed press coverage. Intellectuals contributed the most to these debates. Channels for the spread antisemitic sentiments were public speeches and widespread publications delivered by different authors.

The main accusations

The new antisemitic discourse had its roots in the old anti-Jewish hatred, “enriched” with new accusations and adapted to the realities of that time. Volovici states that the observation of a historian over the composite character of modern antisemitism proved true also in the Romania’s case: the traditional antisemitic stereotypes are supplemented with new elements. “It is “ennobled” through the writings of some prestigious intellectuals; it became an asset of the national culture.”²⁹

The political discourse sought to emphasize the poor living conditions of the population, pointing to the Jew as being responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. In this way the antithesis between the “good Romanian,” blessed with numerous qualities, and the “bad Jew,” who seemed to possess only the worst traits, was introduced into the public discourse. Beyond different styles and codes, the radical antisemitic public discourses transmitted the same message: denigration of the Jewish community and of individual Jews.³⁰ This fabricated image of the Jew was used to support the arguments and the accusations of the antisemites.

One of the accusations that obtained a huge success and acquired an important place in antisemitic speeches all over Europe, the “state within state”, “Status in statu” accusation, is also found in the Romanian political language.³¹ In the Romanian Parliament Pantazi Ghica, in the meetings held on February 22 and

²⁸ Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă*, 27.

²⁹ Ibid., 31.

³⁰ George Voicu, *Teme antisemite în discursul public* (București, Ed Ars Docendi, 2000), 56.

³¹ Jacob Katz, “A State within a State. The History of an Anti-Semitic Slogan”, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4/3 (1969): 29-58.

March 6 1879,³² presented the “Jewish danger” under the “state within state” formulation: “Let’s put the finger on the issue and grasp the role of this alien population which has imposed itself in our country and which until now has formed a state within the state; let’s see how many good things it has done to Romania and how many bad things it has done to Romania, and let us try to see the precautions we have to take.”³³ The meaning of the “state within a state” accusation is explained to us by the deputy Grigore Misail, who, writing the history of the Jewish community in Romania, explained it as follows: “In 1823 the Jews from Iași had the monopoly of bakery, it had to be removed from them, but the prince, in order to console them, in the same year has granted them some more privileges on the organization and the taxation of their communities, [...] These privileges have been renewed on the 1st of February 1845 by prince Sturdza. This is why it has been constructed as a state within the state.”³⁴ In Vasile Alecsandri’s opinion, expressed in the parliamentary session from 11/23 October 1879, the Jews by organizing a state within a state in Romania look only to pursue their commercial goals, sacrificing the country for their economic advantage: “What do they want from us? [...] A social position or an advantageous position? [...] No, because looking at their complaints this is a country of persecution. [...] A homeland? No, because their homeland is the Talmud: they believe in it, they live in it, they die in it! And this brave fanaticism builds their strength, as it is preventing them to assimilate with other peoples, to merge with them; it maintains them as an alien nation among the other nations, like a state within a state. Therefore they seek here not a social position, not a homeland, but a simple property easy to get, cheap to buy, a property that could be given to anyone else if this commercial transaction would fulfill their interests.”³⁵

Directly linked to the state-in-state accusation is the slogan a ‘nation within the nation’. Half a year earlier, this makes its presence known in senator Voinov’s speech, which on the 26th of February/10th of March 1879 session set up the antisemitic discourse: “In whatever country they live, Jews do not merge. They form a nation within the nation and remain in a permanent barbaric state. [...] What I am telling you, it is found in the memo presented in Russia by Mister Brafman, in which he gives an account of the considerable influence of Jews, their exclusive spirit, the existence of an occult government which they have given to themselves to reach their goal.”³⁶

These slogans were directly linked to the idea of transforming Romania into an “Israelite property,” the struggle carried on by the Jews for this purpose being

³² This represents the dates of the Julian calendar, which has been used in Romania along time with the Gregorian calendar until April 1919. After that only the Gregorian calendar is used. The first date represents the Julian calendar date, while the second one represents the one of the Gregorian calendar.

³³ Iancu, *Evreii din Romania*, 220.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Monitorul Oficial* (thereafter *M. O.*), October 11/23, 1879.

³⁶ Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 219- 220.

identified with “modernă judaidă.”³⁷ Therefore the fight of the Romanian politicians against the Jews appeared to be justified and correct, it even became everyone’s duty to oppose these “invaders, who pour unstopped over all the borders of our homeland, on all the mountain paths, over the lands, over the waters.”³⁸

In the opinion of the antisemites, all this scheming and backstage struggling would not be possible without a reliable ally, one to sustain the Romanian Jews unconditionally and one equipped with great power. This partner, sustainer of the Jews was no other than the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, “mysterious name, but sounds as sinister as the name of Nihilists,”³⁹ “the admirable and colossal association. [...] Its commands are undisputable laws. Just one signal from her and hundreds of thousands of people will leave their ancestral home, to silently join together, under the black flag of invasion.”⁴⁰

The fight of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* to obtain civil and political rights for the Romanian Jews,⁴¹ is seen by Kogălniceanu, ministry of internal affairs during that period, as “a lethal war that the *Alliance Israelite* is waging against us since 66 until today,”⁴² being in the same time the biggest enemy from the face of the earth, not only for Romanians but also for the Romanian Jewry. “The Israelites misfortune was mister Cremieux, who has irritated the spirits and hardened even more the fate of the Israelite people by visiting our country in 1866. The *Alliance Israelite* and their president brings a lot of harm to the Israelites, even today mister Cremieux does it with his writings.”⁴³ Kogălniceanu’s speech played an important role in the formation of arguments against the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. The involvement of the *Alliance* in the fight for granting the Romanian citizenship to the Romanian Jews was one of the most disapproved actions in the Romanian public sphere, which influenced the vast majority of the politicians at that time and was one of their preferred themes. This can be seen for example in the speeches of D. P. Grădișteanu, in the session of 16/28 October 1879, in the speech of the deputy V. Conta during the 4th of September 1879 meeting, or of Nicolae Blaramberg during the 4 September 1879 meeting.⁴⁴

World conspiracy was another favorite topic of the antisemites.⁴⁵ In Romania’s case the conspiracy was directly linked to the intervention of the *Alliance*

³⁷ M. O., October 11/23, 1879.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For the activities of the Alliance see: *Histoire de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle de 1860 à nos jours*, ed. André Kaspi, (Paris: Ed. Armand Colin, 2010). The AIU had held two conferences regarding the situation of the Jews in Romania, 1872 in Brussels and 1875 in Paris: Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 50.

⁴² M.O., October 16/28, 1879.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Nicolae Blaramberg (1834-1896), was a Romanian politician.

⁴⁵ Wolfgang Benz, “Jüdische Weltverschwörung? Vom zähen Leben eines Konstrukts,” in Wolfgang Benz, *Was ist Antisemitismus?*, (München: C.H.Beck, 2004), 174-192.

Israélite Universelle during the Berlin Congress in order to make the recognition the existence of a Romanian state depend on the emancipation of the Jews. According to the accusations of the antisemites, Jews from Romania tried to get political rights by collaborating with the national and even the international press: “the entire hostile campaign (against Romania) of the Jews from this country and from abroad, for giving them political rights, is closely related to the Central Committee of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Paris, under whose command everything happens.”⁴⁶ The world conspiracy theory is also put in direct relation to the decisions of the Great Powers at the Berlin Congress, which are considered responsible for the requirements imposed on Romania: “It looks like Europe, and especially Western Europe, having to exercise reprisals against Romania, ordered in the Berlin Congress, the death of the Romanian nation, and as the peak of humiliation and contempt, decided that all of us should die by the hand of the Jew.”⁴⁷ In a statement by deputy Blaramberg this intervention of the Great Powers was seen as one of the greatest harms that could be done to the young Romanian state. Blaramberg’s speech is one of the first Romanian expressions of the world conspiracy theory, accusing the Great Powers to sacrifice Romania and of handing it over to the Jews. From now on this accusation became extremely common, both in the politicians’ speeches as in the press of those times.

The intervention of the Great European Powers in Romania’s internal affairs was seen as an important part of the plan by which “Universal Hebraism” was trying to establish a second Palestine on the territory of Romania.⁴⁸

According to these discourses, the Jews were trying to de-nationalize⁴⁹ the Romanian people: “The Jews from Romania, through their sheer numbers, by continuous immigration, by their tendency to form a state within the state in Romania, by their solidarity with all the other Jews from different parts of the world with whom they conspire to build a Hebrew state at the shores of the Danube, threaten to replace the Romanian nation, instead of merging with it, constitute for us a mortal danger for the State and the Nation.”⁵⁰ In the last quote, all the accusations presented are made with the purpose to sound the alarm concerning the “Jewish danger” which was threatening Romania. The certainty of this fact emerges from the same discourse of Alecsandri which tries to emphasize the character of the Jews and the means they were using:

⁴⁶ “Alianța izraelită universală și evreii din România”, *Unirea*, November 18, 1913. The newspaper was printed by the National Democrat Party and was distributed in Iași on a weekly basis.

⁴⁷ The N. Blaramberg deputy’s speech at 4th of September 1879 meeting, in: *Moțiunea nerevizioniștilor în Chestiunea evreiască și cele trei discursuri ale deputatului colegiului IV de Brăila, Nicolae Blaramberg, precum și discursurile deputatului colegiului III de Iași, Vasile Conta și ale deputatului colegiului I de Bacău*, D. Rosseti Tețcanu destinată a-i servi de cometariu, ed. Nicolae Blaramberg, (București: Tipografia Curții, 1879), 10.

⁴⁸ M. O., October 3/15, 1878, speech of D. N. Ionescu.

⁴⁹ The term used by Voicu in *Teme antisemite*.

⁵⁰ “Moțiunea”, 7.

“What is this new ordeal, this new invasion? Who are the invaders? Whence do they come? What do they want? And who is the new Moses who is leading them to the Promised Land, situated this time on the banks of the Danube? Who are these invaders? They are an active people, intelligent, indefatigable in accomplishing their mission; they are followers of the blindest religious fanaticism, the most exclusive of all the inhabitants of the earth, the least capable of assimilation to the other peoples of the world! [...] their leaders are the rabbis who lay down special laws for them; their homeland is the Talmud! Their power is enormous, for two other powers from their base and their support: religious Freemasonry and gold.”⁵¹

The references to the Jewish religion are accompanied, both in the discourse of different speakers as well as in pamphlets, by the classic religious reproach: “Not by accident a Jew has sold Christ; this is the big example and the big warning. People beware, don’t let yourselves lull to sleep by the mosaic sweet words. Romanians, Judas is preparing to embrace you, raise your eyes to the bloody corpse of the Crucified One!”⁵²

A new accusation was expressed by another deputy: the Jews are instigators of revolution: “They will corrupt our people; they will introduce the commune as in the other countries, because they are the leaders of the communists. You will recall that, as French citizens, in the army during the siege of Paris, instead of fighting the enemy, they provoked civil war, they set fire to Paris. Who did that? The co-religionists of those who now want to insert themselves into the Romanian community.”⁵³

These accusations did not only appear in the Romanian parliamentary discourses, but many of them are also found their way into the press, being from now on a constant feature in the public rhetoric.⁵⁴

One of the novelties in the antisemitic discourse was the racial argumentation. According to Carol Iancu, this was present for the first time at the 26th of February/10th of March 1879 sessions, when senator Voinov was quoting the Marquis of Pepoli, presumably the former minister of commerce and agriculture Gioachino Pepoli, “who defended Romania in the Italian Senate. The Marquis said: ‘In Romania the Jewish question is a racial question. It is not true that the Jews who live in Romania are Romanians; they belong to a race which has superimposed itself on the Romanian people.’”⁵⁵ From this date on, the racial component become more and more present. For the Romanian politician Grigore Misail, the Jewish race has humiliated the Latin race,⁵⁶ and

⁵¹ M. O., October 11/23, 1879, the Vasile Alecsandri speech; Iancu, *Jews in Romania*, 130.

⁵² Carol Iancu, *Miturile fondatoare ale antisemitismului*, (București: Hasefer, 2005), 157-158 he cites Slavici *Soll și Haben*.

⁵³ Iancu, *Jews in Romania*, 130.

⁵⁴ See also George Voicu, “The ‘Judaisation’ of the enemy in the Romanian Political Culture at the Beginning of the 20th Century”, *Studia Judaica. Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca*, XV (2007), 148-160.

⁵⁵ Iancu, *Jews in Romania*, 129.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

deputy Magheru stated that “a state should only contain citizens of a single race.”⁵⁷

The main actors in the discussions about the Jewish emancipation

The racial component was given a well defined form by Vasile Conta,⁵⁸ who, following here Leon Volovici, was the founder of Romanian antisemitic ideology.⁵⁹

As a supporter of the article 7 of the Constitution, Vasile Conta in his speech stressed the necessity to belong to the Christian religion or to convert to it in order to be entitled to full citizenship. He motivated this demand by the fact that non-Christians do not mix with Christians, making special reference to the Jews: “It is known that article 7 does not speak of the Hottentots, neither of the Cafries, it speaks about those non-Christians who come to our country regularly; but the non-Christians who come to our country are the Jews and at most Mohammedans; well, our national history and the daily experience has proven and it proves that of all the foreigners who come to us, the Turks and especially the Jews are the ones who do not mix with us by marriage, while the other foreigners, Russians, Greeks, Italians, Germans, mix with us by marriage.”⁶⁰

Going on with the idea that the “Jewish religion is a theocratic social organization” he proposed in the same session to fight against it, stating that “if we do not fight against the Jewish element, we will perish as a nation.”⁶¹

In a description that Petre Carp gave of Conta, he was presented as “the man who gathered all the mud of accusations against Jews and threw them inside the Romanian Parliament.”⁶² The new element introduced by Conta into antisemitic speech was the fact that it was based on a racial argumentation: “Gentlemen, it is acknowledged by the ones who attack us today, that the first condition for a state to exist and prosper, is that the citizens of that state to be of the same race, from the same blood.”⁶³ So, Conta was marching on the idea of racial purity, of non-interference with other nations. He was also the founder of racial theory in Romania, setting as his goal to lay a scientific

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Vasile Conta was born in 1845 in Ghindăoani village, Neamț⁵⁸ county in a priest's family and died in Iași, in 1882. He made his primary studies in Târgu Neamț and the grammar school at Iași. In 1869 he was sent to Belgium for commercial studies, where started the study of laws and was granted a the doctor in laws diploma of the Bruxelles University. After his return to Romania, he taught at the Civil Law Department of the Iași University. He published in *Convorbiri literare* his first philosophical opera: *Teoria fatalismului* (1875-1876) followed by *Teoria ondulațiunii universale* (1876-1877) and *Încercări de metafizică materialistă* (1879). His philosophical works have also been translated into French, many of them with very good reviews.

⁵⁹ Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă*, 34.

⁶⁰ Speech of deputy V. Conta in the 4th of September 1879 meeting in “Moștineasa”, 26.

⁶¹ Ibid., 29.

⁶² Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 225.

⁶³ *Discursul deputatului Vasile Conta*, 23.

foundation of the discrimination of Jews.⁶⁴ Building his arguments on the idea of blood and religion, the philosopher was probably the first Romanian ideologist with a coherent and fully reasoned fundamentalist antisemitic doctrine.⁶⁵ His activity was not limited only to this period but went on in the years to come. He was also one of the inspirers of doctrine of the Legion of Archangel Michael.

In 1878, Ioan Slavici⁶⁶ published a pamphlet aiming to convince the Romanian Parliament and Europe that the need not to grant Jews full political emancipation was well founded⁶⁷. In his opinion, Jews are those “alien people,”⁶⁸ who “are not of the same race with us”⁶⁹ and who “do not respect anything: His God is the negation of all Gods.”⁷⁰ After he had offered a detailed analysis of the Jewish character, which was presented as the embodiment of the worst possible traits, he reached the conclusion that the Jews will operate for “the destruction of the Romanian people.”⁷¹ The only solution, in order to remove the Jewish danger and to save the Romanian people, would be to close the borders “at a given sign and to cut them into pieces and throw them in the Danube, down to the last man, so there will be no seed of them left.”⁷² If the West would still wish to impose the emancipation of the Jews by force, the Romanians will know how to resist. With a prophetic and macabre spirit, Slavici foresaw the final solution:⁷³ “If the knife gets to the bone, the Christian and indo-Germanic Europe, it will be for us and not for the Mosaic Semites. We know what great popularity it is that the Jews enjoy in the western countries! Let them try to drive us to despair but then they should not blame us when the fire which starts on Romanian land will engulf Bucovina, Transylvania, Galicia, Hungary, Bohemia, Austria and even enlightened Germany.”⁷⁴

Slavici’s pamphlet included all current accusations: the idea of a world conspiracy, the attack on the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, freemasonry, the idea of the state within the state.

⁶⁴ Victor Neumann, *Istoria evreilor din România. Studii documentare și teoretice*, (Timișoara: Editura Amarcord, 1996), 181.

⁶⁵ Marta Petreu, ‘Chestiunea evreiască’ la Junimea în Dilemele conviețuirii. *Evrei și ne-evrei în Europa Central Răsăriteană* (coordonatori Ladislau Gyémánt și Maria Ghitta), Institutul Cultural Român, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, 84.

⁶⁶ Ioan Slavici, 1848-1925 was a novelist and journalist born in Transylvania. He made his debut in *Convorbiri literare* with the comedy *Fata de birău*. In 1874 he moved to Bucharest where he became the editor of the *Timpu* newspaper.

⁶⁷ Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 223.

⁶⁸ Ioan Slavici, *Soll și Haben, Chestiunea Evreilor din România*, (București: 1878), 39.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 40.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 40, Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 223.

⁷¹ Ibid., 73.

⁷² Ibid., 73.

⁷³ Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 223.

⁷⁴ Slavici, “Soll”, 79.

Another one of the eminent personalities who was against emancipation of the Jews was the poet Mihai Eminescu.⁷⁵ Although he did not belong to the political class he must be mentioned because of his public influence as a journalist, with numerous interventions concerning the modification of article 7 of the Constitution, as well as because he was an important member of Junimea.⁷⁶ After his return from studies in Berlin and Vienna, Eminescu adopted one of the main ideas of the European antisemites: fighting against the Jewish influence in the economic sector: “We declare that we are against any juridical or economical concession no matter how small for all the Jews, but this principle does not include hitting with sticks or scrap at individuals of the Jewish community.”⁷⁷ The role played by Eminescu later found a vast echo, when all the antisemitic movements declared him as their precursor (often with little justification).⁷⁸

The spreading of antisemitism in the intellectual and political world was a fact of those times, which was also reported by the French ambassador for Romania in 1900: “L’antisémitisme est plus qu’une opinion en Roumanie, c’est une passion dans laquelle se rencontre des hommes politiques de tout les partis, les représentants de l’orthodoxie et, on peut ajouter, tous les paysans valaques et moldaves.”⁷⁹

Even though a large portion of the Romanian political class was infested with the antisemitic “scourge,” there were also voices in opposition to this antisemitic camp. Among those who did not stop fighting against this current, and worth being mentioned were Titu Maiorescu and Petre Carp.

Although Titu Maiorescu rarely expressed his views on the Jewish issue,⁸⁰ he was classified by Panu as an antisemite because of his attitude toward article 7 of the Constitution. Lovinescu however placed him next to Carp, in the “Europeans” group.⁸¹

Maiorescu openly expressed his ideas and feelings about the Jewish issue in the parliamentary session of 4-16 October 1878: “I - and I owe you this personal declaration - have radically different views of the Jewish issue than the

⁷⁵ Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) a poet, novelist and Romanian journalist, was considered by the Romanian readers and literary critics as the most important romantic Romanian writer in Romanian literature, also called “the star of the Romanian poetry”.

⁷⁶ Junimea was a intellectual and literary circle but also a cultural association formed in Iași in 1863. Its emergence is due to the initiative of some young people returning from studies abroad, led by Titu Maiorescu, Petre P. Carp, Vasile Pogor, Iacob Negruzzi and Teodor Rosetti. Starting its activity with popular speeches, the association soon published a high class magazine, named *Convorbiri Literare* [Literary conversations].

⁷⁷ Mihai Eminescu, *Chestiunea evreiască*, (București: Editura Vestala, 2005), 197.

⁷⁸ Volovici, “Ideologia naționalistă”, 32.

⁷⁹ Ovidiu Morar, *Intellectualii români și chestia evreiască* : <http://cortezn69.blogspot.com/2009/08/e.html> (26.04.2011).

⁸⁰ Titu Maiorescu 1840-1917, (his full name was Titu Liviu Maiorescu) was a Romanian academic, literary critic, politician and writer, prime minister of Romania between 1912 and 1914, Internal Affairs ministry, founding member of the Romanian Academy, remarkable personality of Romania at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

⁸¹ Marta Petreu, ‘*Chestiunea evreiască*’ la Junimea în *Dilemele conviețuirii*, 76.

members of the independent and free faction. I always had, I always will and I believe that I am a good patriot because I have them like this.”⁸² These views are also backed up by the speech he had given on the 10th of September 1879 session when he declared: “I am a friend of the Jews, I have no antipathy against them. Among the Jews I have acquaintances for which I have great respect, both in my country and abroad; and since we are guaranteed our own nationality, I wish them welcome and I will be happy when I will seem them enjoying, in peace, under the Romanian sun, our rights and hospitality.”⁸³

In this way Maiorescu revealed his pro-Israelite feelings, which was also proved by his attitude toward article 7 of the Constitution about which he declared that “I think that art. 7 should not have been in our Constitution at all.”⁸⁴ So one could have expected that Maiorescu, just as Carp, would plead to modify article 7 in such a way that this would lead to a mass emancipation of the Jewish population.

Being under the pressure of the public opinion and his electors, Maiorescu in the end proposed a compromise instead. The solution he proposed was to revise article 7 by removing the religious restrictions, but to keep the “per request” emancipation, individually and after a 10 years probation.⁸⁵

His point of view from September 1879 was, as Z. Ornea observed, a “180 degree” change from his former one. This did not make him an antisemite, as Panu holds, but his position toward the Jewish issue was opaque and he was influenced by the general climate.⁸⁶

Petre Carp had numerous political functions in the governments that lead the country after the departure of prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ministry of Cults and Instruction, Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Domains, Ministry of Finance), being chosen twice as President of the Council of Ministers.⁸⁷ In regard to the Jewish issue, Carp from the beginning sought a solution by granting the Jews civil and political rights, declaring himself as a “Jewofile” in one of the 1875 parliamentary meetings.⁸⁸

Progressive by formation, Carp always supported the Jewish emancipation. Being aware that the Jewish issue in Romania is a part of European

⁸² M. O., October 4/16, 1878; Marta Petreu, ‘Chestiunea evreiască’ la Junimea în Dilemele conviețuirii, 77.

⁸³ *Chestia evreilor. Revizuirea articolului 7 din Constituție. Discurs rostit în Ședința Camerei de la 10 septembrie 1879 de Titu Maiorescu (deputat al Colegiului I de Iași)*, (București: Stabilimentul Grafic SOCECU&TECLU, 1888), 26.

⁸⁴ M. O., October 4/16, 1878; Marta Petreu, ‘Chestiunea evreiască’ la Junimea în Dilemele conviețuirii, 77.

⁸⁵ See Petreu, “Chestiunea evreiască.”

⁸⁶ Petreu, “Chestiunea evreiască,” 78.

⁸⁷ Petre Carp (1837-1919) made himself known as one of the most important political men of his time. Adept of the “junimiste” ideas, he was one of the leaders of the Conservatory Party during that period. He was chosen numerous times as deputy and senator in the Romanian Parliament.

⁸⁸ Petreu, “Chestiunea evreiască,” 73.

discussions, Carp wanted the removal of article 7 of the Constitution, which in his opinion “not only has made no good, but harmed us abroad.”⁸⁹ At the same time he saw the intervention of the Berlin Congress as positive, as it forced the Romanian political class to “look with cold blood in the eyes at the issue itself and to say: this is the harm and this is the way we have to take to fix it.”⁹⁰ Carp was asking for the removal of religious restraints, which mostly affected the Jews.

Not believing in the success of the policy of “restrictions against the Jews,”⁹¹ Carp promoted the idea of a program for the recovery of the Romanian economy: “instead of fighting them we have to use the capital they have for the benefit of our country and to admit them as citizens, according them a serious start for naturalization.”⁹²

In an era when the majority of voices spoke against the Jews, it was difficult for the few opponents, among them the ones mentioned here, to prevail and to produce a change in this matter.

The solution proposed by Romania, which was finally accepted for various reasons by the parties involved in the congress, was adopted and published in the *M.O.* from 13-25 October 1879:

“Law which revises article 7 of the Constitution: Unique article to replace article 7 of the Constitution, which is revised and replaced with the following:

Art. 7 The difference of religious beliefs and confessions is not a reason to obtain civil and political rights and to them.

§ I. The foreigner, whatever his religion, under an alien protection or not, can be naturalized on the following conditions:

a) He will address to the government the naturalization request, in which he will state the capital he possesses, the profession or the craft he exerts and the will to establish his domicile in Romania.

b) He will leave, as consequence of this request, ten years in the country, and will prove by his acts that he is useful to it.

§ II. Can be spared by probation:

a) Those who will bring in the country industries, useful inventions or distinguished talents, or who will start here big commercial or industrial establishments.

b) Those who being born and raised in Romania, from parents established in the country, have never benefited themselves or their parents from a foreign protection.

c) Those who served under the flag during the independence war and who can be mass naturalized after the government proposes that through a law and without other formalities.

§ III. The naturalization can be granted only by law and individually.

⁸⁹ *M. O.*, 29 September – 11 October, 1879.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Petreu, “Chestiunea evreiască”, 75.

§ IV. A special law will determine the way the foreigners can establish their domicile on Romanian territory.

§ V. Only the Romanians or the ones naturalized as Romanians can acquire rural properties in Romania.”⁹³

Consequences of the antisemitic political discourse

The political antisemitic discourse, present in the Parliament while reviewing article 7 of the 1866 Constitution did not remain without consequences in daily life.⁹⁴ As a result, only 85 of the 269.015 Romanian Jews were naturalized until 1900, and until 1911 only 104 further Jews obtained naturalization.⁹⁵ Another result of this situation was that between 1899 and 1904 nearly 42.000 had left Romania.⁹⁶ The adoption of the famous article which allowed only an individual naturalization gave birth to unions, alliances and several congresses. These organizations and congresses tried to make antisemitism popular within the middle and the lower classes. Their deployment took place simultaneously with other similar European events. Among these, the one which marked the beginning of a political antisemitic movement in Romania is the Congress of antisemites,⁹⁷ which took place in Bucharest from the 7th to 9th of September 1886. The congress led to the birth of the *Anti-Israelite Alliance* from Romania, a kind of negative replica of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. Its scope was the fight against Jewish emancipation and the stop of Jewish influence in Romania and the rest of Europe. The year 1895 brought about the founding of another organization: the Antisemitic Alliance⁹⁸, followed in 1910 by the birth of the Nationalist Democratic Party [*Partidul Naționalist-Democrat*], founded by Nicolae Iorga and Alexandru C. Cuza.

Another characteristic of the end of 19th century was the fact that politicians and the press began to connect the “Jewish question” more and more with the

⁹³ M. O., October 13/25, 1879.

⁹⁴ Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*, 84-99.

⁹⁵ Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 197. He uses as source a bulletin of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, Edda Binder-Iijima, *Die Institutionalisierung der rumänischen Monarchie unter Carol I. 1866–1881* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag 2003), 525. Binder-Iijima named a number of 552 naturalizations until 1913.

⁹⁶ Iulia Onac, “Die antisemitische Hydra hebt den Kopf. Aspekte der jüdischen Reaktion auf den Antisemitismus in Rumänien vom Ende des 19. bis Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts”, *Einspruch und Abwehr. Die Reaktion des europäischen Judentums auf die Entstehung des Antisemitismus (1879-1914)*, ed. Ulrich Wyrwa (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2010), 269-280, 280.

⁹⁷ Iancu, *Evreii din România*, 232-234, Mina Savel, *Judaismul în România*, (Iași: Tip. Petru Popovici, 1896), 70-106.

⁹⁸ This organisation was founded in Bucharest in 1895 by the high school teacher Nae Dumitrescu, who had an important role in the Ministry of National Education. Besides the purpose of stopping the alleged growing Jewish influence in the country, the organisation aimed to fight against the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, who was considered to be responsible for the enforcement of the Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty and the supposed attempts to ruin Romania’s image abroad.

“peasant question,” trying to blame the Jews for the poor state of the peasant population.

During this period, the Jews were turned into a “national danger,” and it was seen as a duty of every good Romanian to fight against this menace. Antisemitism became a trait of good Romanians and good patriots, who had the duty to fight against the Jews. All in all, antisemitism, in its early stage, was a characteristic of the political and intellectual class in Romania of that time.

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The Antisemitic Press in Bulgaria at the End of the 19th Century

by Veselina Kulenska

Abstract

With the Russo-Turkish War of 1877/78, the history of Bulgaria entered a new stage. According to the regulations enacted in July 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, summoned by the representatives of the Great Powers, the modern Bulgarian state was founded. Its constitution, proclaimed a year later, provided civic and political equality for the religious and ethnic minorities residing in the country, including the Jews. Although the young state was in many ways relatively backwards compared to other European countries, ideas and demands of the new political antisemitism found their echo here, too. In the 1890s, a series of antisemitic newspapers, magazines, brochures and leaflets were issued in Bulgaria, the authors of which saw the "country's liberation from the Jewish yoke" as their main task. These antisemitic publications were short lived; their demands, however, found a certain audience and were discussed in the Bulgarian parliament at the turn of the century.

This paper is centred on the matter related to the origin and dissemination of antisemitic newspapers, magazines and brochures in the first two decades after Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman Rule in 1878. Tracing back to the conditions in which those publications originated, as well as the personalities of their authors and the analysis of the main topics and stories in the articles, further contribute to create a clearer view of the genesis of the antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria and to outline Bulgarian and Jews cohabiting at the end of the 19th century.

The origination of the antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria coincides with the origination of the Bulgarian modern state after the Russo-Turkish War, 1877-1878. Under the Treaty of Berlin, which was signed on July 13th 1878 by representatives of the Great Powers, the Principality of Bulgaria was established in the north of the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina) and the south part was called Eastern Rumelia and remained an autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire under the direct political and military rule of the Sultan¹. Since the newly established countries were heterogeneous in ethnic and religious composition the Treaty of Berlin contained special provisions obliging them to guarantee the rights of the minorities living in their territories. The principle of political and civil equality of all Bulgarian citizens, including the Jews people was put forward in the first Bulgarian Constitution, the Tarnovo Constitution adopted in 1879 by the Constituent National Assembly.

¹ After a series of revolts the two parts unite. Despite the protests of the Sultan and Russia under the Tophane agreement Bulgaria gained diplomatic and international sovereignty. Grown significantly in territory, Bulgaria remained a principality of the Ottoman Empire until the declaration of independence in 1908.

The aforementioned principle of equality gives right to the Jews that lived in the territory of Bulgaria to get involved in the political and mostly economic structures of the new Bulgarian society, which on the other hand does not remain unnoticed and without consequences.

Statistical data show that in 1880–1881 the number of the Jews in both the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia was 18.197 or 0.9 % of the whole population. Almost all of them regarded Judeo-Spanish as their mother tongue but there were some that regarded themselves as Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Romanians, etc.²

The number of Jews increased until the end of the century proportionally to the population of Bulgaria although it constantly remained under 1%. In number they were an insignificant minority group, compared to the Muslims, whose relative percentage at the time was about 20%. Unlike the Muslims, however, the Jews live mostly in towns, which were 32 in number at the end of the century and the beginning of the new one.³ The majority of the Jews lived in Sofia, the newly established capital of Bulgaria. Therefore it was not a pure accident that the first antisemitic publications appeared there.

In the first years after the establishment of the state, the number of Bulgarian periodicals began to grow gradually. According to the analysis of the data, made by the scholar of the Bulgarian periodicals, Boris Andreev, there were 648 newspapers and magazines published in the period between 1878–1900, as 288 of them came out in Sofia, 83 in Plovdiv, 57 in Ruse, 37 in Varna, 32 in Tarnovo, etc. These numbers clearly show that more than 85% of the periodicals were published in the five biggest Bulgarian cities and more than 43% in Sofia alone. Of all 455 newspapers, they were 291 weeklies, those that came out twice a week were 51 and the ones that were published three times a week were 19; 18 were the daily papers and 34 editions came out twice a month, 9 of them monthly, 12 had no particular date of issue and 12 were broadsheets. The average circulation was between 3 and 10 thousand copies.⁴ The antisemitic papers and articles published in some of them actually constituted an insignificant percentage in comparison with the total number of the newspapers published in the period.

During the first decade of freedom for Bulgarians i.e. the 80s of the 19th century there were no papers amongst the many, manifesting antisemitic ideas. However, there were separate articles published, as for example those in the comic paper *Rasheto*, which came out in the Danube town of Ruse in 1884–1885; these articles put the Jews in an unfavourable light, depicting them as dishonourable dealers, swindlers and expats. Despite this, the main course of

² Eli Eshkenazy, "Statistički eski belezki iz istorijata na balgarskoto evrejstvo" [Statistical notes about the history of Bulgarian], *Novi dni* [New days] 7 (1947): 9-11.

³ Eli Eshkenazy, "Njakoi statistički belezki za broja na evreite v Balgarija v minaloto" [Some statistical notes about the number of the Jews in the past], *Evrejski novini* [Jewish news], February 1, 1957.

⁴ Boris Andreev, *Načalo, razvoj i vazhod na balgarskija pečat* [Beginning, development and progress of the Bulgarian Press], (Sofia: Globus, 1948), 208-211.

the paper is completely different as it is evident from its subtitle, literary translated as “A humorous and satiric paper /distinguishing the moral from immoral.”⁵ In those first years of antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria, antisemitism was disseminated mainly through translated brochures and leaflets. The books of Trayko Bojidarov, for example, were translated from Russian and published in Sofia as “Mysteries of the Jewish Faith,”⁶ “The Talmud and its Mysteries,”⁷ “Jewish Processes;”⁸ Samuil Marokski’s “Bringing the Jews to Reason or a Golden Essay” was translated by the Sliven Metropolitan Bishop Serafim;⁹ and also the brochure “The Jewish Religion” of the monk Neofit had been published in Bulgaria.¹⁰ The main motifs in the aforementioned publications were based mainly on religious topics. The Jews were characterised as betrayers, Christ-killers and enemies of Christianity. What was broadly discussed in these brochures was the accusation, dating back to the Middle Ages, that the Jews killed Christian children and used their blood for religious rituals. A few things should be considered when analysing these first antisemitic works thoroughly, which appeared in the territory of Bulgaria back then. Firstly, it is the fact that most of these works were translated from the Russian. The works are most likely to have found supporters and dissemination during and after the Russo-Turkish War when the Russian Army and administrative authorities acted on Bulgarian territory. The negative attitude towards the Jews was wide spread in the Russian Empire at the time and was proclaimed by a large number of antisemitic works, which later was put in practice with the wave of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Empire in the 1880s. The antisemitic stereotypes and prejudice might have been spread by Bulgarian emigrants who lived in Russia before 1878 and moved back to Bulgaria after Liberation.

Secondly, it is confusing that amongst the main figures in the antisemitic propaganda were many priests. Although there is no evidence and it cannot be said for sure, Neofit, the author of the brochure “The Jewish Religion,” is believed to have been a man of God. It is absolutely true for the Sliven Metropolitan Bishop. The participation of those representatives of the Church leads to the fact that there obviously were many of them who shared the stereotypes of Christian Europe and had some prejudice towards the Jews, which were mostly related to the blood libel. Additionally, we cannot ignore the fact that within the next decade there were men of God amongst the Bulgarian translators, authors and disseminators of antisemitic brochures, papers and magazines.

⁵ □□□□□□ [The Colander], Ruse, 1884 - 1885.

⁶ Traiko Bojidarov, *Potainosti na evrejskata vjara* □□ [Mysteries of the Jews Faith], (Sofia: K. T. Kushlev, 1884).

⁷ Traiko Bojidarov, *Talmuda i negovite potainosti* [The Talmud and its Mysteries], (Sofia, 1884).

⁸ Traiko Bojidarov, *Evrejski prozės* [Jews Processes], (Sofia, 1886).

⁹ Samuil Marokski, *Vrazumlenie na evreite ili Zlatno suchinenie* [Bringing the Jews to Reason or a Golden Essay], (Sliven: Balgarsko zname, 1899).

¹⁰ *Neofit, Evrejskata religija* [The Jewish Religion], (Plovdiv, 1885).

As for the circulation of the brochures mentioned above, it cannot be defined for certain. It is also difficult to assume what effects and influence the proclaimed ideas had on society. It is a fact, however, that antisemitic periodicals did not appear. There is no data about the establishment and foundation of antisemitic clubs and organizations in the country. On that side, it gives grounds to make the assumption that the dissemination and the influence these works had on society, was to a greatly restricted. Despite not being big in number and not so popular, the antisemitic works begot a tendency and started processes that continued and developed in the next decade.

The antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria continued to develop in the last decade of the 19th century, so as to spread over all cities and towns inhabited by Jews. In terms of content it is not different from other European countries; it is based mainly on religious and everyday life topics. Additionally, economic issues are discussed more deeply. The new phenomenon, however, is the foundation of special committees that were set up around some of the antisemitic publications and which claimed their political demands for restriction of the constitutional rights and freedoms of the Jews in Parliament. The latter is a proof for the increasing influence of the antisemitic press at the end of the century. The most remarkable figure that played an important role for the development of the anti-Semitism in Bulgaria was Nikola Mitakov, who was an entrepreneur and owner of sand-pits around Sofia.¹¹

The magazine "Bulgaria for the Bulgarians" [*Bulgaria za Bulgarite*] was first published in Sofia on September, 16th 1893 and its subtitle was "A periodical magazine about political economy and trade."¹² With its second copy it was renamed to "Bulgaria without Jews" [*Bulgaria bez Evrei*].¹³ Although the word "antisemitism" was not mentioned directly in the name of the magazine, the line it followed was definitely antisemitic. The content of the magazine and the articles published in it clearly prove that fact; almost all the material was written by Mitakov himself.

In the beginning the author wrote that he is not able to present literary consistent magazine:

"My Dearest Reader,

It is no wonder that while reading my magazine you might come across thousands of mistakes, some of which might be logical ones. I must warn you that I have no intention to present myself as a man of words and a very literate person. My aim is to show to you the truth and explain half-literately though,

¹¹ His son Krum Mitakov was an Anti-Semite too. D. Benvenisty characterises him as "open fascist." In 1937 Krum Mitakov published the antisemitic book "The truth according to the Mason's list." The main idea is that the Jewish Masons initiated all the revolutions worldwide.

¹² *Balgarski periodiki en pē at 1844–1944* [Bulgarian periodicals 1844 – 1944], ed. Dimitar Ivanchev (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1966), vol. II, 118.

¹³ Ibid.

some issues of vital interest for each and every one of us, namely of the Jews.”¹⁴

With the first copy of the magazine Mitakov called for despising the Jews and appealed for an antisemitic state in which “Bulgarians, Turks, Germans, French, Gypsies, etc.” should be the only members excluding particularly Jews and Armenians.”¹⁵ The articles that were published in the first copy were further developed and continued in the next two copies. The article entitled “Bulgaria for the Bulgarians in terms of Economics” made an appeal toward all Bulgarians and called for not buying from the Jews but from “their Bulgarian compatriots” because “the richer the Jews gets, the richer his brother gets and the more powerful the Jew himself gets; the richer the Jew gets, the poorer the compatriot gets...”¹⁶ The title of the article “Who are the most dangerous parasites” speaks more than clearly: undoubtedly they are the Jews and the Armenians. Mitakov described the Jews as follows: “They are parasites for the whole world [...] because through their infernal meshes they are trying to catch (and gather) in their bloody hands the whole wealth on Earth, to financially overpower all societies, peoples and countries and ultimately the whole world until they pronounce themselves the masters of the situation and the almightiest of the day.”¹⁷ There are offensive epithets and qualifications in the articles “From the Jewish Mysteries,”¹⁸ “The Jews in Villages,” “Jews can lie to the Lord Himself,”¹⁹ “The Blood”²⁰ and so forth as the leitmotiv throughout was the accusation of ritual killings.

The first magazine “Bulgaria without Jews” which was published by Mitakov was suspended after only three issues. After the failure Mitakov started a new project, the paper “People’s Freedom” [*Narodna svoboda*] with the subtitle “a political and antisemitic paper.”²¹ Mitkov himself claimed in the leading article that the aims and the motto of the newly established periodical will be the “relentless struggle against the Jews” and the establishment of antisemitic party with a complicated structure based on his programme, which consisted of twenty items in political and eight in economic aspects.²² Politically he insists on: a “relentless struggle against the Jews as a whole and a restriction to the maximum of the civil and political rights of the Jews in Bulgaria”²³. By this he meant the abolition of the rights and liberties of the Jews proclaimed in the constitution such as the active and passive right of vote, freedom of assembly, of speech, etc. Also Mitakov insisted on “a closure of Bulgarian borders for all

¹⁴ *Balgarija za balgarite* [Bulgaria for the Bulgarians], September 6, 1893.

¹⁵ *Balgarija bez evrei* [Bulgaria without Jews], January 18, 1894.

¹⁶ *Balgarija za balgarite* [Bulgaria for the Bulgarians], September 6, 1893.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Balgarija bez evrei* [Bulgaria without Jews], January 18, 1894.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Bulgarian periodicals 1844-1944*, ed. Ivanchev, vol. II, 27.

²² *Narodna svoboda* [People’s Freedom], January 15, 1895.

²³ Ibid.

scum belonging to the race of the Jews.”²⁴ In his programme Mitkov urged for the immediate Bulgarian Declaration of Independence and the status of a kingdom; he appealed: “Bulgarian politics must be in accordance with Russian politics and Sofia must be in full harmony with St. Petersburg”²⁵ and so on and so forth. In terms of economics the demands set forth are mainly protectionist. The last item number 20 is quite interesting: “Those who want to be supporters of the antisemitism are obliged to guard against any relations with the Jews. The antisemites will have to say ‘*Don’t buy from the Jew*’ as they say ‘Good morning’. And the Jew will not have the right to set up any business and will be despised by every anti-Semites”²⁶.

Not only was this copy full of accusations and ritual killings but the rest of them were too; there were constant appeals for restriction of the rights and freedoms of the Jews people as well as a number of advice and suggestions for taking special measures against them, for example banishing all of them from Bulgaria in the way that most of the civilised countries had already done. It is interesting in terms of stylistic what epithets were used by Mitakov when describing the Jews people. They are highly varied. For example, in one of his articles, published in copy 1/ 24. 11. 1894 when describing the Jews, he uses 73 offensive words following one after another : “a Jew, bur, counterfeiter, crook, failure, Beelzebub, Satan, vampire, goblin, despot, villain, outlaw, scoundrel, bastard, rascal, twerp, brute, beast, swine, dog, snake, sly fox, bootlicker, pimp, crook, swindler, creep, infidel, corrupt, creeping creature, caterpillar, sponge, parasite, worm, leech.”²⁷

One of the basic characteristics of Mitakov’s propaganda is the fact that it is interrelated to antisocialist propaganda. He was convinced that the socialists were his biggest opponents and the greatest supporters of the Jews. Since he belonged to the entrepreneurial class, Mitakov protected their interests. This is the reason why the paper “People’s Freedom” took a stand against the project for taking a state loan from Vienna banks, which he called “the banks of the Jew”. Because of the financial affiliations between the two countries Mitakov called the Prime Minister K. Stoilov “a blind Jew tool and bootlicker of his aunty Austria.” Mitakov was taken to court for those and similar statements and was liable for offence to the Knyaz /prince regnant/ and the Prime Minister.²⁸

The other periodical that made an attempt to establish “the traditions” of the antisemitism is the paper “Echo” (*Otziiv*). Compared to Mitakov’s papers that were short-lived it was published for a relatively longer period, from 1897 to

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., November 24, 1894.

²⁸ Vasil Topencharov, *Bulgarskata zhurnalistika 1885 – 1903* [Bulgarian Journalism 1885 – 1903], (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1963), 541.

1903. The new paper supported the ideas of the Liberal party of Doctor Vasil Radoslavov and was one of the first to give a public forum to the criminal sensation.

Most probably it was for economic reasons that the paper started to proclaim antisemitic ideas amongst the society with its very first copy from February 17th 1897. There were accusations that the Jews were unpatriotic and did not cherish Bulgaria. They provided as an example the fact that during public ceremonies and holidays the Jews openly expressed a cold attitude towards Bulgarian interests. During the visit of the Serbian King Alexander in Bulgaria they were the only ones “who decorated their shops, located in the most overcrowded area in Sofia, with (Serbian) flags, which looked like rags” and this was done to discredit Bulgaria.²⁹ “The Echo” also published a number of materials about “the Austrian Jewish impudence” and stated that “we have warmly welcomed them and generously opened our doors for them”³⁰, and continued ridiculing them as focusing on “the Jewish greed”³¹. The paper repeatedly put emphasis on “the well-known fact” that the Jews speculate with the labour of the Bulgarian people and “lay their hands on Bulgarian trade and crafts, which actually makes them our masters and us, on the other hand, their economic slaves”³². “The Echo” discussed broadly that the Jews were foreigners who settled in our lands to suck Bulgarian blood.³³

In addition to this, it is a characteristic of the antisemitic propaganda of the paper to pay significant attention to the status that Jews have in the rest of the European countries. The extensive review “About the Jews once again,” which was published in several copies of the paper, aimed to answer the question why the Jews had been persecuted for centuries, wherever they went. The further example given is the ancient historian Flavius Josephus, who also had a Jewish descent and “denounced his compatriots as being guilty of corrupting Roman moral, procuring, appropriation of estates and kidnapping young women, being thieves, frauds, swindlers and as a whole extremely sluttish.”³⁴ The Jewish were called “parasites” and “international leeches” and this is exactly what was stated as a reason for banishing them from Spain and persecuting them in Russia. According to “The Echo,” the Jews had to be blamed for “the disgrace of Poland” because “their race became related to the Jews and thus betrayers were born and the Polish sold their homeland for 3 million roubles.”³⁵ Concerning Jewish settlement within the Ottoman Empire the paper commented that after leaving Spain they settled down “in the diseased organism of Turkey and it gave them the favourable grounds for shady affairs

²⁹ *Otzyv* [The Echo], February 18, 1897.

³⁰ Ibid., March 28, 1897.

³¹ Ibid., March 3, 1897.

³² Ibid., February 24, 1897.

³³ Ibid., July 14, 1897.

³⁴ Ibid., May 28, 1898.

³⁵ Ibid.

and speculation.”³⁶ A few years later Turkey started to collapse. The reason is more than obvious “the Jews had a demoralising influence on the Turkish authorities and bribed them, procured, stole and to a great extent contributed to the Turkish corruption.”³⁷ In this sense, the paper did mention “the active” participation of the Jews in the Turkish massacres of the Armenians. The above, according to “the Echo” give reasons to all peoples in the world to despise the Jews who are “parasites,” “international leeches,” “exploiters,” “men of no God,” “parasite nation,” “disgraced people,” “despised people,” etc.³⁸

The paper paid “due attention” to the biggest contemporary spy scandal, in which Jewish were involved, the Dreyfus Affair. The paper qualified him as “the biggest of all Jewish scoundrels” who “allied with some deluded French and corrupts and started a new wave and raised a row with which they aimed to misguide the public opinion.”³⁹ The Jews agreed to demand publicity about the documentation on this case but they did not render an account to the fact that a lot of French state secrets would be brought to light because “a brother of theirs, a spy had more value to them than the defence of an entire country.”⁴⁰ According to the paper, Dreyfus himself had used “the typical Jewish trick-betrayal.” The article finished as follows: “Such corruption could be generated only by the race of Abraham, damned by their God.”

The Jews who live in Bulgaria were not indifferent toward the antisemitic propaganda of “The Echo.” In issue number 419 from May 19th 1898, the paper reprinted in its column a letter from the Chief Rabbi to the Sofia District Attorney in which the Jews claimed from the Sofia City Court to take measures” against the liable and attacks on us aiming to provoke hatred against Bulgarian Jews [...] and I do request to take into consideration what The Echo writes in its issues.”⁴¹ There is a further article published on the matter in which the authors wrote that they “were astonished by the insolence of the Chief Rabbi an impudent and Pharisaic man who gave the following speech in the Synagogue yesterday: “The antisemitic trend will finally end up with as a futile attempt. Before they manage to ban the Israeli from Bulgaria it is highly probable to have the kingdom vanished from the map of Europe.”⁴² In their conclusion the authors of the article called the Jews “international wolves” and a “mean tribe.”⁴³

A new paper with similar content and name appeared in 1898 in Sofia- “The New Echo” (*Nov Otzvin*)⁴⁴. The new edition actually was a sequel and supplement to “The Echo.” Similarly to its forerunner it was a daily paper

³⁶ Ibid., June 16, 1898.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., July 8, 1897; May 28, 1898; June 16, 1898; May 27, 1901; August 18 1903.

³⁹ Ibid., July 8, 1898.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., May 19, 1898.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *Bulgarian Periodicals 1844-1944*, ed. Ivanchev, vol. II, 61.

proclaiming the ideas of Radoslavov and was full of sensational crime news and reports and antisemitic material. The topic which was most broadly discussed is the Dreyfus affair. The paper severely criticised Bulgarian defenders of Dreyfus qualifying them with offensive epithets. In a series of articles like “Not so baptised Jew,” “Jews charged” and so on, “The new Echo” claimed that the sentencing of Dreyfus was right “although the Jews have been moving heaven and earth to prove the spy and charlatan innocent.”⁴⁵

As well as this the paper constantly appealed for pursuing the Jews in the way they did other countries pointing out that they use Christian blood for religious rituals and continue to publish materials mocking and accusing them.⁴⁶

In the last issue of the paper the editor-in-chief Petar Petrov stated the reasons for the fiasco of the journal. According to him, the reasons were deeply rooted in the lack of interest of the Bulgarian society in anti-Semitism. He also mentioned indirectly that certain Jewish circles had offered him money to stop his antisemitic activities. “If we had taken the 40.000 *levs* (Bulgarian currency – V. K.) for the 2.000 subscriptions, which the Jews promised us for seizing the attacks against them, we wouldn’t be deprived from our home now.”⁴⁷ This sentence speaks quite eloquently about the motives that the editors of the antisemitic publications had in the first two decades after the Liberation.

The other paper that played a significant role amongst the others with an antisemitic content is “The National Defence” (*Narodna Zashchita*). It was published three times a week and represented the opposition. Similarly to the antisemitic papers and magazines already mentioned, the National Defence made efforts to create negative attitudes toward the Jews in Bulgaria. For that purpose they systematically published material accusing Jews of speculation, greed, meanness, etc. and used article headlines as follows: “Speculation Makes its Way through the Courts,”⁴⁸ “Brothers Unite,”⁴⁹ “Jew and Medicine,”⁵⁰ “Chronic Disease,”⁵¹ etc.

Unlike the other similar papers “The National Defence” viewed the Jews not as Jews only but rather as non-Bulgarians. To a great extent it is due to the line that the paper followed, which was mainly nationalistic. In this respect the paper claimed that its aim is to fight not particularly against the Jews but against everybody who is not Bulgarian. In terms of quality and quantity the paper mostly attacked the Greeks. The appeal was to appoint to administrative jobs only native Bulgarians, not foreigners (Greek, Jews, Armenians, Italians, Serbs, etc.). According to the paper only the pure-blooded Bulgarians could be

⁴⁵ David Benvenisty, “Neblagoprijatnitate uslovija za razprostranenie na antisemitskata propaganda v Balgarija 1891 - 1903” [The inauspicious conditions for spreading the antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria], *Annual Shalom*, 16 (1980): 197-244.

⁴⁶ *Nov Otziv* [The New Echo], September 7, 1899.

⁴⁷ *Narodna zashchita* [The People’s Defence], February 18, 1901.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, January 13, 1899.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1899.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, April 10, 1899.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

patriots. They were the only ones who truly love Bulgaria and everybody else is far away from Bulgarian national idea.⁵²

A few months before its last issue the paper printed an article with the headline: "The anti-Semitism in us."⁵³ It was exceptionally curious. Bulgarian Jews spoke passionately against the acts of antisemitism. It was confirmed that the antisemitic propaganda in Bulgaria had no success whatsoever; it was further emphasised that Bulgarian people had no hard feelings towards the Jews. However, the article appealed for a complete assimilation of the Jews: "It is no doubt that we are friends of the Jews [...] we have been living together for centuries [...] they would not endanger us in any way in the future as they had never been before."⁵⁴ This is a landmark article that fully turned the attitude of "The National Defence" towards the Jews onto its opposite. Unfortunately the concrete reasons for its publication remain unknown.

At the borderline between two centuries, the antisemitic papers and magazines were published not only in the capital, but also in other towns like Vidin: "The Defender" (*Zashtitnik*), subtitle "Organ of the craft-guild against the Jews"⁵⁵ and "Futurity" (*Badeshtnost*).⁵⁶ Both editions were short-lived; "The Defender" had only six copies published and "Futurity" just five. There was a similar antisemitic paper published in Varna: "*Strandzha*", named after a mountain massif in southeastern Bulgaria. Actually this paper was the organ of the Association of the Thracian Refugees in Bulgaria and it fought for the rights and interests of the Bulgarians in East Thrace (Edirne Thrace) which remained within the Ottoman Empire after the Russo-Turkish War. Basically the paper wanted to promote the Bulgarian national cause, i.e. unification of all the territories with Bulgarian population in one sovereign state. In this respect, most of the articles published in the paper were of a nationalistic character. In most of the articles the patriotic motives were related to antisemitic ones. "The Strandzha" represented the Jews as supporters of the Ottomans and in this sense as enemies of the Bulgarian people. The paper called them "the bitterest enemies of the Bulgarians, because the Ottomans are the almightiest and the Jews are spies."⁵⁷ Referring the inborn, innate aptitude for betrayal of the Jews "The Strandza" came to the following conclusion: "Wherever Christian blood was shed, there were Jews involved."⁵⁸

One of the antisemitic papers which was published in the country and played a central role was "the organ of the Burgas Antisemitic Committee" the paper *Golgotha*.⁵⁹ Similarly to the other antisemitic papers it was short-lived because it

⁵² Ibid., January 31, 1899.

⁵³ Ibid., December 15, 1899.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *Bulgarian Periodicals 1844-1944*, ed. Ivanchev, vol. I, 306.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁷ *Strandzha*, July 17, 1898.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Bulgarian periodicals 1844 – 1944*, ed. Ivanchev, vol. I, 222.

was published only for half a year. N. Ivanov was the editor-in-chief and D. Boev was the organisational secretary. The leading article first published on December 25th 1899 had the headline “Instead of a Programme” and it clearly stated the aims of the paper and the newly founded committee: “to free the country from the economic slavery of the Jews.”⁶⁰ The authors of the article claimed that the Jews were pursued wherever and whenever they lived and that it was their own fault. The usual accusations were repeated throughout, mostly the ones that the Jews had betrayed Jesus Christ and supported the Turks in the Russo-Turkish War, the massacres of the Armenians, etc. In the first issue of the paper the Jews were qualified as “parasitic worms,” “disseminators of corruption and the Evil,” “parasitic nation,” etc.⁶¹

It is interesting how the Burgas Antisemitic Committee was founded. Most probably it was founded mainly because of economic reasons. One evidence about that is not only the leading article but a number of later contributions published in the paper, e.g. the statement of the authors that “the Antisemitic Committee was founded as a consequence of the bad economic situation of the country, the big national debt and the poverty of the population.”⁶² Furthermore, the article “Why are we against the Jews?” explicitly stated that “the Jews themselves make us turn against them because of their speculations, exploitation and godlessness. They make us turn against them because we fear that with their thriving for money by all means, they will one day drive our people into bankruptcy and will leave them devastated both economically and emotionally; they will deprive us of our trade as they have done before, and finally will enslave us economically.”⁶³ These are the arguments, which inspired the founders of the antisemitic organization in Burgas and probably in other cities in Bulgaria. What should be mentioned too is the fact that the organisational secretary D. Boyev owned of a big shoe store in Burgas.

According to the organ of the Burgas Antisemitic Committee there were no people as worse as the Jews. They were carriers of all the bad characteristics that a man could have. The Jew was “morally obliged to be a liar, thief, bandits and murderer and they are fatal for the people around them, for those who are from different faith; If the Jews have no those qualities they would be discharged from their own cast.”⁶⁴ Hence, according to “The Golgotha” publishers the Bulgarians must detest the Jews even more than the Turks: “The Turks massacred us, they hang us with no mercy for five centuries. We did not suffer such barbarity from the Jews. It is only natural that we must detest the Turks more than the Jews but to us it is the other way round- we detest the Jews more.”⁶⁵ The paper viewed the antisemitism as a movement, which “will enlighten the society” and “will find a solution for some racial and cultural

⁶⁰ *Golgotha*, December 25, 1899.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, March 5, 1899.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, April 4, 1900.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, May 25, 1899.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, December 25, 1899.

differences between the Christians and the Jews,”⁶⁶ and then called for anti-Jewish pogroms in Bulgaria, following the example of some other European countries.

As for the readers of the paper it announced that it is distributed nationwide and has 1600 subscribers.⁶⁷ Unfortunately this statement can be neither proved, nor argued these days. Most probably the figures for the subscription were exaggerated since the paper was published for half a year only.

All of the editorial staff and the contributors to “The Golgotha” were members of the Burgas Antisemitic Committee. Their activities were mainly pointed towards sending petitions to the National assembly with demands for legal restrictions of Jewish rights in Bulgaria. One of these petitions is kept in the archives of the Bulgarian Parliament. It was sent by the members of the executive board of the Burgas Antisemitic Committee in 1899 and contains the following:

“1. From now on to legally restrain Jews from settling in Bulgaria; 2. To restrain by law the purchase of land by Jews in the territory of Bulgaria; 3. To ban them from trading outside cities and remove them, once and for all, from participation in public enterprises and strictly control them not to appoint third persons on such positions; 4. To ban the Jews from working in commissioning and acting as intermediaries when clearing goods through the customs; 5. To amend the Criminal Code by adding a special clause stipulating death penalty for Jews persons attempting directly or indirectly to kidnap Christian children and to sentence them to death without exception; 6. To impose a special tax on their stay in the territory of Bulgaria regardless of their sex for everybody at the age over 21, as this is the case of Romania; 7. To shall legally renounce any bank loans or credits to Jews in Bulgaria.”⁶⁸

The initiative of the Burgas Antisemitic Committee was supported through petitions to the National Assembly signed by similar antisemitic organisations in Shumen, Pazardzik, Silistra, Ruse, etc. The resolution was forwarded and filed in the Parliament in December 1899 by the Tutrakanian MP Iv. M. Abrashev, who was a member of the Liberal Party, and it was signed by 48 of his colleagues.⁶⁹ There were no debates on it and it is important to point out that it was rejected.

Although it failed, the act gives grounds to make several important conclusions about the development of the anti-Semitism in Bulgaria for the period under scrutiny. The antisemitic ideas were spread only in a few periodicals but they were not harmless at all. The resolutions, ideas and demands of the Burgas

⁶⁶ Ibid., June 25, 1899.

⁶⁷ Ibid., May 21, 1899.

⁶⁸ “Petition of Antisemitic Committees to stop the Jewish settlement in Bulgaria, 21 November 1899-20 December 1899,” National Assembly, fund 173K, opp. 1, file 1618, Central State Archives, Sofia.

⁶⁹ Ibid., file 1024.

Antisemitic Committee were supported and shared by antisemitic committees in nineteen other Bulgarian cities.

The number of the people who signed those documents is not so insignificant. Hence, the anti-Semitism in Bulgaria had increased its influence at the end of the 19th century.

Conclusion

It is an undisputable fact that at the end of the 19th century the antisemitic messages and attitudes, which were spread in Europe, also reached the newly established state of Bulgaria. There are various reasons why this happened and they could not be explained without a more thorough analysis of the overall political and economic situation in the country in the first years after the Liberation. The bitterest enemy of Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire failed after 1878. However, that fact did not solve the problems, on the contrary it led to even more difficulties. Bulgaria's opening toward Europe, the modernization and industrialization evoked instability and fear amongst society. Discontent was expressed in various ways, and a whipping boy was sought in form of the "other," in most cases, "non-Christians" or "non-Bulgarians." Because of the mass emigration of Muslims after the Russo-Turkish War, the Bulgarian Jews were particularly suited for this role.

The economic crisis in Bulgaria began at the end of the 19th century and it was caused by the decline of crafts and the import of cheaper and most often more qualitative goods by higher quality from Europe. This brought considerable discontent among the so called craft-guild. On the other hand, there were common interests in trade and it led to interweaving between Jews and Bulgarians, which eventually made the latter try to get rid of their serious competitors, the Jews. One of the ways in doing this was spreading lies and accusations against them. It was no accident that most of the antisemitic brochures, papers and magazines appeared in the trade centres and department stores first, where according to the anti-Semites "the foreigners" held key economic positions. These editions set the goal to eradicate "the Jew" and to "protect" the craftsmen, merchants and industrialists from decline. The editors and authors of antisemitic literature were mostly entrepreneurs and tradesmen and their motives were mainly commercial in character. For example it became clear that in a letter written by N. Mitakov that the publisher of "Bulgaria without Jews" and "Bulgaria for the Bulgarians" had gone deeply in debt to Jewish creditors who rejected his request to remit his debt, after which he started his antisemitic papers.⁷⁰

Despite the efforts made by Mitakov and his "comrades," the antisemitic ideas did not spread amongst Bulgarian Society. An example of this could be not only the short life of the papers but the appeals for subscription and donation,

⁷⁰ Kiril Fitovsky, *Evreite v celija svijat* (The Jews around the World), (Svishtov: A. H. Dankov, 1898), 15.

permanently made by the editors. On the other hand, there were objective reasons for that and they can be explained with the fact that at the time a big percentage of the population was uneducated and illiterate, living mostly in the rural areas of the country. As already mentioned the antisemitic brochures, papers and magazines were disseminated mainly in the cities. Another reason for the failure of the antisemitic press might have been the Bulgarian cultural background and the fact that during the Ottoman Empire Bulgarians were used to live peacefully and to cohabite their lands with other ethnic groups, including Jews.

If one assumes that some of the attempts of the Bulgarian anti-Semites to popularise blood libel were to a certain extent successful, for example there were court trials in 1891 in Vratca and 1898 respectively in Yambol charging Jews with kidnapping and murdering Christian children for religious purposes, anti-Semitism failed from a political point of view. The antisemitic committees tried to put pressure on the Parliament to pass an antisemitic Law, but this initiative turned out to be completely unsuccessful. Thus, in spite of being a lucid touch in the whole picture of the new Bulgaria, anti-Semitism did not succeed in becoming a mass phenomenon on the verge of the 20th century.

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**“A quarter of a century of struggle” of the *Rola* weekly.
“The great alliance” against the Jews.**

by Maciej Moszyński

Abstract

In 1883, a new Polish weekly magazine, 'Rola', gathered around itself a group of journalists and writers who tried to overstep the liberal-conservative scheme of the political scene in the Kingdom of Poland. The founder of the periodical, Jan Jeleński and his colleagues did not hesitate to admit that their goal was to formulate a unified and convincing programme which would include social, economical, cultural and political elements. The journalists viewed these issues through their prejudice against Jews. This article focuses on the role of the weekly as a tool in the formation of the modern political antisemitic movement in the Kingdom of Poland. It shows which stereotypes were used by the authors of 'Rola', and particularly to what degree they were influenced by European anti-Jewish thought. This problem will be shown based on the analysis of the Polish self-image and the antisemitic image of the Jews.

“Quarter of a century of struggle” is the title of the commemorative book published in Warsaw in 1910. The intent of its authors was to document the history of the *Rola* weekly published in Warsaw; as well as to commemorate the achievements of its founder and long term editor, Jan Jeleński, who died the year before ¹. Publications of this type usually focus on paying homage to the achievements of one prominent figure, and commemorating related events. In case of the work in question, however, the reader received not only the ‘commemorative book’ but also a clear and thorough ideological message. Although the focus of “A quarter of a century of struggle” was on the hagiographic description of Jeleński’s life and an idyllic representation of the history of *Rola*, its main aim was, first and foremost, to familiarise the reader with the views presented in the magazine and the worldview of its authors. Certain tendencies represented in *Rola* have naturally evolved, but the viewpoint had remained unchanged for its whole publishing life. The decisively most important element is present in the title of this article. The authors of *Rola* thought of the word ‘struggle’ as a keyword. It was present on the pages of the weekly from its first edition to the last issue, and served as a starting point

¹ In the introduction, the publisher of the commemorative book discloses the original intent of the authors of *Rola*, which changed after Jeleński’s death: “The book was intended as a unique and highly original work, documenting a quarter of a century of struggle for the liberation of Poland and the Polish soul from under Judaic oppression; a document embracing thousands of letters, memos, notes compiled by the initiator and leader of the struggle, based on his own experiences, memories and pain.” *Ćwierćwiecze walki. Księga pamiątkowa „Roli”* (Warszawa, 1910), V.

for many other statements. All of those statements could be subsumed under one general thought: the struggle against Jews and their influence on the society of the Kingdom of Poland. *Rola* can be described as the first Polish magazine with clear antisemitic sentiments. From the day *Rola* was first published, Jeleński and his colleagues did not hesitate to admit that their goal was to formulate a unified and convincing programme which would include social, economical, cultural and political elements. The journalists viewed these issues through their prejudice against Jews. They dubbed themselves anti-Semites² and were seen as such by their contemporaries.³

It should be noted that, from the moment it was coined in the late seventies of the nineteenth century, the understanding of the notion 'antisemitism' differed for the representatives of opposing social environments, who propagated or opposed the idea. What is more, research conducted on the phenomenon of antisemitism up until the middle of the twentieth century clearly shows that aversion to Jews, often dubbed 'modern', became relatively quickly integrated into the world of politics.⁴ For those who harbored prejudice against Jews antisemitism became a readily identifiable cause for various socio-economic phenomena emerging parallel to nineteenth century development. As a notion it had significant explanatory power. The possibility to provide simple solutions in an increasingly complicated world was an additional advantage. Antisemitism entered politics particularly in the area of Central Europe, consequently spreading into the Kingdom of Poland. As a topic it is also becoming increasingly popular among researchers.⁵

2 In one of his leaflets published after his death, Jeleński wrote about the effects of the many years of his endeavor: "I would just like to concede that the type of antisemitism that *Rola* took upon itself to spread turned out to bear positive results, truly beneficial for Polish society." Jan Mrówka [Jan Jeleński], *Co to jest antysemityzm i jak go chrześcijanin katolik rozumieć powinien?*, (Warszawa, 1910), 27.

3 That *Rola* expressed antisemitic sentiments was a prevalent opinion, regardless of the political orientation of the speaker. Ludwik Kulczycki, a socialist, reminisced: "When discussing the new movements in our society in mid-80s one cannot omit the antisemitic movement, represented by the *Rola* weekly published by Jan Jeleński." Ludwik Kulczycki, "Dokoła mego życia. Cz. I: Lata dziecięce i młodość do połowy 1893 roku," Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (Rps BN II 6384), 114. In the mid-80s of the 19th Century Antoni Zaleski, a conservative journalist hostile towards *Rola* stated: "The Anti-semitic movement today is popular in all places, and particularly here caused this mediocre periodical to gather an impressive number of subscribers." Baronowa XYZ [Antoni Zaleski], *Towarzystwo warszawskie. Listy do przyjaciółki*, vol. II (Kraków: nakł. Księgarni J. K. Zupańskiego i K. J. Heumanna, 1889), 146.

4 See Paul Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of political anti-semitism in imperial Germany*, (New York: Harper, 1949); Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, (New York: Wiley, 1964).

5 See Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881–1922. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa*, (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981); *Antisemitism and its opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum, (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850-1914*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

Taking these factors into account the present article will focus in the characterization of the *Rola* weekly and its programme in terms of politics. I will concentrate on three main issues posed by this problem. First, providing a general characteristics of the magazine and the circle of persons concentrated around it, which comprised of journalists and readers alike. Second, identification of the key elements of the political programme formulated by the magazine; particularly as put forward by the founder of *Rola*, Jan Jeleński. Finally, the description of elements which were crucial in establishing the special role that *Rola* played among other periodicals published at that time in the Kingdom of Poland.

Jeleński's journal was published in Warsaw between 1883 and 1912, that is for three decades.⁶ Considering the instability and specifics of operation of the Congress Kingdom press market, the periodical undoubtedly enjoyed a long life. The operation of the national censorship system was one of the key problems, an annoying reminder of the Tsar's self-imposed rule in the country. For the majority of time during which *Rola* was published the press was completely under state preventive control, much more restrictive in Warsaw than in, for example, Petersburg.⁷ The press system in Congress Poland was, naturally, a consequence of the socio-political order in the Tsardom. As a result public life underwent extensive deformation. Whoever engaged in social, political or cultural activities had to attach equally large weight to the factual side of their message as to its acceptability to the organ which assessed their "ideological correctness."⁸ This directly influenced the clarity of press language; it was also the reason certain topics were discussed and others consciously avoided. As a consequence of these exceptional circumstances the press in the Kingdom of Poland developed a special role in society. The social reality of Tsar's Russia was one with limited civil rights and freedoms. The press filled the resulting void in public life. The role of legal political parties was assumed by publishers and non-governmental organisations. Any emerging political, social or literary movement aimed to infiltrate society via the press. This relation was not limited to readers in Warsaw but spreading onto the communities of intelligentsia in smaller provincial centres.⁹

6 The death of Jan Jeleński in April 1909 was a landmark event for the development of 'Rola'. From that moment onwards his son Szczepan, who was a recurring contributor for the magazine from the beginning of the century, became its editor in chief. The situation continued until 1912. At that time young Jeleński discontinued 'Rola' and went to Rome so as to pursue theological studies; see: Aleksander Rogalski, "Szczepan Jeleński," *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [PSB], vol. 11, (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1964-65,) 145-146.

7 Marek Tobera, "Cenzura czasopism w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku," *Przegląd Historyczny*, vol. LXXX (1989): 46.

8 Henryk Bałabuch, "Pozycja redaktora odpowiedzialnego w Królestwie Polskim w końcu XIX w.," *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej*, vol. XXXII (1993): 21.

9 Tobera, "Cenzura czasopism," 63-67. For more about the reception of the Warsaw community opinions in other areas of the Kingdom of Poland see (ex. Kielce Governorate):

During this period *Rola* managed to keep up the circulation at a relatively constant level, similar to that of leading national weeklies.¹⁰ Jan Jeleński, the founder of the periodical, controlled its establishment process on each step as editor in chief and publisher. A significant number of articles published in *Rola* was authored by him. The thematic range of the periodical was relatively wide. First and foremost, *Rola* featured articles on “social, economical and literary matters.”¹¹ The layout and structure of respective thematic sections was adapted to these topics. The editorial and topical article were crucial elements of each issue. Notes, social and economical analyses as well as commentaries on broadly understood cultural life were often part of the content, provided that they were convergent with the profile of the weekly. The ideological message that *Rola* propagated in its editorials was supported by the literary pieces published. These were mostly short stories and novels, on rarer occasions also pieces of poetry. They were characterized by a simplistic plot and schematic character portrayal, as the writing was meant to resonate with a wide variety of readers, usually without literary sophistication.¹² On certain occasions, specifically during the 1905-1907 revolution and in the Russian Duma election period, additional pages (so-called “people extras”) were added to issues of *Rola*. These extras aimed at increasing the awareness of the lowest social strata regarding the threat posed by the programme enemies identified by *Rola*.¹³

One important factor in the development of the programme was the choice of authors who wrote for the periodical. The previously mentioned “commemorative book” contains a list of prominent journalists who published in *Rola*, who were jointly called “brothers in arms.” One quarter of the 130

Danuta Adamczyk, “Prasa jako narzędzie oddziaływania warszawskich środowisk opiniotwórczych i politycznych na prowincję w II połowie XIX i początkach XX wieku,” *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej*, vol. XXIX (1990): 71-82.

10 The circulation of *Rola* in the decade between 1886 and 1905 was estimated at 2400-3000. See Zenon Kmiecik, “Wydawnictwa periodyczne w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1868-1904,” *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego*, vol. IV (1965): 145-157; Jerzy Myśliński, “Nakłady prasy w Warszawie w latach 1905-1906,” *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej*, vol. XX (1981): 122.

11 This fact was underscored in the announcements of the periodicals published in Warsaw press at the end of 1882, for example in the conservative daily ‘Wiek’; see *Wiek*, No. 232, October 5/17, 1882, 4.

12 For more on this topic see Małgorzata Domagalska, “Kreacja bohaterów żydowskich w antysemickiej prozie na łamach *Roli*,” *Żydzi i judaizm we współczesnych badaniach polskich*, vol. IV (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2008), 377-390; eadem, “Zabawa w chowanego. Antoni Skrzynecki wobec Żydów,” *Kwestia żydowska w XIX wieku. Spory o tożsamość Polaków*, eds. Grażyna Borkowska and Magdalena Rudkowska, (Warszawa: Cyklady, 2004), 309-318.

13 It is worth mentioning such articles from 1906 as “Whose advice to follow during Duma elections and whom to choose,” “Don’t vote for Jews and non-believers,” “Farmers defend yourselves in advance from the socialists,” “Don’t beat the Jews, but don’t let yourselves be beaten,” “Attention, fellow land owners, for evil people are plotting against you,” “How the Germans and Jews brought us socialism.”

people listed were clergymen.¹⁴ Among them Kazimierz Niedziałkowski, the bishop of the *łucko-żytomierskie* bishopric and Justyn Pranajtis, known for providing expert testimony for the Russian Ministry of Justice during the 1913 trial of Mendel Bejlis in Kiev in which he insisted that Jews committed ritualistic murders.¹⁵ *Rola* collaborated with a number of priests who wrote for other periodicals published in the Kingdom of Poland, including those of religious nature. One of those journalist priests was Jan Gnatowski who later became the editor of 'Przegląd Katolicki' ('Catholic Review'), an unofficial organ of the Warsaw curia¹⁶. The remaining authors were secular journalists and writers, both regular contributors and occasional collaborators. Among those published most frequently one needs to mention Teodor Jeske-Choiński, Klemens Junosza-Szaniawski, Ludomir Prószyński and Antoni Skrzynecki. All of them contributed to other journals as well.

But what the editors of *Rola* were particularly proud of were its readers. The impact of subscribers on the shape of its programme was carefully underscored, as well as their contribution to the establishment of an informal 'friends of *Rola*' group. The 'commemorative book' says:

"Undoubtedly, every ideological body needs to have proponents and opponents, as well as people indifferent to its message [...]. But also in this respect 'Rola' was an exception [...]. Separated [...] both by the left wing and the right of Warsaw journalism, it had either sworn enemies or trusted friends. [...] If an opponent, after a period of reading 'Rola' they found in cafeterias or borrowed from acquaintances, became a subscriber this alone made them an ally or, as they were called a 'rolarz'. The notion caught on relatively quickly and provided a detailed definition of the adopted social programme."¹⁷

The 'rolarze' group was intended as a means of real support in the struggle for the implementation of the programme. Many of the articles referred to the strong bond between the periodical and its friends. Ostensibly, this bond was exemplified by the amount of letters from readers and their visits in the *Rola* editorial office located in Jeleński's private lodgings. *Rola* attached great weight to the opinion of the 'rolarze' community. Consequently, members were often welcome to publish on its pages and their ideological integration was ensured

14 *Ćwierćwiecze walki*, 94-104.

15 Bolesław Kumor, "Justyn Pranajtis," *PSB*, vol. 28, 348-349. Between 1893 - 1894 Pranajtis published a series of articles in 'Rola' pertinent to his work "Christianus in Talmude Iudaeorum." For echoes of the Mendel Bejlis process in press relations from the Kingdom of Poland, see Jolanta Żyndul, "Bejlisy, czyli polska reakcja na proces kijowski," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 4 (2009): 397-410.

16 Karol Lewicki, "Jan Gnatowski," *PSB*, vol. 8, 139-140.

17 *Ćwierćwiecze walki*, 68.

by a number of organized meetings and debates between journalists and faithful readers.¹⁸

In the second part of this article I would like to focus on factors influencing the political landscape in the Kingdom of Poland in the thirty year period before World War I. First, there was a lack of officially condoned political activity and limitations on public discourse imposed by tsarist censorship. The liberalization of this state of affairs happened only after the 1905-1907 revolution. The characteristic circumstances under which official and unofficial political life proceeded in the Kingdom of Poland were visible also in the influence of socio-economical and cultural phenomena. The population explosion, and the parallel processes of urbanisation and industrialisation during the second half of the nineteenth century re-established Kingdom of Poland as the most economically developed province in Russia. Another important development in that period was the advancement of emancipation processes. Emancipation was embraced particularly by those communities which, up to that moment, did not have the right of self-determination with regard to their social and economical activities in the existing system, that is Jews and peasants. The latter participated in the economical life of the Kingdom to a much larger extent than the Christian peasantry and yet, until the formal emancipation in 1862, they had to face many legal limitations.¹⁹ These processes drew the attention of the rest of society and became the topic of many public statements, as well as debates between representatives of different sociopolitical environments. At the same time, the Kingdom of Poland was considered a typical example of actual (or often imagined) peripheries of civilisation. Western Europe was at that time identified as the centre of civilisation by local elites.²⁰ This state of affairs influenced the character of the debate taking place in public printed media. The widening rift between the old and the new was followed by a surge in hope or anxiety was an additional factor.²¹

18 Ibid., XXIII. Although the editorial board of 'Rola' saw 'rolarze' as an exceptional community unprecedented in the Kingdom of Poland, another Warsaw-based weekly published at that time (since 1886), the radically antiliberal 'Głos' had its own group of staunch supporters, the 'głosowicze'. 'Głos' was also evolving toward antisemitism, see Maciej Moszyński, "Volksfreunde und Judenfeinde. Die Wochenzeitung *Głos* (1886–1894) und die Anfänge des modernen Antisemitismus in Kongresspolen," *Medaon – Magazin für jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung* 5 (2011): 1-18.

19 See Artur Eisenbach, *Kwestia równouprawnienia Żydów w Królestwie Polskim*, (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1972).

20 Jerzy Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują. Studia z dziejów idei i wyobraźni XIX wieku*, (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1988), 289-295.

21 It needs to be noted that although the nineteenth and twentieth centuries put forward a single modernisation paradigm, the phenomenon of modernity is currently interpreted in the context of the variety of changes taking place see Tomasz Kizwalter, "Modernizacja z polskiej perspektywy: wiek XIX," *Drogi do nowoczesności. Idea modernizacji w polskiej myśli politycznej*, ed. Jacek Kłoczkowski and Michał Szuldrzyński, (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2006), 48;

When *Rola* began to be published the political stage in the Kingdom of Poland seemed relatively ordered. The division ran between the liberal-positivists²² and conservatists. With time, however, new trends started to gain momentum with socialism and nationalism at the forefront. At the turn of the century there was an increasingly important rift between the independence and conciliatory movements.²³ In the early eighties of the nineteenth century, however, the liberalism-conservatism dichotomy seemed to be entrenched in society. Both sides published magazines presenting their arguments shaped in the course of the previous decade. Discussions taking place between those two camps were limited to the rather strict circle of the sociocultural elites and, therefore, did not usually go beyond a certain generally acceptable norm. Jan Jeleński was familiar with the topic of this debate, as he aspired to be admitted into the positivist movement in the 1870s himself.

The person of the future founder of *Rola* deserves further investigation for two reasons. Firstly, he was an important factor in the establishment of the weekly and the ideas proliferated on its pages. On the other hand, Jeleński's life was parallel to that of many other members of the 1840s generation descending from impecunious noble families. Those people devoid of perspectives for economical prosperity which would allow them to stay in the countryside were forced to relocate to the cities (particularly to Warsaw and Łódź) and seek employment to work for a living.²⁴ Jeleński was one of those particularly experienced by life. The lack of financial means made it impossible for him to get educated beyond a very basic level and he had to resort to self-education.²⁵

Marek Pąckiński, *Konserwatyzm na rozdrożu. „Młodzie konserwatyści” warszawscy wobec ideowych dylematów schyłku XIX wieku*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1994), 6.

22 On the specificity of Polish positivist ideology, as a philosophy, ideology and worldview, and as a literary tendency, see Janusz Maciejewski, “Miejsce pozytywizmu polskiego w XIX wiecznej formacji kulturowej,” *Pozytywizm. Język epoki*, eds. Grażyna Borkowska and Janusz Maciejewski, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2001), 23.

23 See Andrzej Szwarc, *Od Wielopolskiego do Stronnictwa Polityki Realnej. Zwolennicy ugody z Rosją, ich poglądy i próby działalności politycznej (1864-1905)*, (Warszawa: Warszawska Oficyna Wydawnicza “Gryf,” 1996), 260-.

24 A similar route was taken by a *Rola* collaborator Klemens Junosza-Szaniawski in his youth. The liberal journalist Aleksander Świętochowski referenced these experiences in a review to one of his novels: “Among contemporary Polish authors discussing the deadly influence and destructive activities of Jews the most eminent position was undoubtedly assumed by Klemens Junosza. He achieved this notable position due to his remarkable storytelling ability and exceptional knowledge of life.” Poseł Prawdy, “Liberum veto,” *Prawda* 39 (1893), 463. For more information regarding Szaniawski's writing, see Anna Ochwat, “Bolesław Prus i Klemens Junosza-Szaniawski,” *Bolesław Prus. Pisarz. Publicysta. Myśliciel*, eds. Maria Woźniakiewicz-Dziadosz and Stanisław Fita, (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2003), 261-275; Anna Wereszczyńska, “Niezrównany monografista Żydów. Krytyka o Klemensie Junoszy-Szaniawskim,” *Zeszyty Naukowe WSH*, vol. XVII (2005): 67-92.

25 In a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski Jeleński wrote: “In my first youth I was taught to read and write only. I learned on my own after that [...]”. Korespondencja J. I. Kraszewskiego, Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (B. Jag. 6508/IV, vol. 45, 1863-1887), 143.

In the following years commentators frequently referred to his these inadequacies.²⁶ The desire to compensate for this long accumulated frustration, and his conviction that he was constantly the subject of attacks from adversaries²⁷ was clearly visible in Jeleński's prose later. Having relocated to Warsaw and acquired the position of a telegraphist, the future founder of *Rola* focused on furthering his education. At the same time he witnessed the birth of the positivist movement in the Kingdom of Poland. Jeleński was not indifferent to both the notion of 'organic work' formulated by the young generation of positivists and the cult of science among them. By the early 1870s he managed to publish some articles in journals appreciating the new progressive ideology. He was interested particularly in the topic of economy and self-education. When writing on the latter topic he drew generously from the ideas of Józef Supiński, one of the canonical authors of that generation.²⁸ First and foremost, Jeleński was fascinated by the Polish translation of the work of Samuel Smiles, a Scottish author whose book entitled "Self-help"²⁹ was instrumental in shaping the worldview of the future founder of *Rola*. In a 1873 brochure Jeleński referred to his own difficulties with acquiring knowledge and stigmatized anyone who wasted the gift of education in any way.³⁰ This pertained particularly to well-educated persons who did not use their knowledge to benefit society. The author saw them as 'social parasites.' In contrast to them there were the so called "productive society members" that is persons who "ought to search for help and support for their goals only in their own ability, consistent work, steel undefeated will; they need to believe in themselves and rely mainly upon themselves."³¹

26 Antoni Zaleski, whom I quoted earlier, referenced "Jeleński, despite his pretences is not familiar with the issues of economy, nor seemingly does he know one foreign language." Baronowa XYZ, "Towarzystwo," 147. Roman Dmowski, the leader of national democrats said that he appreciated the editor of 'Rola' managed to appropriately identify the "vivid hatred towards the Jews" present in Polish society. On the other hand, however, he did not hold the crudeness of methods in high esteem, see: Grzegorz Krzywiec, *Szowinizm po polsku. Przypadek Romana Dmowskiego (1886-1905)*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2009), 236.

27 Marian Pachucki, who collaborated with *Rola* in the years before its dawn, referenced the obsessions that Jeleński accumulated over the years: "In the home of Szczepan Jeleński I have seen a painting of his father defending himself from progressive writers attacking him with quills held in their hands [...]. Marian Pachucki, "Wspominki 1888-1919," Biblioteka Ossolineum (Rps Ossol. 14054/I), 32.

28 Krzysztof Biliński, "Szkoła polska gospodarstwa społecznego Józefa Supińskiego i jej recepcja w pozytywizmie," *Książka pokolenia. W kręgu lektur polskich doby postyczniowej*, eds. Ewa Paczoska and Jolanta Sztachelska, (Białystok: "Łuk," 1994), 65-77.

29 Jolanta Sztachelska, "Czytanie Smilesa," *Książka pokolenia: w kręgu lektur polskich doby postyczniowej*, eds. Ewa Paczoska; Jolanta Sztachelska, (Białystok: Wydawn. ŁUK, 1994), 78-91; see Bartłomiej Szleszyński, Kto napisał *Pomoc własną* Samuela Smilesa?, *Etyka i literatura. Pisarze polscy lat 1863-1918 w poszukiwaniu wzorców życia i sztuki*, eds. Ewa Ihnatowicz and Ewa Paczoska, (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2006), 453-460.

30 Jan Jeleński, *O samopomocy w kształceniu się*, (Warszawa, 1873).

31 Ibid., 12.

In his works published in the middle of the seventies, Jeleński focused primarily on two issues: economy, with special attention to economic self-organisation of society,³² and the Jews. Under an obvious influence of positivist thought, the future publisher of *Rola* formulated plans to ‘reform’ those who believed in Judaism by delegating them to work in the farming industry and preparing an education system for the unenlightened masses. Both Christians and ‘civilized’ Jews were to be involved in the implementation of the latter part of the plan.³³ Jeleński also indicated the crucial importance of Jews for the economical development of the Kingdom.³⁴ His views fit into the emancipation movement developing in the area of Poland from the end of the 18th century. Its most important tenets included the “re-stratification” and “productivisation” of the Jewish population. Yet the paternalistic and positivistic tone to Jeleński’s preachings was significantly ambivalent from the very beginning. Although he was able to identify the primary ‘sin’ of the Christian population in the country - namely the lack of solidarity that hindered economical development - it was easier for the soon-to-be editor of *Rola* to resort to pinpointing Jewish usurers as the cause. The existence of a “speculation network” was considered by the author a threat, that “systematically sucked out vital strength” out of society. In one of the articles he writes:

“As [...] any moderately prominent provincial Rotschild keeps the local nobility in his pocket, similarly any small-time usurer and shop-keeper holds the everyday existence of a number of manufacturers and factory workers tight in his exploiting fist.”³⁵

Jeleński’s views began to crystallize soon afterwards. The journalist described the economical relations in one of the provincial cities in Congress Poland as “German industry, Jewish trade.”³⁶ “We want to step over from economic powerlessness to relative power” he wrote, and identified those factors that hinders the implementation of this message. To Jeleński, one of the key obstacles was the attitude represented by Jews, particularly Chasidic Jews, this “malignant tumor, which also today spreads over the body of our Israeli peoples.”³⁷ The author failed to recognize multiple internal differences characteristic to the group harboring the strongest religious beliefs. In his work he treated this community as a homogenous mass. Jeleński did not reject

32 Jan Jeleński, *Najpilniejsze ekonomiczne potrzeby kraju*, (Warszawa, 1875).

33 Jan Jeleński, *O skierowaniu żydów ku pracy w rolnictwie*, (Warszawa, 1873).

34 See especially the brochure entitled: *Żydzi nasi wobec handlu i przemysłu*, (Warszawa, 1875), see Michał Śliwa, *Obcy czy swoi. Z dziejów poglądów na kwestię żydowską w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1997), 8.

35 Jan Jeleński, “Które ze stowarzyszeń ekonomicznych najlepiej odpowiadać mogą społeczeństwu naszemu?,” *Wiek*, n. 147, December 7/29, 1873, 3.

36 Jan Jeleński, *Kalisz i jego okolica*, (Warszawa, 1875), 5.

37 Ibid., 17.

positivist rhetoric. His calls for action, “civilizing” the “unenlightened fanatics” were delivered in a contemptuous manner. Referring to the “Jewish intelligentsia,” or the integrated part of the Jewish community, he underscored its positive social impact, but also criticized the group for insufficient devotion to the cause of unenlightened masses.³⁸ Writing these words Jeleński must have believed them to an extent. The brochure, which he published as a compilation of his socio-political views regarding the situation of the country, can be taken as proof.³⁹ In it, the author reviews his opinion on the programme for the “civilizing” of Jews which he expressed up to that point. He concedes: “[...]to a large extent these reforms do not depend on the society itself. Society does not have the proper means to conduct them [...]”⁴⁰ Describing the state of economy in the Kingdom of Poland Jeleński added that “from our position today we can be delivered mainly by trade and industry, thus we would advise to take those sources of prosperity in our own hands, no less because their functioning can be adjusted to serve a greater good.”⁴¹ The notion of the exhaustion of existing socio-political measures, and the necessity to have the three vital sectors of the economy: trade, industry and commerce controlled by Poles from that moment onwards became for him a “confession of faith.” Jeleński’s specific perception of social progress, increasingly dissimilar to the positivist programme, could *de facto* already be seen. Only a comprehensive presentation of his views on the Jews, however, showed his convictions in a different light. He divided the Jewish community into three groups: plutocracy, intelligentsia and uneducated masses, and reflected:

“At the top there is social indifference striving to conquer the area of economical matters and needs; at the bottom there are backward ignorants living in isolation, to a large extent at the expense of the working classes; in the middle a growing handful of intelligentsia who, considering its beneficial activity fueled by the same spirit as the Christian community, is a healthy part of the middle classes.”⁴²

And so the activities of rich Jewish financiers, and the businesses of small-town Jewish merchants were, according to the journalist, a form of business activity hostile to the interest of the Christian population. One reason was identified as “their desire to conquer and rule single-handedly matters of utmost importance to the country,” another was the “exploitation of working classes,” particularly in rural areas.⁴³ Jeleński acknowledged the existence of a group of culturally assimilated Jews, admittedly an empty gesture. He assigned

38 Ibid.

39 Jan Jeleński, *Żydzi, Niemcy i my*, (Warszawa, 1876).

40 Ibid., 54.

41 Ibid., 4.

42 Ibid., 26.

43 Ibid., 17, 22.

a role to them in the framework of his “welfare and safety” programme for Jews. “To look after and deal with the education of unenlightened masses in cooperation with the class of progressive Jews, while remembering to secure their own economic wellbeing”⁴⁴ was, in Jeleński’s eyes, the task that stood before the Christian community. Yet the first part of this postulate was illusory from the very beginning. It was the members of Jewish intelligentsia who, in the mind of the journalist, had to take the initiative in this respect. Thus it had to assert its right to be regarded as a socially beneficial group. It was at the same time a type of ethical blackmail and Jeleński’s attempt to find out how far can he go in formulating demands towards the integrated Jews. In case of Jeleński, the statement on “securing their own economic wellbeing” sounded much more sincere. He described it as a kind of “small policy” which, in contrast to “the big policy”, which proved to be ineffective. This headline subsumed what Jeleński mentioned before, namely the activation of the Christian population in the spirit of solidarity to participate in the economic life of the country, which he also understood as a call for them to counter the negative Jewish influences.⁴⁵ One should mention briefly that although Jeleński’s attention focused at that time on the “Jewish element,” part of his programme was devoted to fighting the influence of “germanisation” in the Kingdom of Poland. The most interesting issue seems to be the difference in the assessment of both threats. If, according to him, the Jews constituted a threat, regarding the monopolisation of trade and seizure of “the source of national wealth,” the Germans were dangerous primarily due to their buying land.⁴⁶ “The struggle for land” has grown over time to become the basic theme in the programme authored by the future publisher of *Rola*.

In publications issued in the late seventies of the nineteenth century Jeleński replied to the many critical opinions, which have been appearing in the press of the Congress Kingdom since the formulation “little policy.” His reaction was very emotional, and showed a clear evolution in the objections he raised against the Jews. The columnist accused Jewish financiers of establishing, with help from the press network of economically and morally dependent applauders (“the courtiers of the Jews”).⁴⁷ Jews were, therefore, a threat reaching much farther than the economy *per se* but also encompassing the matters of widely understood civilization. Indeed, according to Jeleński, they had sufficient force at their disposal to distort reality, using their influence to manipulate public opinion. As the publicist stated: “the tactics of such bodies

44 Ibid., 61.

45 Ibid., 61-73. In this brochure the author for the first time quotes Jakub Brafman, the author of “Kniga Kahala” - a book that inspired a 19th century antisemitic movement in Europe. For more on this topic see Anke Hilbrenner, “Jakob Brafman,” *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, vol. 2, (Berlin: De Gruyter Verlag, 2009), 97-98.

46 Ibid., 42-51.

47 Jan Jeleński, *Dworacy Żydów*, (Warszawa, 1878).

are cleverly disguised, and one needs to have intimate knowledge of these newly formed relations in journalism to be able to assess what is behind them.”⁴⁸ The need to expose enemies favorable to Jews and hidden in the ranks of both culturally assimilated and integrated Jews and Christians, as well as the belief in a Jewish conspiracy carried out through the press, made Jeleński’s views comparable to the modern antisemitic worldview. However, the journalist opposed the opinion of those of his critics who called him a “Jew-eater” [*żydożer*] (the notion of an “antisemite” was to appear a year later in Germany). The future editor of *Rola* insisted that his “little policy” bore no relation to “Jew-eating.”⁴⁹ He considered his economic arguments completely legitimate and did not identify them with encouraging physical violence against Jews which, in his opinion, were parts of the “Jew-eater” discourse. Additionally, it needs to be mentioned that such views, equalling antisemitism with direct violence and refusing to consider other (ex. economical) forms of hostility towards the Jewish population as antisemitic are present in Polish society to this day. Jeleński’s statement clearly showed that expressions of negative attitudes toward Jews which used to constitute a part of public discourse were not suitable for inclusion in his “little policy.” As it turned out, a new word was introduced soon after that. As it was regarded as a scientific term it allowed Jeleński to solve his dilemma.

Coming back to *Rola* itself, it should be noted that in the early eighties of the nineteenth century Jeleński increasingly argued that it was necessary to introduce new quality into what was considered “ensuring one’s economic wellbeing.” In 1881 he wrote about the need for “great unanimity and organized action throughout the country.”⁵⁰ Jeleński himself did not intend to remain inactive on this issue. The following year he purchased a relatively unpopular periodical, “*Tygodnik Rolniczy*” (“Agriculture Weekly”) and changed its name to *Rola*.⁵¹ From that moment he controlled a publishing entity, which he considered necessary to attain his goals.

At the beginning of 1883, when Jeleński formulated his political program, he could not fail to address the ideological debate between the liberal-positivists and conservatives that transpired in the Kingdom of Poland. Articles in the first annual of *Rola* and described by the editors as programmatic and “pedagogical,”⁵² served to proliferate a new vision of reality. Editors attached great importance to ensuring that the articles were written in a scientific manner.⁵³ It was through those articles that readers were able to familiarise

48 Ibid., 7.

49 Ibid., 10.

50 *Wiek*, n. 234, October 7/19, 1881, 2.

51 Edmund Rabowicz, “Jan Jeleński,” *PSB*, vol. 11, 142.

52 *Ćwierćwiecze walki*, 106.

53 Teodor Jeske-Choiński, while staying in the capital of Austria-Hungary wrote in one of his letters: “Here in Vienna work is abundant; I am collecting material for new works in literary history that are unattainable in Warsaw. I am planning to conduct the main attack on liberals,

themselves with the ideological message of *Rola* and with the objectives it set for itself and its followers. In their programmatic manifesto the editors wrote:

“Using the help and influence of our publishing entity we intend to establish a force of opposition, reaching to the widest possible social circles; an alliance undertaking a persistent legal battle in the domain of economy. [...] We have often heard the argument that there needs to be a unified, extensive alliance and we agree with this idea in principle. We cannot omit that, should the vast plain of economical development be overtaken by foreign powers with no relation to the common good, inevitably the ‘one great alliance’ will be driven away from its ideals, rather than toward them. There is a tribe who harvest general failure; who find helplessness and certain weakness of character in society to be a guarantee of success for their classist aspirations. We do not know if anyone else has observed that the impact of this tribe, as powerful and extensive as we see it today, generally dates back to the time when the public was forced to immediately adapt to new working conditions and to work for a living; in addition, emancipation provided the tribe with a double set of rights - general and those of the class.”⁵⁴

The programme formulated in *Rola* has two basic aspects: positive and negative. The call for the creation of a broad social movement should, without doubt, be considered the main positive element. The belief that existing forms of political activity were completely exhausted and did not provide answers to current conditions served as a starting point for this motion. As an idea, the creation of a “single great alliance” stemmed from the necessity, as *Rola* proclaimed, to gather the widest possible social circle around a common goal. That goal was a “calm, legal and systematic defense.” Characteristically, this defense would take the form of a “struggle.” The aim was to secure the threatened “basis of economic wellbeing” of society.⁵⁵ Naturalistic themes, visible in Jeleński’s writing before, in his subsequent articles to the periodical were supplemented with views containing elements of biological determinism:

“*Rola* knows that the eradication of a ‘caste, class, ethnicity,’ etc. is simply a utopia, invented by the bourgeoisie, for whom this ‘fiction’ was necessary so as to discredit the nobility; in the hands of financiers this “fiction” became one sided having reached the purpose for which it was created. *Rola* [...] recognizes the right of inheritance, and, therefore, believes in real differences between castes, classes and ethnicities, for example, that a Jew is the

Jews and positivists but I require scientific facts for this purpose.” Korespondencja redakcyjna Walerego Przyborowskiego, Biblioteka Ossolineum (Rps Ossol. 13602/I), 156.

54 Redakcja, “Czego chcemy? (I),” *Rola* 1 (1883): 1.

55 Ibid., 2.

product of his past, and that for a long time he will remain what he has been for ages.”⁵⁶

and social Darwinism:

“Principles governing the animal kingdom have been present in human society for a long time, from the moment we discovered the need to eat, drink, sleep. [...] Such is also the age of the so called struggle for survival. Personal interest has governed human activities, and will continue to do so indefinitely.”⁵⁷

This clearly stated plan of political mobilization at the macro level was accompanied by a concrete program for socio-economic activation of these groups, which, according to *Rola*, were particularly vulnerable to the threat of “foreign and degenerative elements.” In the three decades during which *Rola* was published the notion of “little policy” formulated earlier by Jeleński evolved into concrete demands. Although they were directed to different groups of society, attempts were made to unify the messages by a number of common features. The majority of attention, particularly in the years when *Rola* was a relatively young periodical, was devoted to those of the social strata, whose life was in some way related to soil cultivation. According to *Rola* land ownership constituted the basis of social existence - its collective “I.”⁵⁸ Therefore, *Rola* primarily addressed its programme to the landowners of Congress Poland. Their main task was the struggle to maintain possession of real estate. The periodical, however, refrained from granting its unconditional approval to this social group. On the one hand, landowners were given validation as the “proper people” and “the main source of national wealth.”⁵⁹ On the other hand, the magazine did not hesitate to publicly condemn those of the landowners who “recklessly disposed of the land of their fathers” and thus “shattered the basis for the welfare of society.”⁶⁰ Looking for ways to acquaint landowners with the principles of “practical economics”, the weekly promoted, among other ideas, the establishment of landowner farming partnerships and credit societies. This would also serve a more universal purpose, namely the reviving in the descendants of noble family a old noble morality and a sense of solidarity against danger from ideological foes.⁶¹

56 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 4 (1883): 9.

57 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 14 (1883): 9.

58 Redakcja, “Czego chcemy? (II),” *Rola* 2 (1883): 1.

59 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 13 (1883): 8.

60 Redakcja, “Czego chcemy? (II),” *Rola* 2 (1883): 1; J.J., “Jeszcze Zakłęcie,” *Rola* 15 (1883): 2.

61 Hreczkosiej, “Hreczkosiej do magnatów (I-IV),” *Rola* 26-29 (1885). Chociński wrote in a letter: “We desperately need to defeat the Jews as otherwise we will become ultimately disgusting; we desperately need to return our youth to the ideals of Polish knighthood and shape their characters - or we will decay. (...) Warsaw needs a knighthood society that will raise brave hearts and eradicate the Jewish and urban-utilitarian influences. Korespondencja redakcyjna Walerego Przyborskiego, Biblioteka Ossolineum (Rps Ossol. 13602/I), 156-157.

In a similar vein *Rola* communicated with the peasant population. It encouraged villagers to form co-operatives, shops and companies providing cheap mutual loans.⁶² The weekly expressed a paternalistic attitude to the peasant classes. One of the ways this manifested itself was the expectation that landowners had a duty to protect the people. With time the “little policy” programme became filled with messages intended for the urban population of the Kingdom of Poland. Particularly during the revolution in the years 1905-1907 and after its dawn *Rola* provided information regarding threats to the urban population. The periodical supported activities related to the promotion of domestic trade, industry and manufacture.⁶³

If one tried to subsume the entire positive program of *Rola* with a single word, it would have to be the notion of “organic” development of a “spirit of solidarity” in society, abundantly present in Jeleński’s former writing. For this purpose the journal intended to mobilize what was called the contemporary “silent majority.”⁶⁴ This group, for various reasons uninvolved in the dispute between liberals and conservatives in Congress Poland, was controlled by minor gentry and provincial clergy. The first step in the implementation of social “self-help” was to be taken by “rolarze”, the dedicated readers of *Rola* mentioned earlier in this article. The ultimate guarantor of success was, however, what became a recognizable feature of the program advocated in *Rola*: an unconditional alliance between all layers of society and the Catholic Church. Indeed in the magazine Catholicism had been represented as the greater good, permeating all levels of human activity. The most apparent manifestation of this idea was the constant emphasis that *Rola* put on the reconstruction of Catholic morality in society; and the assertion that the clergy plays a crucial part in the struggle against “foreign powers.” Jeleński wrote:

“My society, fooled by Judah and his legion of servants, contains a unique circle of people who, according to their strengths and possibilities, are working to save and elevate the very base of social existence: morality. That circle of people is our clergy. Only they, struggling for the greatest good for mankind against the wave of modern paganism, can protect us from complete downfall and jewification. I owe my respect to this class for two reasons: first as a Catholic, second as a small part of my community which I would

62 Jan Jeleński, “Praktyczne cele (I-VII),” *Rola* 40-49 (1884); “Sklepy polskie (Wskazówki praktyczne),” *Rola* 37 (1888): 434-436.

63 Jan Jeleński, “W sprawie rzemiosł (I-II),” *Rola* 35-36 (1884); “Co zabija rzemiosła?,” *Rola* 6 (1885): 1-2; “Protesta rzemieślników (w sprawie przyjmowania Żydów do zgromadzeń),” *Rola* 15 (1885): 1-2; 1905-6.

64 Andrzej Jaszcuk, *Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski 1870-1903* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 208.

like to see delivered from sinking in judaism and the waste of demoralisation.”⁶⁵

For the purpose of analyzing the negative programme of *Rola* one needs to identify “the enemy” whose eradication was pursued by the magazine and its readers with such great determination. This enemy was, according to the “little policy” formulated by Jeleński, the Jewish population residing in the Kingdom of Poland. Jews were, according to the weekly, almost the sole source of misfortune falling on the Christian part of the population of the country. There were, indeed, especially in the early days of the magazine, frequent calls to defend the country against the deadly threat posed by the Germans. With time, however, the “Germanist threat” for the supporters of *Rola* descended into the background. If it appeared in an article, it was usually in the context of an alleged permanent alliance between “Germanism” and “Semitism.” That was the case in 1902 when Warsaw press called for a boycott of “German produce” due to attempts at germanisation going on in the Prussian partition. *Rola* considered the boycott to be insufficient unless it was followed by a boycott of goods of Jewish origin.⁶⁶ In a similar vein the weekly called for dismantling the German-Jewish cooperation during the 1905-1907 revolution.⁶⁷

The term “alliance” used in a context similar to that mentioned above, was another keyword appearing *Rola*. It represented the essence of a belief prevalent among “rolarze”, namely that Jews did not constitute a threat solely due to them being Jewish, but also because they acted in cooperation with the ideological enemies of the periodical in a more or less transparent manner - including those enemies which were initially considered “non-Jewish.” It was Jews who were supposedly behind the materialistic and nondenominational liberalism hated by the journal. As a result, attacks carried out in *Rola* against its main political opponents - the Warsaw positivists - were also attacks against their alleged jewification. The magazine sought to identify the origin of the threat as “culturally assimilated Poles of semitic faith.” Most of the articles published in *Rola* were filled with hostility towards those representatives of the Jewish community who were also the most integrated with the ethnically Polish population of the Congress Kingdom. Paradoxically, among the supporters of *Rola* orthodox Jews were considered less of a threat than their “civilized” compatriots. This was made clear from the very beginning:

“Repugnant to us, the so-called “civilized” Jew does not believe in anything but gold and corporal pleasure; we abhor this liberal platitudinarian who spews humanitarian ideas when he thinks it

65 Jan Jeleński, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 32 (1899): 526.; see Jan Jeleński, “Z księdzem polskim – polski lud!,” *Rola* 48 (1905): 729-731.

66 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 17 (1902): 261-262.

67 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 9 (1905): 122-123; Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 14 (1905): 201-202.

favorable; we loathe any man who is plain, indifferent, living the existence of a hunting animal. You are a Jew, be one! Dearer to us is an unenlightened orthodox Jew than a civilized zero, as the former believes in something, is something, and the latter gives no guarantees. To make a profit he will sell anything, scam anyone, for he is a proponent of absolute, vile utilitarianism.”⁶⁸

This was a declaration drastically dissimilar in relation to what Jeleński preached in the early years of his journalistic endeavors. To reject the allegations appearing in the Warsaw press, *Rola* proclaimed the admissibility of assimilation for some individuals of Jewish descent, provided they were deemed suitable. This was connected with accepting their conversion to Catholicism.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, these statements were superficial as exemplified by countless articles in *Rola* in which the “neophytes” became objects of vulgar attacks.⁷⁰ *Rola* focused its attention on the threats from the “nondenominational,” “civilized” Jews and the growing number of their servile “courtiers.” This was a symptom of a broader trend, which, with greater or lesser intensity, affected the press in the Kingdom of Poland in the early eighties of the nineteenth century. At that point in time an “assimilation breakthrough” of sorts can be identified within the discourse of conservative communities. As a result, an emerging program convergence began to visibly attract *Rola* to this part of political stage in Congress Poland.⁷¹

That fact, however, did not prevent the magazine from accusing the Congress conservatives of jewification, and succumbing to the influence of the insidious Jewish plutocracy. *Rola* bemoaned the fact that “there are impostors, Pharisees, hypocrites pretending to act under the banner of conservatism,”⁷² Their publications “sponsored by Jewish merchants” were described as the “organs of the bourgeoisie,” “masked liberals, who profess utilitarianism.”⁷³ No wonder that most of the conservative press was in conflict with Jeleński’s weekly. He was accused of slander and sowing confusion in his own ranks.⁷⁴ It was questioned whether his “hateful anti-Semitic rhetoric always written in the

68 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 19 (1883): 9.

69 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 21 (1886): 246-247.

70 Alina Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864-1897). Postawy. Konflikty. Stereotypy*, (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989), 288.

71 Grzegorz Krzywiec, “Gangrena, czyli kto nam dusze zeszpecił. Obraz Żydów w prasie ziemiańskiej końca XIX wieku,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 1 (2002): 38.

72 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 11 (1883): 7.

73 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 25 (1883): 8.

74 Mściśław Godlewski, a conservative journalist and colleague of Jeleński’s in the seventies wrote him in a rather suggestive manner: “Had I not known you better than perhaps you know yourself I would come to the conclusion that you have fought Jews for such a long time that you have now adopted their tactics, intending to defeat them with their own main weapon: lies and slander.” *Papiery Mściśława Godlewskiego*, Biblioteka Ossolineum (Rps Ossol. 12448/II), 175.

same manner”⁷⁵ conformed to the relevant principles of conservatism. Jeleński’s opinion regarding his conservative critics can be subsumed by one of his (milder) responses:

“Unfortunately, the repeated taunts and assaults convinced me that your pride is without boundaries. You seem to think that on the conservative side of the press there should not exist any voice other than your own, and this is your cardinal mistake which, I would venture to add, public servants ought not commit.”⁷⁶

In later years, the socialist movement became the leading political enemy for *Rola*. The magazine saw it as a body manipulated by the cosmopolitan Jewish International leading to “revolutionary turmoil” destructive for the ethical and economical prosperity of the country. The stereotype of the socialist Jew, an enemy of the Polish nation,⁷⁷ was a compilation of all the previous allegations that the magazine directed against members of the Jewish population in the Kingdom of Poland. With time, there was a visible increase in the frequency with which elements of conspiracy theories were published in *Rola*. The initially local stereotypical portrayal of a network of Jewish “moneylender-spiders” preying on defenseless Christian “flies”⁷⁸ was extended to the international level. Jews, according to the magazine, not only controlled the global financial policy, but also successfully instigated wars, according to their “the more Christian blood pours down, the more gold flows into Jewish pockets” rule.⁷⁹ This dichotomous vision of the world threatened by both the Capitalist Jew and the Socialist Jew was characteristic for modern antisemitism.

The domain in which Jewish conspiracies were most successful in exerting their influence was, according to *Rola*, the global and local press market. Willingness to be corrupted by the Jews was supposedly the main feature of the press in the Kingdom of Poland. “One part of the press is simply afraid of Hebrew power, the other is held in its grasp” - as Jeleński quoted John Retchiff’s belief that newspapers serve the Jews as a tool for social incapacitation and imposition of their ideological views alien to the affected nation.⁸⁰ A prime example of this was supposed to be the press in Berlin and Vienna, repeatedly discussed in the magazine.⁸¹ As an element of the ongoing

75 Choraży, “Sprawy bieżące,” *Niwa* 309 (1887): 781.

76 Papiery Mściława Godlewskiego, Biblioteka Ossolineum (Rps Ossol. 12448/II), 172.

77 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 52 (1905): 797-798.

78 This theme was particularly visible in the novels of Antoni Skrzynecki published in *Rola*, see Domagalska, *Zabawa w chowanego*, 309-318.

79 J. J., “Wojny i żydzi,” *Rola* 11 (1904): 163.

80 J. J., “Ważna chwila,” *Rola* 10 (1883): s. 2; Jan Jeleński, “Żydzi w Prasie Warszawskiej (I),” *Rola* 9 (1883): 1.

81 For instance in a series of Jeleński’s articles: “Żydzi w Prasie Warszawskiej (I-VIII),” *Rola* 39-46 (1883); Dr. M. P., “Judaica (Dziennikarstwo wiedeńskie),” *Rola* 42-43 (1885).

struggle *Rola* took it upon itself to expose Jewish journalists and newspaper owners, whom it later accused of “speculation and press trade.” In fact, it is difficult to find an area of life in which the editors of *Rola* failed to search for pernicious Semitic influences. All forms of social activity were supposedly under Jewish threat, from socializing and cultural activities where they spread “faithlessness” and cynicism, to economic relations, which were seen as room for usury and exploitation ruinous for Christian society. The sense of constant danger present in the magazine was related to the conviction harbored by “rolarze” that the socio-economic transformation, was causing degeneration and collapse of existing values. Ludomir Prószyński put it suggestively in one of his letters to the Croatian bishop Josip J. Strossmayer:

“Sad beyond words and utterly depressing for the mind of a thinking man is the current state of the Christian world, constrained by networks of Jews and French Freemasonry, twisting in convulsions caused by the poisoned narcotic potion of modern free thinking, fed to the people by their own luminaries, worshipping the Jewish golden calf, and obeying the orders of the progressive camp leaders. This terrible decay in Christian states seemingly leads to a horrific disasters, disasters the world has never seen before - because if nations and tribes often attacked one another and shed blood to achieve certain goals, yet there used to be many inextricable knots binding together individual members of these masses, who thought of one another as brothers, and considered each other untouchable. Today, when modern free thinking holds emblems of brotherhood, national, tribal or religious in disregard; thinking they are superstitions, what will become of the cosmopolitan and faithless humanity, completely savage and obeying only the universal prerogative of survival, when the masses are overcome by the ferocious rage of an animal?”⁸²

The pessimism that emerges from these words in relation to the phenomena of modernity, and the accusations directed against the alleged perpetrators, responsible for the decay of existing – Christian – ethical principles, often appeared in the statements of representatives of the conservative in the Kingdom of Poland.⁸³ Their arguments were both universal in nature and interconnected with a mix of fear and resentment, which stemmed from their experience of local relations. Nevertheless, most conservatives found it difficult to completely dissociate from the modernizing influence brought by Western tendencies regarding culture and civilisation. An alternative, in this case, was provided by Russia. Although some were already pointing in this

82 Arhiv Hrvatske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti [AHAZU], XI-A., no page numbering.

83 Pąckiński, *Konserwatyzm*, 18.

direction they constituted a minority, as the political situation under the partitions was conducive to accusations of treason.⁸⁴ If, therefore, it was practically impossible to reject everything that the changes brought with them, there was still the possibility of disassociating oneself from their least acceptable results. It was not by accident that the group which evoked the strongest “anti-modernist sentiments” was “modern Jewry.” This group was the most easily recognizable symbol of foreign values, standing in opposition to the traditional model of life. It became a metaphor of modernity with all its disastrous consequences.

“Rolarze” were convinced about the crisis of modernity and inevitable fall of the “materialistic world.” Their conviction was, however, accompanied by a belief in imminent moral rebirth. Prószyński wrote on this topic:

“While my spirit is low and I feel terribly depressed, as a man, a Slav, and as a Pole, I nevertheless predict that the reign of the evil upon us is nearing its end, and that a moment is approaching when the all-powerful reaction will change everything for good, in the sense of truth, justice and charity guided by wisdom which we do not yet have. It will send a general message to the Slavs, a word of brotherhood and equality and then everything around us will change beyond recognition, and we will become what we should have been, and the rest of the Christian nations will follow our example and be reborn.”⁸⁵

Therefore, all symptoms of progressing downfall, caused by the modern “evil” were subject to the governing principle of action and reaction. After an era of “degeneration” there needed to be an era of “rebirth.” This evolutionary perception of reality was in a way a positivist inheritance for the supporters of *Rola*. Teodor Jeske-Choiński provided the most elaborate description of this process of development, from “an era of decline” to the “era of morality.” The only source of regeneration that was able to stop the disintegration of the modern world was, in his opinion, the Catholic religion.⁸⁶

The magazine identified assimilation as one of major threats. “Rolarze” thought it was an illusory process used only for the purpose of Jewish infiltration into society. Therefore the programme statement of the periodical

84 Magdalena Micińska, *Zdrada córka nocy. Pojęcie zdrady narodowej w świadomości Polaków w latach 1861-1914* (Warszawa: Wydawn. Sic!, 1998), 73-118.

85 AHAZU, XI-A.

86 For more information on Choiński's ideas see: Zofia Mocarska-Tycowa, *Działalność krytyczno-literacka Teodora Jeske-Choińskiego wobec przełomu antypozytywistycznego*, (Warszawa-Poznań-Toruń: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1975); Maria J. Olszewska, “Teodora Jeske-Choińskiego koncepcja idealnego państwa,” *Etyka i literatura. Pisarze polscy lat 1863-1918 w poszukiwaniu wzorców życia i sztuki*, ed. Ewa Ihnatowicz and Ewa Paczoska, (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2006), 199-213.

explicitly called for the activation of the Christian population in order to prevent it. The notions of “crowding out” and isolation of Jews were central elements of the programme. At first, they referred mainly to the economic life of the country, which was supposed to be freed of “foreign slavery.” In order to limit mutual contacts *Rola* demanded that the Christian part of society systematically boycott “Jewish fraudulent trade.”⁸⁷ The expulsion of foreign influences applied also to other sectors of the economy, which, in the opinion of *Rola*, required “systematic severing of all relations with the element morally and financially detrimental for our social organism.”⁸⁸ With time the call to fence off from the Jews with the “great wall of China” has been extended to the sphere of social life and social activities. The weekly saw common Christian-Jewish schools, Jews imbued with “Talmudic ethics” were allegedly spreading demoralization among the rest of the students, as a serious threat. Therefore, *Rola* engaged in a campaign aimed at reducing the number of Jewish youth in schools, in line with a similar policy implemented by the tsarist authorities.⁸⁹ “Rolarze” also stigmatized mixed marriages and the adoption of Polish-sounding names by the Jews.⁹⁰ Besides calls for isolation, from the very beginning the magazine called for the emigration of Jews from the Kingdom of Poland.⁹¹

The vision of society as a community in which there was no room for mutual Christian-Jewish relations painted by Jeleński and his collaborators was also popular in among other groups in Congress Poland, particularly those strongly drawn to the social program of the Catholic Church. At the end of the nineteenth century a Christian social self-defense program formulated by Marian Morawski, a Jesuit from Krakow, earned significant interest in certain social circles. The monk invented the concept of the so-called “a-Semitism” which, in theory, rejected antisemitism to become an effective strategy for countering Jewish solidarity with solidarity between Christians. The essence of this program was the demand to strictly isolate Jews from Christians, both professionally and in private life.⁹² Reprints of father Morawski’s publication published in the Kingdom of Poland contributed to the popularization of his views.⁹³ For “rolarze”, who fully supported his claims, it was yet another proof

87 “Z Końsko-Woli (Wzorowy czyn),” *Rola* 35 (1885): 1-2; “Najpewniejsza obrona,” *Rola* 43 (1885): 1-2. Even advertisements published in the magazine adhered to its programme: „Fully furnished store to let, only to a Christian Pole[...].” *Rola* 17 (1885): 206.

88 Jan Jeleński, “Straszne cyfry (VI),” *Rola* 39 (1887): 458.

89 “Judaica,” *Rola* 25 (1884): 297.

90 Jan Jeleński, “Polacy-Żydzi,” *Rola* 3 (1884): 25-26.

91 “Emigracja,” *Rola* 24 (1884): 1-2.

92 Krzysztof Lewalski, *Kościół chrześcijański w Królestwie Polskim wobec Żydów w latach 1855-1915* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002), 125-126.

93 Małgorzata Domagalska, “The Linguistic Image of the Jew in *Rola* and *Niwa* Weeklies at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century,” *Studia Judaica* 26 (2010): 316; Jaszczuk, “Spór pozytywistów,” 221-223.

of the correctness of their proclaimed policy of “self-defense against moral and material terrorism.”⁹⁴

A closer look at the program postulated in *Rola* raises the question of the place occupied by its group of collaborators and supporters on the political stage in the Kingdom of Poland. “Rolarze” themselves have tried to answer this question. A significant number of articles devoted to this subject was written by Jeske-Choiński, who was, along with Jeleński, probably the most well-known contributor to *Rola*. According to him, *Rola* provided an effective remedy to the problems of Polish conservatism. According to him it was a worldview that required significant remodeling and reformulation to be able to respond to current challenges more appropriately.⁹⁵ *Rola* as a rule tended to dissociate from the positivists, who, by definition, were imbued with “Jewish liberal” ideology. However, it also rejected the policies of “old” conservatives. On the one hand, *Rola* accused them of passivity, dullness and lack of interest in the affair of the country. On the other, that they let themselves be influenced by liberalism and prostrated before the Jewish “golden calf.” “Rolarze” have also tried to prove that it was their publication that legitimately represented the views of “true” “new age conservatism,” untainted by these flaws and based on anti-Semitism.⁹⁶ According to *Rola* its source should be sought in “the spirit of mankind.”⁹⁷ Although in late seventies Jeleński did not want to be associated with the term “Jew-eater” which he considered inappropriate, several years later he did not associate similar feelings with the term “antisemite.” Finally there was a concept not only lending credibility to his “little policy” but also broad enough to encompass a number of notions that were often contradictory. The reports from antisemitic congresses published in the journal proclaimed gladly that the fight against Jews was viewed as necessary not only by the European traditionalists, but also atheists and liberals hostile to religion.⁹⁸ Having realized that, *Rola* began to publish reprints and summaries of the works of leading members of the European antisemitic camp, whether their views in other areas (e.g., religion) were convergent to the views of “rolarze” or radically different.⁹⁹

The mere act of “rolarze” declaring themselves as representatives of “true” conservatism is not enough to conclude that this was actually the case. The

94 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 5 (1903): 69.

95 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 5 (1883): 8.

96 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 25 (1883): 8; Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 26 (1883): 8; “Uzasadnienie antysemityzmu (I-III),” *Rola* 15-17 (1884); “Antysemityzm jako wyraz czasu,” *Rola* 43 (1890): 713-714.

97 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 6 (1883): 7.

98 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 21 (1883): 7-8; R., “Judaica,” *Rola* 24 (1883): 5-6.

99 R., “Judaica (Dühring o żydach),” *Rola* 24-27 (1883); R. Judaica (Ks. Profesor Rohling i talmud), *Rola* 34 (1883): 4-5; “Francya żydyziła. Studium z historii współczesnej przez Edwarda Drumont,” *Rola* 21-52 (1886); Nemo, “Ahlwardt,” *Rola* 52 (1892): 885-886.

political programme of the journal did contain a number elements of a conservative worldview, such as defensiveness towards social and civilisation change, attaching special importance to landowners, who were thought to constitute the true “wealth” of the country, and a reverence towards the clergy. Nevertheless, along those ideas, the vision presented in *Rola* had visible traces of the liberal roots of its founders. Consequently, its programme contained ideas remarkably similar to the positivist notion of “organic work.” Despite some external similarities, the “rational development” policy endorsed in the magazine was a caricature of the original idea. Another idea adopted and distorted from the positivist discourse, in this case evolutionary theory, was the “struggle for survival,” a notion that appeared on its pages multiple times.¹⁰⁰ “Rolarze” accepted it as one of the fundamental principles governing natural phenomena, but also social relations. *Rola*, in its own words, was forced to accept this principle by cruel reality.¹⁰¹ This did not stop it from incorporating the notion of a “struggle for survival” into its own programme; an action that evoked a negative sentiment from a fraction of the clergy.¹⁰² According to *Rola*, this principle was supposed to govern social and economical life in Congress Poland, where the roles of David and Goliath were played by “rolarze” and the Jews. The journal indicated that Warsaw press constituted an important foothold in this battle. The “commemorative book” mentioned earlier in this article describes the three decades during which *Rola* was published as a series of attacks, and boycotts ending in the isolation of *Rola* by the majority of periodicals published in the capital of the Kingdom of Poland.

Another element of the political agenda of “rolarze” needs to be mentioned, one that may be considered paradoxical. Namely, that they often referred to the so called “democratic spirit”¹⁰³ which on the surface of things must have stood in opposition to the commitment to conservative ideas emphasized by the periodical. The reason for this was that *Rola* journalists gradually assimilated views characteristic for modern nationalist movements. For a prolonged period the magazine hovered between two stages of political evolution: on the one hand, it felt a certain bond with those social groups who were traditionally considered privileged (gentry); on the other, it often evoked a sense of community using the rhetoric of national discourse. *Rola* often addressed the proverbial “ordinary man”, implying that it cared about the fate of every Catholic Pole, member of the religious and national community.¹⁰⁴ This trend culminated shortly before *Rola* ceased to be published, when most of its supporters entered politics on the side of the modern national-democratic camp. *Rola* openly supported members of the

100 Pąckiński, “Konserwatyzm,” 32.

101 Pancerny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 25 (1883): 8.

102 Lewalski, “Kościoły chrześcijańskie,” 116.

103 *Ćwierćwiecze walki*, 106.

104 Pąckiński, “Konserwatyzm,” 10; idem, “Język konserwatystów,” *Pozytywnizm. Język epoki*, ed. Grażyna Borkowska and Janusz Maciejewski, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2001), 94.

National Democrats party candidates in the elections to the Russian Duma, stressing the need to unite forces in the fight against “internal enemies.”¹⁰⁵ The weekly was also willing to turn a blind eye to the fact, that the face of the National Democratic movement was criticized by the clergy for not being sufficiently “distinctly Catholic.”¹⁰⁶ Contributors to *Rola* argued they have influenced the decision of the Polish national movement to acknowledge Jews as the main enemy. “Rolarze” were also convinced that the idea of a “a single great alliance” they preached for years finally achieved nation-wide recognition.¹⁰⁷ After Jeleński’s death Teodor Jeske-Choiński commented

“Over the last fifty years Poland raised only two avowed anti-Semites: Jan Jeleński and Teodor Jeske-Choiński [...]. The former, a talented journalist, was an “instinctive” anti-Semite. [...] The latter complemented him as a theoretician of the movement. For their anti-Semitism they were condemned by “enlightened, progressive Poland” confused by the doctrine of assimilation; for over twenty years they were boycotted, called backward, enemies of progress, fools, idiots, “Black Hundreds” etc. [...] The “backwardness” of those two anti-Semites only meant that they were twenty years ahead of their peers, they have seen before what everyone sees now. [...] It was only after Lithuanian raids on Warsaw and Jewish arrogance during the last elections to the Duma in St. Petersburg [...] that nearly every member of Polish society awoke, and nearly everyone became “backward,” “enemies of progress” etc. An average Pole could have only had his eyes opened by force. [...] Roman Dmowski became the leader of the last anti-Semitic movement.”¹⁰⁸

To conclude I would like to draw the attention of the reader to several factors that made *Rola* an important voice in the public discussion conducted on the pages of Polish press. With regard to its content, Jeleński, the founder of the magazine, and his colleagues can be said to represent anti-modernisation tendencies, characteristic of peripheral social circles. This view was shared by some of their political opponents. Among them was a clearly discernible fear of losing their own identity and an inferiority complex causing the need for

105 Kamienny, “Na posterunku,” *Rola* 10 (1907): 148; “Przed wyborami,” *Rola* 41 (1912): 648-650.

106 “Kto nie jest przeciw nam z nami jest,” *Rola* 36 (1912): 563-564.

107 “Zwycięstwo idei,” *Rola* 47 (1912): 739-740; *Rola* 48 (1912): 755-756.

108 Teodor Jeske-Choiński, *Poznaj Żyda!*, (Warszawa: Kronika Rodzinna, 1912). On the other hand some members of the National Democratic movement did not dissociate themselves from the idea that there was continuation of belief. One of the letters said that Jeleński “brought the Jewish issue into the spotlight in full, so thoroughly that Roman [Dmowski - MM] added nothing, not one new word or concept”. Documents on the National League and other political organisations, after Krzywiec, “Szowinizm,” 120.

compensation. For a long time *Rola* was defined through the anti-Semitic worldview that it consistently promoted. It was the first periodical in the Kingdom of Poland to make hostility to Jews one of the flagship slogans of its program. The vision of the world presented on the pages of *Rola* was a good example of the co-existence of anti-Semitic themes from different sources. It also exemplified the process of transformation of some “old” *topoi* into “new” ones. These phenomena became increasingly clear along with the change in argumentation style of the articles: from personal observations to “second hand” anti-Jewish stereotypes. Jeleński himself was the best example of this tendency. His early work was based predominantly on personal observations regarding the Jewish people. Over the years, the editor of *Rola* with increasing consistency quoted the views of European “preachers” of antisemitism. This hostile approach to Jews was built on the “traditional,” “anti-Judaic” premises of economy and religion, but also on the more modern foundations of “anti-emancipation” and “conspiratory” ideology. *Rola* constantly relied on the authority of the church, pointing out its anti-Judaic legislation¹⁰⁹. Nevertheless, it also opposed Jewish bankers, journalists and stock market players with modern accusations. The weekly devoted particular attention to the presentation of a plethora of its great ideological predecessors, starting with Thomas Aquinas and finishing with Jeleński’s “ideological patron” Józef Supiński¹¹⁰. “Rolarze” attempted to “invent tradition”¹¹¹ of antisemitism anew, so as to increase the credibility of their postulate by quoting well-known names.

One needs to remember what constituted a distinctive feature of *Rola* in terms of form. It was the first periodical in the Kingdom of Poland to consciously employ modern methods for public discourse. It arranged “press campaigns”, focusing the attention of its readers on a particular topic throughout several yearly issues.¹¹² *Rola* did not shy away from gross simplifications and manipulation of truth. It used means of political agitation with a remarkable consistency, coming up with catchy phrases such as “give bread to one of your own.” All of these elements influenced in no small part the press in the Kingdom of Poland, and acted as a source of inspiration in later years.

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109 “Godne przypomnienia,” *Rola* 4 (1885): 37-38.

110 R., “Judaica (Antysemita przed dwustu laty),” *Rola* 30 (1883): 6-7; K. W., “Antysemita z XVI-go wieku,” *Rola* 27-29 (1889); “Antysemityzm Ś-go Tomasza z Akwinu przez H. Gayraud,” *Rola* 27-52 (1897); Szczepan Jeleński, “Józef Supiński (Z powodu setnej rocznicy urodzin),” *Rola* 12 (1904): 177-178.

111 Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

112 Cała, “Asymilacja,” 291.

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British Discourses on ‘the Jew’ and ‘the Nation’ 1899-1919.

by Susanne Terwey

Abstract

In Britain, modern antisemitism, that is, the perception of Jews as a ‘race’ as well as the employment of pictures of the Jew in social and political debates, developed around the same time as did its French and German counterparts, in the second half of the 19th century. Concentrating on the years between the South African War and the conclusion of the Great War, this essay explores the functional character of antisemitism and the discursive context of negative images of the Jew. In Britain, too, Jews were identified as a negative ferment within the nation, and they figured largely as an agent of representative government. In addition, Jews were continuously used as a negative foil for the definition of what was ‘English’ or ‘British’. However, unlike their continental counterparts, British anti-Semites did not question Jewish emancipation and even distanced themselves from ‘antisemitism’ at a time when elsewhere in Europe, being an ‘anti-Semite’ was a positive social and political stance. Both elements reflected the political culture, within which British anti-Semitic narratives evolved: while allowing for various forms of manifest and latent antisemitism, late 19th century Liberalism secured the status of the Jews as a religious minority, and contained specific forms of antisemitism that emerged on the Continent during the same period.

This essay looks into the functions of antisemitism from the Second Boer war until the early 1920s. British antisemitic utterances will be examined with the following set of questions: What did the Jew stand for in British journalistic and literary texts, and which pictures were attached to the picture of the Jew? Was there a common strand, a binding theme, in the contextualization of attacks on Jews over a longer period of time?

I. Opposition to the Boer War or the Come-back of Antisemitism

The South African War (1899-1902) was the first major military conflict of the 20th century. Fought for the *raison d'être* of the British Empire, it turned into a humiliating adventure for Britain, costly in terms of human lives and sense of security at the British home front. The war provoked strong reactions amongst ordinary men and women in many European states. While men and women on the Continent, notably in France, Germany, and the Netherlands demonstrated outrage at the British course, those in Britannia's streets celebrated their nation.¹ However, at the British home front the festive mood was not shared

¹ Ulrich Kröll, “Die internationale Buren Agitation 1899-1902. Haltung der Öffentlichkeiten und Agitation zugunsten der Buren in Deutschland, Frankreich und den Niederlanden während des Burenkrieges,” *Schriftenreihe für Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft*, Vol. 7 (Münster: Verlag Regensburg, 1973). Harald Rosenbach, “Das Deutsche Reich und der Transvaal (1896-1902). Anfänge deutsch-britischer Entfremdung,” *Schriftenreihe der historischen*

by all. Opposition to the War was voiced by pro-Boers from the Liberal and Labour camps.² It is here, in ranks of the opposition to the War and to the Unionist coalition government's policy, where the antisemitic choir gave its noisy come-back to the public stage, after modern antisemitism's dawn in Britain, in the late 1870s during the premiership of Benjamin Disraeli and the Bulgarian crisis.³

The War in South Africa and with it the antisemitic agitation which set "Jewish capitalist interests" against those of the British nation and the Empire in what was dubbed a "Jews' war", evolved place at a time, when the British public was concerned with questions of immigration control and restriction in response to the immigration of some 144.000 Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe. British Gentiles experienced and witnessed both, the immigration debate and the South African War, in parallel, as would have the Jewish minority. The response to the immigration was two-fold: first, it led to the passage of the "Aliens Act" of 1905, the first modern law designed to monitor and control immigration.⁴ Second, British voices began to question current laws of

Kommission bei der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vol. 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

² John W. Auld, "The Liberal Pro-Boers," *Journal of British Studies* 14 (1975), 78-101. M. D. Blanch, "British Society and the War," *The South-African War. The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, ed. Peter Warwick (London: Longman, 1980), 210-237. David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 264-267. J. S. Galbraith, "The Pamphlet Campaign on the Boer War," *Journal of Modern History*, 24 (1952), 111-126. Preben Kaarsholm, "Pro-Boers," *Patriotism. The Making and Unmaking of British National History*, vol. I, ed. Raphael Samuel, *History and Politics*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 1989), 110-126. *The Anatomy of an Antirwar Movement. The Pro-Boers*, ed. Stephen Koss (London, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), xiii-xxxviii. Henry Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in late Victorian Britain*, (Toronto, New York, 1986), 82-100. Bernard Porter, "The Pro-Boers in Britain," *The South-African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (London: Longman, 1980), 246 ff. Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack. Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left 1881-1924* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 1998), 59-75. Stewart Weaver, "The Pro-Boers: War, Empire, and the Uses of Nostalgia in Turn-of-the-Century England," *Singular Continuities. Tradition, Nostalgia, and Identity in Modern British Culture*, eds. George K. Behlmer, Fred M. Leventhal (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 43-57.

³ For antisemitism in the 1870s see, Feldman, "Englishmen and Jews," 94-120.

⁴ For the 'aliens'-debate and the Aliens Act of 1905 see, Feldman, "Englishmen and Jews," 268-290. David Feldman, "The Importance of being English. Jewish immigration and the decay of liberal England," *Metropolis – London. Histories and representations since 1800*, eds. David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (London, New York: Routledge 1989), 56-84. See also, Andreas Fahrmeir, "Immigration and Immigration Policy in Britain from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Centuries," *European immigrants in Britain, 1933-1950*, eds. Johannes-Dieter Steinert, Inge Weber-Newth (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2003), 43-54. Previous research has treated the Boer War agitation and the 'aliens debate' discretely; Arndt Bauerkämper, *Die 'radikale' Rechte in Großbritannien. Nationalistische, antisemitische und faschistische Bewegungen vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1991); Feldman, "Englishmen and Jews." Claire Hirshfield, "The British Left and the 'Jewish Conspiracy': A Case of Modern Antisemitism," *Jewish Social Studies*, 43 (1981), 95-112. Claire Hirshfield, "The Anglo-Boer War and the Issue of Jewish Culpability," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15 (1980), 619-631. Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* (London: E. Arnold, 1979). William Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-speaking World: Great Britain* (London, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

citizenship and demanded a tightening or even fundamental change from the *Jus Soli* to the *Jus Sanguinis*.⁵ The public debates about terms of citizenship, which reached a climax during the Great War, were accompanied by gradual changes in nationality law and practice by the state since the late Victorian Era, and found reflection in antisemitism.⁶

The time coincidence of an outright antisemitic argument with an intense preoccupation with the question of whether or not external borders needed to be closed, or at least monitored, turned out to have been crucial for future discourses on Jews and potential negative consequences of immigration for the nation's external and internal security. But it also triggered the incorporation of the picture of the Jew as *eternal alien* into British antisemitism, who was relegated to the status of a hermit in the nation's no-man's-land, not only as member of the Jewish minority but as an Englishman with an immigration background, subsequent to the *aliens debate*: henceforth, the terms "alien" and "Jew" were frequently used interchangeably in one and the same context.⁷ The discursive declaration of alienage and denationalisation should target Jewish Englishmen and British subjects, the acculturated Anglo-Jewish minority within the Jewish population. Furthermore, in the immediate historical context, many of pro-Boer utterances included explicit references to the aliens and immigration issues, and their authors imported themes from the aliens-debate into their antisemitic narratives on Jewish capitalist profiteering. All texts shared a juxtaposition of Englishmen and Jews and thus reasoned from the premise that the latter did not qualify to be counted amongst the former or to

⁵ For a proposal to introduce the *Jus Sanguinis* in the aftermath of the Great War see, Bagot Gray, "Our Alien Laws. Some suggested Reforms. The Coming Bill," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 Mar 1919, 5. "The Aliens Bill. Need for Drastic Legislation," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 Mar 1919, 6. For Jewish comments, see, "Anti-Alienism running mad," *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 Mar 1919, 8; "Around the World...", *The Jewish World*, 19 Mar 1919, 6.

⁶ For the history of the British nationality law, see Andreas Fahrmeir, "Citizens and Aliens: Foreigners and the Law in Britain and the German States, 1789-1870." *Monographs in German History*, Vol. 5. (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000). J. Mervyn Jones, *The British Nationality Law and Practice. With a Foreword by W. E. Beckett* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947). For the changes after the Second World War, when the concept of 'allegiance' was written out of the law, see J. Mervyn Jones, *The British Nationality Law* Rev. Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956). David Feldman has traced the mounting problems of Jews to assert their interests from the positions of foreigners and citizens in the first two decades of the twentieth century, David Feldman, "Jews and the State in Britain," *Two Nations. British and German Jews in comparative perspective*, eds. Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke, David Rechter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 141-161. See also, David Cesarani, "The Changing Character of Citizenship and Nationality in Britain," *Citizenship, Nationality, and Migration in Europe*, eds. David Cesarani, Mary Fulbrook (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), 57-73. Cesarani attributes changes in the practice of British nationality law in the interwar-period to war-time nationalism. So does Sven Oliver Müller, "Recht und Rasse. Die Ethnisierung von Staatsangehörigkeit und Nationsvorstellungen in Großbritannien im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 30 (2004): 379-403.

⁷ The term 'alien' was used alongside and interchangeably with the terms of 'Jew' or 'Jewish' in one and the same text by all authors discussed in this essay (Arnold White, J. A. Hobson, Leopold Maxse, F.E. Eddis, J.H. Clarke) as well as in the British Press.

ever become members of the positive group, since in these discourses Jews embodied the opposite values of what was deemed, ideally, to be *English*.

This second major wave of modern antisemitism in Britain is reflected in newspaper articles and pamphlets as well as in the best known interpretation of the Boer War as fought in the interests of Jewish capitalism, John Atkinson Hobson's work on "*The War in South Africa. Its Causes and Effects*." The South African War was followed by an intense debate over "national efficiency"; one proponent of this discourse was the author Arnold White whose book "*Efficiency and Empire*" will be discussed.

The editor and journalist James Leopold Maxse was one of the most outspoken antisemites of his time. In his conservative monthly *The National Review*, he untiringly and with increasing frequency after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 enlightened readers on the pro-German machinations of the "international Jew" and the "German Jew" in Britain. Maxse was no original thinker, he took his themes from the mainstream conservative press, in particular *The Times*.⁸ This also pertains to his interpretation of the dangers arising for the British nation from the Jews' presence in the public sphere. As a consequence, Maxse was a seismograph for the quality as well as the development of British antisemitism. The discussion of Maxse's elaborations will be flanked by that of comments from the metropolitan and provincial press in order to underscore the extent to which Maxse's writings reflected what was published elsewhere.

In line with the majority of British antisemitic voices during the time under consideration, James Leopold Maxse questioned terms of British citizenship and national belonging in force. The most glaring evidence of shifting attitudes towards current terms of British citizenship is the identification of so many "German Jews" in Britain, who began to populate the new stands around the turn of the century: in fact, by 1914 only few Jews in Britain were German citizens, and the historical figures these British Gentiles were referring to were Englishmen and British subjects like Lord Rothschild, Lionel Phillips or Sir Ernest Cassel – and with them thousands of ordinary, non-prominent English and British Jews.⁹ These English and British citizens, whose families resided between one and four generations on the British Isles could only be identified as German and by their German background if British Gentile contemporaries implicitly questioned terms of national belonging in force.

In his writings, James Leopold Maxse identified specifically the Jews' being near to leading politicians and the government as *the* national Jewish peril. Via antisemitism British authors inquired into the nature and process of national decision-making, and between 1899 and 1919, antisemitism served as an

⁸ John Hutcheson, *Leopold Maxse and the National Review, 1893-1914. Right-wing politics in the Edwardian Era* (New York, London: Garland Pub., 1989), 464 passim.

⁹ The vast majority of English and British Jews could trace back their families' history to an immigration from German lands since around 1800. A survey of Anglo-Jewish history in the 19th and early 20th centuries can be found in, Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), ch. 3-5.

instrument for the critical control of the national leadership whose decisions were discredited by the allegation of Jewish influencing. The development of modern British antisemitism cannot be separated from the process of democratisation and the extension of the franchise in Britain in the last third of the 19th century: alongside explicit worries about the state of representative democracy, its themes gravitated around demands for more responsibility, accountability, morality and transparency, and thus reflected changing expectations of those who represented and lead the nation in the wake of slow but progressing democratisation.¹⁰ However, the defence of representative democracy did not come along with demands for further democratisation and the extension of the franchise. Many of antisemitism's British proponents who claimed to speak "for the man in the street" shared at times an apprehension for the masses. This observation pertains to groups and individuals as diverse as the pro-Boers, Arnold White, and Leopold Maxse.¹¹ Their diffident approach towards the masses was rather typical for advocates of representative democracy in Britain and very close to that of the vast majority of the British political class towards the idea of universal suffrage and a mass-democracy when instigating the progression of representative democracy in the Victorian Era.¹²

Among the highly heterogeneous groups and authors subsumed under the label of promoters of "national efficiency" there had been some voices who also questioned the value of parliamentary democracy and advocated the

¹⁰ In his work, David Feldman has already pointed to the increasing demands of politics and politicians to be guided by moral standards by groups connected with the Liberal Party in the wake of the Reform Act of 1867 – and to the way in which these appeals at times intertwined with attacks on Jews. Feldman, "Englishmen and Jews," 119 passim. For the changes in the British political system in the second half of the 19th century, the process of democratisation, see for instance, Ian Machin, *The Rise of Democracy in Britain, 1830-1918* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2001). John Hostettler, Brian P. Block, *Voting in Britain. A History of Parliamentary Franchise* (Chichester: Barry Rose, 2001). See also, Pat Thane, "Government and Society in England and Wales, 1750-1914," *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*. vol. III: *Social agencies and institutions*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (3 vols., Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-61.

¹¹ Both Arnold White and Leo Maxse fashioned themselves as mouthpieces for the ordinary citizens. There is no information on Maxse's thoughts of the masses, however, he cannot be considered a populist. Hutcheson, "Maxse," 37-38. John M. McEwen, "The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17 (1982): 476. Even though White's apprehension had lost its depth by the time of the Boer War, in his earlier writings Arnold White had clearly distanced himself from the masses. G. R. Searle, introduction to in Arnold White, *Efficiency and Empire*, by Arnold White (London: Harvester Press, 1973), vii-xxxi. For the Pro-Boers see footnoten. 9 and also, Feldman, "Modernity," 182-183.

¹² Machin, *Rise*. See also, Norman Gash, "The Social and Political Background to the Three British Nineteenth Century Reform Acts," *Deutscher und Britischer Parlamentarismus. British and German Parliamentary*, eds. Adolf M. Birke, Kurt Kluxen Prince Albert Studies, Vol. 3 (Munich, New York, London, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1985), 57-67.

introduction of an authoritarian form of government.¹³ Unsurprisingly, some of those authors who combined the endorsement of “national efficiency” with antisemitic elaborations on Jewish intriguing also questioned the value of democracy and advocated its abolition. Such proposals, however, were very few and seem to have been somewhat isolated in modern British antisemitism. The prejudice rather figured as an agent and in protection of representative democracy.¹⁴

II. Englishmen and Jews or Jews as Germans

“This war is, in fact, a fight not merely between Boer and Britisher, but between the *pastoral race* and the *mining engineer* – Cain and Abel over again. It is, in a nutshell, the whole great fight between materialist and spiritualist, between believer in gold and believer in God, between taxed and taxer, between Herod and the Jews, between the oppressed and the oppressor, and still more keenly possibly between moneylending sharebroker and sturdy, upright Christian.”¹⁵

The author of the play *Paul and Joseph; or God and Mammon in the Transvaal* neatly brought together the most current ideas reproduced in the British press on Jews, the British cause and the Government during the Boer War in 1899.

One of the first voices commenting on the part played by Jews in the simmering conflict in Southern Africa was the social democratic weekly *Justice* and its editor H. M. Hyndman. In June 1899 Hyndman identified financial Jews and their money interests as the driving force behind the “campaign against Kruger and the Transvaal Boers.” Hyndman informed his readers on what he identified as the wish of the “overwhelming preponderance of Englishmen”, namely, the avoidance of a war fought in the interest of a handful of financiers; but he equally laid open his disregard of terms of British nationality, when he referred to those he had identified as culpable of provoking a conflict sarcastically as “such true-born Britons as Beit, Eckstein, Rothschild, Joel, Adler, Goldberg, Israel, Isaac and Co.”¹⁶ The better known individuals out of this group (Beit, Eckstein, Rothschild) were either naturalised British subjects or Englishmen. Hence, the exclusion of Jews was driven by two forces, first, a conflict between self-seeking pursuits by individuals at the expense of the majority, a pattern of behaviour that was

¹³ G. R. Searle, *The Quest of National Efficiency. A Study in British Politics and Thought, 1899-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 54-106; 158 passim.

¹⁴ The combination of concerns about potential threats to representative government with attacks on Jews can be found in writings by J.A. Hobson, Feldman, “Englishmen and Jews,” 267.

¹⁵ Howard Swan, *Paul and Joseph; or God and Mammon in the Transvaal. An unfinished Drama* (London: S. Baxter, 1899), 7.

¹⁶ H. M. Hyndman, “The Soudan and the Transvaal,” *Justice*, 17 June, 1899, 4.

identified as “Jewish”, which was set against a selfless caring for the nation as well as the furthering of the common good; second, by a redefinition of *Britishness* and national belonging. Contrasting “Englishmen” with “true born Britons”, Hyndman suggested a concept of Britishness based on culture which excluded Jews as immigrants and citizens with an immigrant background.

On the eve of the War, *Justice* returned to the theme even more pronounced, when Hyndman included another facet of British antisemitic discourses, namely, Jewish influence on government decisions and on government ministers. In strong words, the article expressed “detestation for those aliens” who, “under the guise of patriotism” were bullying the British government “to a criminal war of aggression.”¹⁷ According to *Justice*, it was the Jewish element which made government policy dangerous to the nation while the legitimacy of government decisions was questioned, since they served the interests of very few instead of using the well-being and interests of the majority as a guideline. By using the term “Jews” synonymously for “alien” and “un-English”, these two contributions brought together the constituents of the antisemitic arguments which sought to define what was “national”, “patriotic” and “English.” The argument was carried one step further only a couple of days later, when Jews were not only identified as exercising major influence on government decision making, but, commenting on a meeting between Lord Rothschild and Arthur Balfour, *Justice* was now convinced that “questions of war and peace” depended largely on decisions of the Jews, now epitomized in the person of Lord Rothschild and New Court, the premise of the Rothschild Bank.¹⁸ What transpires in these remarks as elsewhere in the critical comments on the War, were concerns about a lack of respect for the constitution and the interests of Englishmen and the nation, for whom the Pro-Boers claimed to speak out, on the part of leading politicians. Instead, British ministers had become “willing agents” of the “Jew financier.”¹⁹ A cultural definition of Britishness continued to figure prominently in the arguments when time of residence became the dividing line between the Jews, who were over and again ironically referred to as “true born Britons” in want of any true patriotic feelings, and common Englishmen who were identified by their families’ centuries old residence on the British Isles.²⁰ Once again, the Jews’ exclusion was driven by a notion of national identity and belonging which was no longer based on common values, English liberties and the *Jus Soli*, but on culture and an ill-defined, vague concept of race. Up to this point, the question of what triggered doubts about the viability of the current terms of nationality had been answered indirectly by the introduction of relatively recent immigration as a yard-stick for in or out of the nation, as well as the employment of the term of *alien* synonymously for *Jew*. However, another often quoted contemporary commentator on the War in South Africa was more precise and direct.

¹⁷ “‘Our Affair’, Jew Financiers and Real Anti-Semites,” *Justice*, September 30, 1899, 1.

¹⁸ H. M. Hyndman, “‘The Jews’ War on the Transvaal,” *Justice*, October 7, 1899, 4-5.

¹⁹ H. Quelch, “Jews and Jingoism,” *Justice*, 4 Nov 1899, 4.

²⁰ H. M. Hyndman, “‘The Jews’ War on the Transvaal,” *Justice*, October 7, 1899, 5.

The best-known and most influential interpretation of the Boer War as serving “Jewish capitalist interests” is the book-length piece “*The War in South Africa. Its Causes and Effects*” by the journalist and theorist of imperialism, John Atkinson Hobson published in February 1900. The book, was based on a series of articles Hobson had produced for the *Manchester Guardian* in autumn 1899.²¹ In fact, his book and in particular a chapter entitled “*For whom are we fighting?*” offered as much a detailed exposition of Hobson’s interpretation of the forces behind the War as it was a comment on the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to England, and his own scepticism towards the current terms under which British citizenship could be acquired. In order to convey to his readers on the British motherland a clearer picture of the scenery in Johannesburg and the prominence of Jews in everyday life, J. A. Hobson went into some detail about the size and composition of the Jewish population there, in doing so, he evoked pictures most familiar to British readers who witnessed and experienced the wave of immigration from Eastern Europe. The author first echoed the juxtaposition of Englishmen and Jews when he contrasted the “financial pioneers in South Africa”, “Messrs. Rhodes and Rudd”, both of whom were Gentiles, with those who had taken control of the gold-mining industry in the mean time, namely “a small group of financiers, chiefly German in origin and Jewish in race.”²² Once again, it is their German background and not their actual citizenship by which the Jewish financiers were identified. In a second step, Hobson then turned to the poor immigrants, the numerical majority of Jews, whom he had met on the voyage when he had found with himself on the ship “many scores of Jewish women and children.” Upon landing in Johannesburg he then discovered, as he put it, that he had landed in “the New Jerusalem.”²³ When the author went on to explain to his readers his problems to give exact figures as to the actual number of Jewish inhabitants of Johannesburg, Hobson launched a thinly veiled attack on the British Nationality law and practice in the face of the immigration from Eastern Europe:

“Public statistics are most deceptive in this matter; many of these persons rank as British subjects by virtue of a brief temporary sojourn in some English-speaking land”²⁴

In fact, nobody ever acquired British citizenship by mere and brief residence, but through a mutual legal act between the immigrant and the State, which

²¹ John Atkinson Hobson, *The War in South Africa. Its Causes and Effects* (New York: H. Fertig, 1969 edn. First published, London: J. Nisbet, 1900). “Hobson, John Atkinson,” *DNB (1931-1940)*, London, 435-436. A detailed discussion of Hobson’s factual errors and tendentious description of the financiers’ rôles can be found in, Harvey Mitchell, “Hobson revisited,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVI (1965), 397-416.

²² Hobson, “War,” 189.

²³ Hobson, “War,” 190.

²⁴ Hobson, “War,” 190.

Hobson cast aside dismissively. Further, it may not have been known to all of Hobson's British readers but certainly to the author himself, that, at the time he wrote this passage, there was only one English-speaking country, where foreigners could become (naturalised) British subjects, and this was the United Kingdom.²⁵ Hence, the procedure under attack and in dispute in the writings of J.A. Hobson was not that in any other part of the Empire but in Britain.

The opponents of the War in South Africa were united in the ideal of national and international politics to be guided by moral standards, and the antisemitic commentaries on the background of the war neatly fitted into this moral argument.

Individual character traits ascribed to the Jews constituted a prominent element in the comments on capitalist influences on British politics from the onset, and served as a negative foil for eulogies of what was identified as "English" patterns of behaviour. Jews stood for "lust for gold", "money-grabbing", reckless self-seeking pursuit of individual interests, greed as well as lack of ideals and true religious feelings. The only god the Jews knew, accordingly, was Mammon.

The Labour M.P. John Burns and the Radical Edward Carpenter, on the other hand, contrasted the Jews with the Boers. Their utterances were informed by a nostalgia for an idealized English past and pre-industrialization life on the countryside which was subscribed to by many in the anti-war camp.²⁶ In a speech in Battersea Park, in May 1900, Burns described the Boers as courageous, energetic, patient and full of love for independence. The Labour leader saw the Boers in a heroic battle, defending their country not so much against an army, but against militant capitalism, personified by the Jews, who allowed English soldiers to fight for their financial interests.²⁷ Since the 1880s, the socialist writer Edward Carpenter had harshly criticised in his writings what he had made out as values of the Victorian middle-class, in particular a want for true religious feeling and excessive materialism.²⁸ He had found his ideals in a life on the countryside and a celebration of the "masculine bond which he associated with manual labour."²⁹ It was the Jews who embodied for Carpenter everything he despised whereas he'd detected British past and brighter future in the Boers. In a tract entitled "*Boer and Briton*" Carpenter praised the Boers for leading simple lives with their cattle and for their love of the land they

²⁵ In other parts of the Empire and in the Colonies, foreigners could acquire colonial naturalisation papers which were only valid in the relevant part of the Empire, but not in the U.K. J. Mervyn Jones, *British Nationality Law and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 286.

²⁶ For an excellent discussion of this nostalgic discourse, see, Stewart Weaver, 'The Pro-Boers', *Singular Continuities: tradition, nostalgia, and identity in modern British culture*, ed. George K. Behlmer, Fred M. Leventhal (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

²⁷ John Burns, LCC, MP, *War against two republics. A Speech delivered in Battersea Park on May 20th 1900* (Publisher: Stop-the-War-Committee).

²⁸ Tony Brown, introduction to *Edward Carpenter and late Victorian Radicalism*, ed. Tony Brown (London: Frank Cass, 1990), 1.

²⁹ Matt Cook, "'A New City of Friends': London and Homosexuality in the 1890s," *History Workshop Journal*, 56 (2003): 44.

worked. This paradise was being destroyed, when the gold fever had turned Johannesburg

“in a hell of Jews, financiers, greedy speculators, adventurers, prostitutes, bars, banks, gaming saloons, and every invention of the devil.”

The real problem did not, however, lie with the Jews but with the leading classes in Britain, the military and the politicians, who would allow the Jews to lead them “by the nose” and who knew only one ideal, commercialism. As a consequence, Carpenter expressed the vague hope that the only class in England he identified as still uncorrupted by the Jewish ideals, the working class, would lead their nation into a better future.³⁰

The combination of antisemitism with attacks on the government and concerns about the functioning of the political process along constitutional lines had been central to the utterances during the Boer War. British antisemitism gravitated around the thus perceived sectional interests of the Jews who would realize these against the interests and at the expense of the nation; this theme was accompanied by scathing criticism of the national leadership and leading politicians who were held responsible for Jewish activities since it was government ministers who would allow the Jews to exercise their influence. In so doing, members of the cabinet and the government failed in their roles as leaders and temporary representatives of the nation.

The South African War was a sobering enterprise for the British people. It had taken the imperial power months to gain military control in the veld and even after that, the War dragged on for years. This experience set off a political and social movement in search of ways to enhance and achieve “national efficiency.”³¹ The journalist Arnold White was but one out of many writers who published their prescriptions for the English, English society and politics in the wake of the Boer War.

Arnold White’s treatise “*Efficiency and Empire*” was published in 1901. In the chapter “*Our Moral Inefficiency*” he exposed his interpretation of the reasons for the malaise both Britain and the Empire were experiencing. As the section’s title already indicates, for White, too, the real problem did not lie with the machinations of the “German Jews”, or, alternatively of “foreign Jews”, but with the failings of the society and the political class. However, he reiterated much of what had been voiced by pro-Boers about the Jewish character. Jews represented excessive materialism, “unearned” wealth, and White, too, identified “material success” as “truly the god” of the Jews, which had never,

³⁰ Edward Carpenter, “Boer and Briton,” *Labour Press Leaflet* (Manchester, 1900).

³¹ For the political strand and ideas, see, Searle, *Quest*. The societal responses are surveyed by David Feldman, “Nationality and Ethnicity,” *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul A. Johnson (London: Longman, 1994), 127-148.

as White stressed, “become a British ideal.”³² Arnold White thus cast doubt on the ability of Jews to harbour what he defined as real religious feelings and excluded the Jews by ascribing to them characteristics which were devised as *counter-British*. The nation had become “infected” by “bad smart society”, which was dominated by the Jews and their principles. According to White, the way out of this peril was the emergence of a new elite, young men who would take up responsibility and seats in Parliament and in Government. This new, “true aristocracy” would be characterised by patriotism, independence and the hostility to “financial schemers”, in other words, opposed to those patterns of behaviour deemed “Jewish.” On a practical level, White proposed a close examination of the qualification of candidates for Parliament.³³

“Jewish press-control” became part and parcel of antisemitic narratives in Britain in the closing years of the nineteenth century. This motif which accompanied pictures of the Jew until well into the twentieth century was employed by practically all authors who had spoken out in antisemitic terms during the Boer War and can also be found in the writings by Arnold White.³⁴ The motif developed in line with changes in the character, production and distribution of the press in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Traditionally, the press had been considered by Liberals as an instrument for acceptable political education of the masses and which should accompany the changes in the political system, the process of democratisation. These ideals were run over by a swift professionalisation of journalism in the wake of the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1861 and technological advances since the 1880s, the coming of “New Journalism” and the penny press. Newspapers were necessarily increasingly run by businessmen on business principles.³⁵ Jewish press-barons and journalists came to personify these changes, which were not only regretted and attacked by Liberals but also, as will be seen in the discussion of Leo Maxse’s work, by Conservatives who strove to uphold traditional standards. During the South African War, the pro-Boers worried about their own constitutional rights and abhorred the way in which the government and the press whipped up nationalist feelings amongst the enfranchised but uneducated masses.³⁶ What evolved was a concoction of attacks on Jews with criticism of a certain form of journalism symbolizing the neglect of what was perceived to be the essence of the role of the political press: the education of the people, control and defence of representative democracy. In this context, Jews came to embody conscious misinformation with sectional, self-seeking interests in mind. Consequently, it was this

³² White, *Efficiency*, 80.

³³ White, *Efficiency*, 74-76.

³⁴ For pro-Boers on Jewish press control see, for instance, the contributions in *Justice*, but also, ‘Hireling War Press’, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, September 24, 1899, 4. Hobson, *War*, 193; 211 passim.

³⁵ Alan L. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), esp. 181 passim. See also, *Papers for Millions. The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914*, ed. Joel Wiener (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1988).

³⁶ Feldman, “Englishmen and Jews,” 264-267.

“remorseless control” exercised by the Jews “over the expression of public opinion hostile to them” which explained to Arnold White, why the negative influence of “bad foreign Jews” and the dangers arising thereof to the Empire, had been ignored by the Press.³⁷ In his analysis of the ills of the nation, Arnold White directed his criticism against the old elites who had seemingly failed in their roles. With reference to Jews and German Jews in England, he warned that this “island of aliens in the sea of English life” was still small, but growing. He castigated English society and old aristocracy for admitting “moneyed aliens who unite rapacity with display” into their midst. However, when summing up those character traits that had brought England into the state she was in, he used the examples of other European nations, Austria and France, as a warning to his own. White concluded that it had been “weakness, self-indulgence, want of foresight, self-respect and culture” on the part of the majority which had enabled the “industrious” and “unscrupulous” Jews to reach and assume their positions.³⁸

From December 1911 onwards James Leopold Maxse enlightened the interested public about the pro-German intrigues of the “international Jew”, or, alternatively, the “German Jew” in England. Although Leo Maxse stressed that he was writing “for the man in the street”, the readership of the *NR* was to be found in the upper middle-class villas of the suburbs, and the journal, which counted among the quality journalism, was subscribed to by Conservative politicians and journalists.³⁹ Upon his death in 1932, an obituary published in *The Times* described Leo Maxse as “confirmed democrat”⁴⁰; and, in fact, concerns about representative democracy were central to Leo Maxse’s antisemitic outpourings on Jewish influence on the government, the parliament and “Jewish wire-pulling of the press” as well as Jewish presence in London Society. In addition, themes that had emerged and evolved in previous decades and in particular since the Boer War, continued to loom large in his perception of the Jews, the State and the nation: terms of citizenship, immigration and the negative consequences of immigration arising out of an over-generous immigration policy to the nation’s security in times of a national crisis such as the Great War. In short, Maxse identified Jews as acting in favour of the political and military enemy, Germany, by promoting her interests wherever and in every way they could - to the detriment of England. All this was, according to Maxse, the outcome of England’s “excessive hospitality.”⁴¹ Once again, it was “German Jews”, albeit only for the first nine months of the Great War after which they turned into “international Jews”, who were made out as

³⁷ White, “Efficiency,” 80.

³⁸ White, “Efficiency,” 80-81.

³⁹ Hutcheson, “Maxse,” 30 *passim*.

⁴⁰ ‘Maxse, Leopold James’, *DNB (1931-1940)*, 607 (The obituary was originally published in *The Times*, January 23, 1932).

⁴¹ “The Cabal”, *The National Review* (NR), 58/1 (1912): 679-680. See also, for instance, James Leopold Maxse, “The Fight against Pan-Germanism. I. Is the Potsdam Party killed of scotched?”, *NR*, 64/9 (1914): 41-50.

schemers, as a result of another author's disrespect for long term residence, naturalisation and Englishness on the part of the historical figures he attacked. His logic became evident in an article from September 1914: he deviated from his otherwise indiscriminate, generalising accusations and gave the first names of those, who were allegedly intriguing for German interests. This list helps to understand, whom he actually subsumed under the term "German Jews": Sir Edgar (Speyer), Sir Ernest (Cassel), Sir Alfred (Rothschild), and Alfred (Mond). Without going into biographical details it is worth mentioning that all of these men were either British subjects or Englishmen. Two of them (Speyer and Cassel) had immigrated to England from Germany decades before and both were naturalised British subjects. The other two were born in Britain and had a German-Jewish background. Nonetheless, Maxse classified all of them, and with them all English Jews with a German background, as "German." Their naturalisation and long-standing residence, not to say that of their families in the cases of Mond and Rothschild, were obviously irrelevant for Maxse's concept.⁴² With the combination of anti-Jewish utterances and concerns about the effects of immigration, Maxse was not alone. In March 1915, the *Walsall Pioneer* informed its readers, about "German Jews" who had come to England in order to influence politics in the interests of Germany.⁴³ While in the *Manchester Sunday Chronicle* an author with the telling epithet of "John Briton", held that Jews as well as German Jews had –

"forced themselves into public positions and Government jobs, and have then behaved in a way that no loyal and honest Englishman would behave."⁴⁴

Once again, "Jews" and "Jewish" form of public conduct served as a negative foil for the definition of what made an Englishman: loyalty, honesty and, apparently, modesty.

Leo Maxse's writings on the Jews belonged into the context of what his biographer had named his "fight for a clean government."⁴⁵ In principle, as he wrote as early as in January 1912, Maxse saw any British government under influence and direction of "cosmopolitan Jews", testifying to the irresponsibility of leading politicians on both sides of the House; however, until mid-war, it was the Liberal government and Party which came primarily under severe criticism.⁴⁶ Opponents to the South African War had used the picture of Jewish influence when describing Government policy as immoral, wrong, and against the interest of the nation, eleven years on, the right-wing

⁴² Maxse, "Fight."

⁴³ "Taking sides in English Politics", *The Walsall Pioneer*, March 26, 1915, 4.

⁴⁴ John Briton, "The Great Betrayal. How England helps Germany to fight England", *Sunday Chronicle*, October 10, 1915.

⁴⁵ Hutcheson, "Maxse," 412 passim.

⁴⁶ "The Cabal", NR, 58/1 (1912): 679-680. For press-control in behalf of Germany and Jewish influence on the government prior to 1914, see, for instance, "Peculiar Propaganda", NR, 58/1 (1912): 688. "Disloyal Jews", NR, 61/3 (1913): 6-7.

journalist James Leopold Maxse untiringly employed the same motif in his condemnation of the Liberal Government's policies: in April 1913 Maxse came up with an echo to the utterances of the pro-Boers. His theme was the reputation of the country abroad and the quality of policy-making under the "Asquith clique" who would do anything to maintain the power. Leo Maxse castigated the "deterioration of standards of public life", and the only hope was that of relief – "in spite of the Hebrew clutch upon the Radical Party, the spread of Hebrew power in Parliament, in the Press, finance, and society." As had been the case in 1899/1900, Jews signified the epitome of lack of ideals and empty materialism, the "old struggle between men and money" in Maxse's words.⁴⁷

By August 1914 Leo Maxse had developed the core of his accusations; however, after the outbreak of the War his contributions became more frequent. Over and again, it was the alleged "semitic control" over the British government and leading politicians around which his elaborations circled; and with this motif the questions of how government decisions came about, who decided, who was listened to and whose interests materialized with the help of members of the government. Leo Maxse, too, harshly attacked government ministers for their Jewish contacts and for leaking information which would then reach Berlin.⁴⁸ In the course of the war, Leo Maxse's antisemitism and his criticism of the political elite became harsher: what had been explained rather by naiveté before, was increasingly interpreted as the consequence of ill-will and a lack of responsibility towards Britain in the second half of the war.⁴⁹ Further, from early in 1916 a potential separate peace agreement with Germany began to enter into Leo Maxse's writings. He warned against Jewish financial interests behind peace feelers, and untiringly pointed to the way in which these Jewish intrigues, designed at ending the peace under conditions favourable only to Germany, undermined international agreements between the allied governments, namely the Pact of London of September 1914.⁵⁰ It was this "amateur diplomacy of hyphenated finance", "backstairs business", the machinations of the "international Jew", which constituted the real threat to democracy, in Maxse's view.⁵¹ Maxse's crusade for the salvation of representative democracy and the defence of the nation against the workings

⁴⁷ "Men v. Money", NR, 61/4 (1913): 189-190.

⁴⁸ For the allegation of a Jewish grip on the British government after August 1914, see, for instance, 'Our military Weakness', NR, 64 (Sept 1914): 2-3. James Leopold Maxse, "Fight." "Rich and Poor", NR, 64/12 (1914): 515-516. James Leopold Maxse, "Rothschilds in Downing Street", NR, 66/9 (1915): 94-100. 'The International Jew', NR, 66/1 (1916): 652-653. "The I.J.", NR, 66/2 (1916): 813-814. 'Musical Chairs', NR, 67/7 (1916): 665-666. 'Financial Roll of Honour', NR, 41/3 (1917): 41.

⁴⁹ "A Spy", NR, 69/4 (1917): 137-138.

⁵⁰ The Pact of London (5 Sept 1914) was an agreement between France, Russia and Britain against a separate peace. Italy later joined the agreement.

⁵¹ "High Finance", NR, 66 (Jan 1916), 651-652. Further references to the Pact of London can be found in, "The International Jew", NR, 66 (Jan 1916), 652-653. 'Competitive 'Canards'', NR, 68 (Dec 1916), 437-438. "A Greater Danger", NR, 69 (Apr 1917), 138-139.

of Jews in highest places lasted into the immediate inter-war period, when he commented on the peace negotiations in Paris. Leo Maxse was not the only British voice who severely criticised secret diplomacy and thus the perceived British leniency on Germany, which did not go together from a British point of view with the promises Lloyd George had made in the run up to the elections in December 1918.⁵² Leo Maxse, however, translated this into his very own language and pictures.

Once the peace treaty had been signed, Leo Maxse identified the Jewish control over British government policy and the Premier David Lloyd George as the reasons for the, at the end in his view, far too lenient terms for Germany.⁵³ This line of interpretation just as with the reading of the Jews against the nation, was shared, for example, by the *Morning Post*. In late November 1918, after the signing of the armistice and in the run-up to the general election, a leader expressed concern about the state of the national parliament, parties and electioneering by the people after four years of war. What would be necessary was a “clean sweep of German-Jewish and other corrupting influences in our public life”, as much as an “independent” House of Commons working in the interest of the nation. The *Morning Post* hoped for a return to “national politics” and in view of the upcoming peace negotiations in Paris, demanded that Britain should be represented only by men of “British blood and feeling” with an understanding of ‘national sentiments as to the peace terms’.⁵⁴ A couple of weeks later, *The Times* reproduced in one of its leaders the assumption that “some international financiers” were said to play too great a role in the surroundings of the Peace Conference, a formula very close to the comments on the Jewish sway over the British delegation published in the NR.⁵⁵

From the pro-Boer utterances to the Paris Peace Conference, British commentators resorted to the theme of Jewish influence in order to portray government policy as harmful and destructive to the nation and the State. This is only possible, if the subjects of such outpourings perceive Jews as a negative ferment to the nation the Jews reside in, irrespective of what individual Jews did or did not do. It is that particular conviction, which forms the very essence of modern antisemitism. In this view, expressed explicitly for instance by Arnold White and James Leopold Maxse, Jews had too much influence on the State and this influence “imperilled the State”, as Maxse wrote in 1920, looking back at what he considered as the for England unhealthy “ascendancy Jews were allowed to assume” prior to the outbreak of the Great War.⁵⁶

⁵² On the British debate of German reparations, see, Barbee-Sue, Rodman, “Britain debates Justice: an Analysis of the Reparations Issue,” *Journal of British Studies*, 8 (1968): 140-154.

⁵³ “The I.J.”, NR, 73/5 (1919): 300-301.

⁵⁴ “The Dead Language”, *The Morning Post*, November 21, 1918.

⁵⁵ “The Conference hesitates”, *The Times*, April 3, 1919.

⁵⁶ White, “Efficiency,” 82. For Maxse, see, “‘Anti-Semitism’”, NR, 74 (Jan 1920), 588-589.

One core element of modern antisemitism that can be found in the German context as in Britain, was a dual picture of the Jew. This view juxtaposed bad Jews with good Jews with the latter standing for everything interpreted as positive by the speaker with reference to his own collectivity.⁵⁷ For Arnold White, it was time of residence, two centuries, that allowed the Jew to be categorized “gallant Jew” who would throw in his lot with the nation while the bad “foreign” Jew undermined nation and State.⁵⁸ During the First World War, many commentators contrasted the bad and dangerous German Jews with all other Jews, or simply, good with bad Jews. As the *Investors’ Review* instructed its readers in June 1916, the good Jews were all patriots and loyal.⁵⁹ In Leo Maxse’s world, too, there existed two types of Jews: the “international Jew” and the “national Jew”, and Maxse himself demonstrated by his shifting uses of the pictures, that the notion of a good, national Jew does not testify to the weakness of an author’s prejudice, but forms part of the prejudiced concept.⁶⁰ For Maxse, Jews had the potential to be good patriots and loyal citizens. Still, who was and what made a “national Jew” depended entirely on criteria set by the commentator, in this case by Maxse. Moreover, just as the “international Jew” had the potential to become a “national Jew”, the metamorphosis could also go the other way round, and a “good Jew” could be turned into a “bad Jew.” This was the fate suffered by the conservative politician Lord Rothschild at the hands of Leo Maxse: two years before the war, Rothschild had been praised in the NR as a prime example of a “good national Jew.”⁶¹ Seven years later, after the war and after Leo Maxse’s antisemitism had become even more radical, he dubbed Lord Rothschild – referring to the same time in his active life in politics for which he was praised earlier – the international Jew, who had been manipulating British policy in the interest of Germany at the time of the Conservative Government.⁶²

Moreover, the “national” Jews were by no means spared attacks. Since it was them who were held responsible for the misdeeds of the “bad” or “international Jews”, and the whole of the Jewish minority was repeatedly threatened with negative consequences to the status of Jews in the country, if they didn’t stop the machinations of those identified as acting against

⁵⁷ For German narratives on good and bad Jews see, George Mosse, “The image of the Jew in German Popular Literature: Felix Dahn and Gustav Freytag,” *Germans & Jews. The Right, the Left, and the search for a “Third Force” in pre-Nazi Germany*, ed. George Mosse, (New York: Grusset & Dunlap, 1971), 61-76.

⁵⁸ White, “Efficiency,” 78-79.

⁵⁹ “The German Spy Mania-The Forestal Land Co. and Lady Rothschild”, *The Investors’ Review*, June 24, 1916, 794-795. See, for instance, John Briton, “The Great Betrayal,” *Sunday Chronicle*, October 10, 1915. “In Passing”, *The Ilkeston Pioneer*, March 24, 1916, 4.

⁶⁰ William Rubinstein holds that the notion of a ‘national Jew’ testifies to the weakness of Maxse’s prejudice. Rubinstein, *History*, 119.

⁶¹ “Advertising Ambassadors”, NR, 59/7 (1912): 751.

⁶² James Leopold Maxse, “The Second Treaty of Versailles. I. Introduction, with a Digression”, NR, 73/8 (1919): 818.

England's very interests.⁶³ Further, those categorized by Leo Maxse as "national Jews" were not considered Englishmen and part of the nation. At best, "national Jews" were seen as "politically indistinguishable" from Englishmen.⁶⁴

III. The denial of being British

Antisemitic texts constitute their very own form of violence.⁶⁵ They wield oppressive as well as intimidating power and bestow justification upon discriminatory language and behaviour in everyday life. The above discussion sheds a glaring light on the quality of textual violence levelled against the Jewish minority in Britain in the 1900s. Embedded in a host of negative ascriptions, vilifications and frequent open threats to the Jews' status in England, the most prominent element was the Jews' wholesale and categorical exclusion from the nation, their denial of being English and British.⁶⁶ From the late Victorian Era until the immediate aftermath of the Great War, British antisemitic utterances on both sides of the political divide, went hand in hand with criticism of the Government and an appeal for transparency as well as the common good as guide line for policy making. In Britain, too, Jews were defined as a race apart and beyond Judaism. However, the variant of racism reflected in this racial construction of the Jew falls into the category of genealogical racism as distinct from anthropological racism, which emerged in Europe in the second half of the 19th century and, in particular, entered with the *völkisch* strands of antisemitism on the Continent, in Imperial Germany.⁶⁷ British authors commonly used the notion of a "Jewish race"; still, this "Jewish race" was not allocated in a coherent system and hierarchy of human races which would then had been ascribed fixed racial character traits founded on biology. Leo Maxse, just like any of the other authors discussed in this essay, used the notion of a "Jewish race" but did not introduce Jews as one amongst other "races." A racial construction of the Jews notwithstanding, the ultimate term of reference for the definition of the Gentile speakers' relation to the

⁶³ See, for example, "The I.J.", NR, 73/5 (1919): 300-301. John Briton, "Lord Reading in America", *Sunday Chronicle*, September 26, 1915, 1. "The Choice before Labour", *The Morning Post*, January 24, 1918, 6.

⁶⁴ "Dangerous?", NR, 64/10 (1914): 161-162.

⁶⁵ Ulrich Sieg, "Auf dem Weg zur „dichten Beschreibung,' Neuere Literatur zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 12 (2003): 342.

⁶⁶ For a contemporary Anglo-Jewish comment not only on the extent antisemitism has increased to in Britain by early 1914, but also on the emotional and psychological impact on Jews, see, "How Jews suffer", *The Jewish World*, January 28, 1914, 8. For the Jewish responses to antisemitism during the First World War, see, Susanne Terwey, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Großbritannien, 1899-1919. Über die Funktion von Vorurteilen sowie Einwanderung und nationale Identität* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), chapter 5.

⁶⁷ Werner Bergmann, "Völkischer Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich", *Handbuch zur Völkischen Bewegung', 1871-1918*, eds. Uwe Puschner, Walter Schmitz, Justus H. Ulbricht (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1996), 302-315. For the distinction between genealogical racism and anthropological racism, see, Heil, "Antijudaismus", 103 *passim*.

Jews was and remained the nation against which the Jews were read. This becomes even more evident in the prevalence of the dual picture of the Jew in the British discourse well into the twentieth century. This, albeit most discriminating, concept, was preconditioned by discursive permeability and fluency, for which a racial hierarchy would not have allowed. Finally, that it was the 'nation' which remained the focal point of the antisemitic discourse was manifested in the picture of the 'inter-national' versus the 'national' Jew which figured prominently not only in the writings of James Leopold Maxse.

In May 1904 the British Premier Arthur Balfour had been pointed to a newspaper article discussing growing antisemitism in Britain, which led the Prime Minister to dismiss the idea publicly as "quite untrue" in *The Times*. This provoked a sharp retort in shape of a letter to the editor by the author Israel Zangwill who pointed to an increasing number of incidents of anti-Jewish violence and manifestations of racial prejudice.⁶⁸ British political culture as it developed in the course of the 19th century secured the status of the Jews as religious minority and thus also contained specific forms of antisemitism, namely, attacks on Jews in their status as a religious and cultural minority and, consequently, a widespread questioning of Jewish legal emancipation, which had largely gone along with modern antisemitism in Germany. However, the British liberal self-image, modelled on the British political scenery as much as by positive comparative glance on the Continent, brought about a Gentile narrative according to which whatever was said about and done to Jews in Britain was not "antisemitic", and thus stood in a way of an open and self-critical approach to British antisemitism.

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⁶⁸ "Mr. Balfour and the Aliens Bill", *The Times*, May 11, 1904, 7. Contrary to what the title of this short article may suggest, Balfour not only referred to the Aliens Act as not directed against Jews, but commented on antisemitism in general. For Zangwill's response, see, *The Times*, May 13, 1904, 15.

Middle-class Gothenburg, Jewish Participation, and the Limits of Liberal Tolerance 1870-1900

by *Christoph Leiska*

Abstract

This article discusses the extent and conditions of Jewish participation in Swedish society c. 1870-1900. Whereas earlier research on Jewish history in Sweden had pictured this period as a time of peaceful integration, recent studies have stressed the continuities of cultural representations of 'the Jew' as essentially different from 'the Swede'. Taking the city of Gothenburg as an example, this article offers a new approach by discussing the role of conflicting national and urban elements within liberal self-identification. With regard to urban identities, attitudes of toleration and religious pluralism went side by side with the liberal representation of Gothenburg as being different – different from its rural hinterland, but also from the capital Stockholm. These images of Gothenburg as being exceptionally progressive and open-minded facilitated Jewish participation in the city's communal politics and associational life. On a national level, however, the ambiguities of Swedish liberal thinking persisted: An increasingly politicised discussion about national identity from the 1880s onwards reveals that the protagonists of Gothenburg liberalism had far greater difficulties in including Jews into their vision of the Swedish nation than the imagined liberties of Gothenburg city culture would suggest.

Antisemitism and the extend and limits of Jewish integration in the nineteenth century has long attracted only marginal attention by scholars of Swedish history. The dominant focus on class conflict and societal structures has long obscured the place of ethnic, religious, and other minorities in Swedish history: Changing experiences of minority groups ran counter to long-term narratives of Swedish history that operated with an implicit understanding of a largely homogeneous state and society, divided only by class interests. Especially historians of the 1970s and 1980s looked back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century in order to uncover the roots for what became known as the “Swedish Model”: a special social ethos favoured by deeply-rooted egalitarian traditions that facilitated a peaceful development on all levels of society, and a unique ability to cope with conflicts at critical moments of the historical process. These narratives of Swedish history were obviously modelled along the lines of the German *Sonderweg* theory, which served as starting point and counter-image for the analysis of historical developments in Sweden. Contrasting to nineteenth century Germany's aggressive nationalism, her militaristic political culture and rampant antisemitism, liberal Sweden stood out as a bright alternative, a prosperous country in which people lived in easy tolerance and harmony.

Also the way Swedish Jewish history has been narrated has largely been affected by this kind of master narrative. For a long time, ideas of an exceptionally peaceful and smooth integration of the Jewish minority were readily accepted without problematising the coercive and homogenising impulses of modern society or the efforts of minorities to define their own place in the national community. This traditional understanding could draw upon the works of the liberal doyens of Swedish Jewish history: They interpreted Swedish Jewish history as part of a larger historical process, ever progressing towards enlightenment and liberty.¹ According to Hugo Valentin's masterly study of 1924, which still is the most elaborate presentation of early Swedish Jewish history, the years after the accomplishment of emancipation were something of a golden age for Swedish Jewry: Undisturbed by anti-Semitic harassments and socially accepted by their non-Jewish neighbours, Swedish Jews attained high positions in society and contributed greatly to the progress of the Swedish nation. Indeed, not until the inter-war period did Sweden see the establishment of a handful of anti-Semitic organisations and none of these parties and organisations achieved considerable political strength.² Thus, when compared to the turmoil on the continent, the relative failure of Swedish organised antisemitism seemed once more to confirm the particular strength of Sweden's liberal values and tolerant attitudes.³

Needless to say, that this idealistic reading of Swedish Jewish history has long been criticised. Especially studies working on cultural representations of "the Jew" in Swedish society have led to a revision of the far too harmonious picture of Jewish integration.⁴ However, by strictly confining its analysis on "majority society" and its hostilities, research in antisemitism generally tends to overlook the plurality of interactions between Jews and non-Jews. Moreover, the predominance of discourse analysis within research on Swedish antisemitism leads back to questions regarding the balance of structure and agency: Research on antisemitism as a discourse has little to say about how Jews perceived of their position in public life and how they actively participated in shaping spaces and cultures of interaction.

This article focuses on social practices and every-day relations instead. It tries to apply an "every-day-perspective" on the interactions between Jews and non-

¹ Hugo Valentin, *Judarnas historia i Sverige*, (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1924); Eskil Olán, *Judarna på svensk mark: historien om israeliternas invandring till Sverige*, (Stockholm: Rex, 1924).

² Lena Berggren, *Nationell Upplysning. Drag i den svenska antisemitismens idéhistoria*, (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1999).

³ For the difficulties of comparative analysis in the field of antisemitism, see, Tony Kushner, "Comparing Antisemitisms: A Useful Exercise?", *Two nations: British and German Jews in comparative perspective*, eds. Michael Brenner, Werner E. Mosse, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 91-109.

⁴ Lars M. Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude... Repräsentationer av 'juden' i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900-1930*, (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000).

Jews in Swedish politics and civil society. Its aim is, thus, to shed some light on the extent and conditions of Jewish participation and to critically reconsider the efficacy of those liberal ideas which are so often offered as explanation for the undisturbed and smooth integration of Jews into Swedish society. The chosen example for this study is Gothenburg, Sweden's port to the West, and undisputed centre of nineteenth-century liberalism.⁵ At the same time, the city was home to the second largest Jewish community in Sweden which in 1855 had proudly celebrated the inauguration of the country's first public synagogue. As similar building projects throughout Europe, the synagogue on *Stora Nygatan* symbolically affirmed that the Jews were willing to be seen and that they had the wherewithal to establish a presence in their city.⁶

Gothenburg: City of Liberalism

The Napoleonic Continental System in the beginning of the century had radically altered Gothenburg's economic and political elite. With Gothenburg's port serving as one of few loopholes for England's trade with the Continent, the local economy boomed and attracted merchant families of very different origins.⁷ While some of the new players on a brisk but increasingly risky market accumulated great wealth which provided the basis for Gothenburg's emerging enterprises in the following century, some of the long-established merchant houses had to face bankruptcy and disappeared. In the early 1830s, the city's economic and political elite had profoundly changed.⁸ A new elite of merchants, financiers and factory owners gradually took over more and more power from older governmental agencies and self-confidently began to re-define Gothenburg's city culture. This transformation of the city was facilitated by the fact that Gothenburg lacked strong traditions of autonomy and pre-modern forms of self-government. Founded in 1623 as a new port and stronghold on the west coast of Sweden, Gothenburg's rights and status as a town had long been limited by the state's interest in its strategic position. Until the early nineteenth century, the local representatives of the crown had exerted considerable influence on the city's policies and defended their right to possess

⁵ See Jan Christensen, *Liberalernas stad. Fattigvård och kulturdonationer i artonhundratalets Göteborg*, (Göteborg: Daidalos, 2009); Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930*, (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 2004), 454 et seq.

⁶ Richard I. Cohen, "Urban Visibility and Biblical Visions: Jewish Culture in Western and Central Europe in the Modern Age", *Cultures of the Jews. vol. 3: Modern Encounters*, ed. David Biale (New York: Schocken books, 2002), 9-76, 25.

⁷ For Gothenburg's general history, see, Martin Fritz, *Göteborgs historia: Näringsliv och samhällsutveckling. vol. 2: Från handelsstad till industristad 1820-1920*, (Göteborg: Nerenius & Santérus, 1996).

⁸ Thomas Magnusson, "Borgarklass i vardande. Göteborgskapitalister 1780 och 1830", *Historisk Tidskrift* 109/1 (1989), 46-74.

one of three keys to the city's treasury (the other two were held by *borgerskapets* aldermen and the treasurer).⁹

It needs to be emphasised that the immigration of Jews to Gothenburg and other Swedish cities took place in this peculiar period of fundamental socio-economical, and political changes. Other than in the port cities on the continent, Jews in Gothenburg were immigrants in the literal meaning of the term: Not until the 1770s had Jews been allowed to settle in the Kingdom of Sweden. During the reign of Gustavus III (1771-1792) the ban on Jewish settlement had partly been lifted and small Jewish communities started to develop in four assigned towns.¹⁰ Even if anti-Judaic attitudes of the Church persisted in Christian preaching and arts, Jewish - non-Jewish interactions in Swedish towns had no previous history of segregation and no memories pertaining to a Jewish-Gentile past. On the other hand was Jewish life still subject to the heavy restrictions of the *judereglement* which only were abolished in 1838. In 1815, the small Jewish community of Gothenburg comprised of not more than 215 individuals, but slowly grew to 382 in 1855 – the year of the inauguration of Gothenburg synagogue, and 667 in 1890. The restrictive immigration policies towards Jews in the early 19th century had an immense impact on both the social structure of the Jewish immigrant group and on the character of Jewish integration: The modes and spheres of interaction between Jews and non-Jews in Gothenburg were very much shaped by the fact that the vast majority of Jewish newcomers integrated into a specific subgroup of society: The wealthy and educated middle class. As the following pages will show, Jews were intensely engaged both in the cultural formation of this faction of Gothenburg bourgeoisie which became the main bearer of Gothenburg liberalism.

Liberal ideas were shaped and disseminated at the local level through the mediation of voluntary associations. They provided an important forum for the expression of social and political values and were considered as central to the reform of society.¹¹ Only very few of these associations were explicitly directed towards political goals. But membership in an association constituted a basic prerequisite for an active and responsible citizenship, promoted by liberal thinkers from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. The various societies and clubs of Gothenburg's economic elite had opened up relatively early for the Jewish immigrants. In contrast to German cities, where Jews continued to be denied access to the general associational life, the

⁹ Regarding the administrative history of Gothenburg see: Artur Attman et al., *Göteborgs stadsfullmäktige 1863-1962. vol. 3: Stadsfullmäktige. Stadens styrelser och förvaltningar*, (Göteborg: Elander, 1971).

¹⁰ For the general history of Swedish Jewry, see Valentin, "Judarnas historia".

¹¹ Torkel Jansson, *Adertonhundratalets associationer: Forskning och problem kring ett sprängfullt tomrum eller sammanslutningsprinciper och föreningsformer mellan två samhällsformationer c:a 1800-1870*, (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1985).

heterogeneous character of the new bourgeoisie in Gothenburg seems to have led to a more inclusive character of the city's associational life – sure enough only in relation to cultural difference, but neither in relation to class nor gender. The powerful merchant guild had already during the time of the Napoleonic Continental System admitted individual Jewish merchants and so had the Order of the Amaranth (*Amaranther-Orden*), a society devoted to the conveying and practicing of bourgeois manners and values.

An important example for the persisting exclusion of Jews, however, were the freemasonry lodges of Gothenburg. In contrast to English or French lodges, Scandinavian freemasonry of the so-called “Swedish rite” emphasised (and in fact still does so today) its Christian character by refusing to accept non-Christians. Swedish freemasonry thus became a stronghold for the idea of confessional homogeneity and the predominance of Lutheranism in society.¹² Due to the small overall number of Jews, the continuing exclusionary practice of the Masonic Lodges never sparked a significant reform debate in Sweden. Moreover, the predominantly Christian character of its lodges seems to have weakened the position of freemasonry within the upper bourgeoisie's sociability during the course of the century. The merchant elite of Gothenburg had created new, competing forms of sociability, of which the most prominent certainly was *The Royal Bachelor's Club*. The club was a very exclusive society, established by and for Gothenburg's upper class men. Founded in 1769 already, it connected to the tradition of English gentlemen's clubs, providing a private environment in which to carry out conversation and billiard sports. Though established about in the same time as the Masonic Lodges of the city, the club had its heyday not before the fall of the Napoleonic continental system, when it became an association of a more official character. As early as 1821, the club had decided to admit Lazarus Elias Magnus (wholesaler), Valk Isaac Vallentin (merchant), and Aron Magnusson Magnus (merchant). During the following years, further Gothenburg Jews applied successfully for membership. *The Royal Bachelor's Club* became one of the most prominent gathering places of the city's (male) mercantile elite, joined in 1872 by the *Merkantila Förening* and in 1894 by the more occupational-related *Börssällskap*.

Scholars have often portrayed the history of associations and civil society as a male-dominated story. Jewish middle-class women, however, played important roles in the differentiation of Gothenburg's associational life. Women of the Magnus family for example, were very involved in *Sällskapet för uppmuntrande av öm och sedlig modersvård* (The Society for Encouraging Tender and Moral Motherly Care). During the 30 years from 1870 to 1900, some member of the family always was active within the society's board. Founded in 1849, the society was one of the city's most reputable charity institutions. Its members

¹² So far, research on Swedish freemasonry seems not to have noticed this peculiar exclusive character; see the essays in *Mystiskt brödrskap – mäktigt nätverk: Studier i det svenska 1700-talsfrimureriet*, ed. Andreas Önnersfors (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2006).

were solely established women of Gothenburg's higher bourgeoisie who directed the society's activity towards working class mothers with at least three children. Though the society did distribute direct support to a limited number of women, the main purpose of the society was not to grant material help, but to inculcate its protégées with a sense of moral responsibility, domestic peace and orderliness.¹³ The society ran a work-house for mothers and closely co-operated with the city's Poor Relief Board.

The numerous clubs and associations had a major impact on the making of Gothenburg's middle-class. Their activities formed important networks; their members shared common values and interests and thus created mutual trust and a sense of common belonging. At the same time, the socially exclusive clubs and associations of the city's male elite provided the main forums for defining and formulating local policies. They constituted a parallel, informal structure of communal politics, where future policies and recommendations for elections were discussed and sometimes even decided beforehand.¹⁴ The underlying understanding of communal politics as – in contrast to politics on a national level – being primarily “un-political” and harmonious was an integral part of what later became known as *Göteborgsandan* (the spirit of Gothenburg). With the important exception of freemasonry and those associations connected to the Church or evangelical revivalism, Jewish Gothenburgers took part in these informal structures and made use of their possibilities to influence the decision-making process within communal politics. The participation in voluntary associations and liberal discussion circles on a local level provided the opportunity to, at least to some extent, influence politics on a level, where discriminatory regulations still excluded Jews from direct participation: In the early 1860s, Aron Philipsson, a successful advocate and member of the Jewish Community Board, participated actively in the debates leading to the Swedish *Riksdag* being reformed as a modern bicameral parliament. In spite of the fact that even those liberal reforms would not bring equality in terms of eligibility to the *Riksdag*, Philipsson was nominated member of the city's delegation to present the government with the city's reform proposals.¹⁵

Compared to the slow and gradual process of emancipation at a national and legislative level, the integration into the networks and associations of local liberalism was by far less controversial. However, in spite of the changes in local political culture, which originated from the associational networks of a new bourgeoisie, it was not before 1862 that the municipal reform (*1862 års*

¹³ For the “Society for Encouraging Tender and Moral Motherly Care” see, Birgitta Jordansson, “Women and Philanthropy in a liberal context. The case of Gothenburg”, *Charitable Women. Philanthropic Welfare 1780-193. A Nordic and Interdisciplinary Anthology*, eds. Birgitta Jordansson and Tinne Vammen, (Odense: Odense University Press, 1998), 65-88.

¹⁴ Åberg, Martin: *En fråga om klass? Borgarklass och industriellt företagande i Göteborg 1850-1914*, (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1991), 155 et seq.

¹⁵ Stig Ekman, *Slutstriden om representationsreformen*, (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1966), 231.

kommunalförordningar) finally brought an end to the old corporative form of local government. The composition of the subsequently established town council once more reflected the primacy of a self-confident elite in the city. Half of the city councillors were directors or wholesalers, and only two out of 50 were representatives of the city's master artisans. For the Jewish citizens however, who had never gained access to the traditional corporate institutions, the new institution meant a radically new opportunity to participate in the city's political culture. In the following years, Jews assumed an important role in Gothenburg Liberalism and thus had an important part in creating "The Liberals' city" (*Liberalernas stad*) as the city was frequently referred to. During a time in the 1870s, twelve of the 57 seats in the city council were held by Jewish councillors. Earlier research has documented the various activities of Jewish town councillors and other municipal office-holders.¹⁶ In deed, there is no sign for discrimination considering appointments to communal public offices. Philip Leman, a Jewish advocate, was elected city councillor in 1872 and re-elected several times. For more than 30 years, he was member of the city council and acted as its deputy chairman for 16 years. For some time he was chairman of the city's powerful and prestigious financial committee and through the years acted as member in countless boards and ad-hoc committees. In September 1895, he was elected Member of the First Chamber of the *Riksdag* by the town council.

The liberal utopia of Gothenburg depended heavily on the census suffrage system, and thus on the exclusion of the vast majority of the city's population. Census suffrage (which included in some cases women, but also public companies) guaranteed political power to a small group of leading citizens holding up to 100 votes each. In 1870, only 20% of the city's population were entitled to vote at all, most of them holding only one single vote.¹⁷ In this respect, Gothenburg liberal culture certainly was an elite phenomenon which offered participation only to a small stratum of the city's population. However, I would argue that Gothenburg Liberalism's exclusionary character in relation to class and its inclusionary character in relation to cultural difference were in fact two faces of the same coin. Gothenburg liberalism rested upon the individualistic values and ideals of a new mercantile elite. It did not have much in common with the pre-modern traditions of municipal autonomy which were represented by the board of aldermen (*Borgerskapets äldste*). Neither did Gothenburg Liberalism connect to 19th century's mass movements (*folkrörelse*), which were of great importance to the liberal movement in more rural areas.¹⁸

¹⁶ Artur Attman, "Judiska insatser i Göteborgs samhällsutveckling," *Göteborgs Mosaiska Församling 1780-1980: Minnesskrift till Göteborgs Mosaiska församling 200-års jubileum*, ed. Carl Vilhelm Jacobowsky, (Göteborg: Göteborgs Mosaiska Församling, 1980), 33-57.

¹⁷ Attman et al., "Göteborgs stadsfullmäktige", 58 et seq.

¹⁸ See, Martin Åberg, "Liberalismen som historiskt problem", *Parti eller rörelse? Perspektiv på liberala organisationsstrategier 1880-1940*, eds. Tomas Nilson and Martin Åberg, (Lund: Sekel 2010), 9-15.

The needs and interests of Gothenburg as a trading city and the political influence of a heterogeneous merchant elite made the city a stronghold of Swedish liberalism during the times of major political reforms from the 1840s to the 1850s. Besides, Gothenburg's reputation as the home of Swedish liberalism was largely based on the influence of its leading newspaper, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* ("The Gothenburg Trade and Shipping Journal", usually called only *Handelstidning*) and its talented editor, Sven Adolf Hedlund. Hedlund took over editing the newspaper – which already then was known as "radical from Gothenburg" – in 1851 and quickly turned it into the leading liberal voice of the country.¹⁹ Together with the writer, religious historian and idealist philosopher Viktor Rydberg, he managed to establish a close collaboration with Scandinavia's leading intellectuals, as for example Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson in Norway and Georg Brandes in Denmark. Right from the beginning, Sven Adolf Hedlund's agenda concerning *Handelstidning* is quite clear: cultural identity, political reforms and – especially in the 1850s and 60s – religious toleration. Hedlund's villa in Gothenburg became a major forum for political, literary and aesthetic discussions. Early members of his staff were the Jewish writers Jonas Philipson and Mauritz Rubensson, later joined by the famous literary critic Karl Warburg.

In addition to its political agenda, liberal *Handelstidningen* was also a protagonist in the transformation process of Gothenburg's urban culture. In the 1860s and 1870s, Mauritz Rubensson became famous for his accounts of the city's society life but also for his reports on the stunning metamorphosis of "new Gothenburg".²⁰ In deed, after the old city walls had been torn down in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Gothenburg had gradually evolved into a modern city. On the first of December 1856, the first train bound for Jönsered left the new station; Gothenburg's new bourgeoisie promenaded proudly on *Nya Allén* or in *Trädgårdsföreningen's* recently established park. In 1854, the statue of Gustavus Adolphus, the founding father of Gothenburg, completed the rebuilding of the city's central square. The significant changes in the cityscape took place in a time of huge migrations from the countryside into the city: Gothenburg's population grew rapidly from 21.000 in 1830 to 130.600 in 1900. *Handelstidningen* and other newspapers assisted the profound transformation of the city as much as they profited from it: As on the continent, the growth of a bourgeois public sphere and the accessibility of cafés, parks, and waiting rooms invited reading and brought ever larger readership to the newspapers.²¹ In addition to the coverage of diplomatic crises and parliamentary debates, *Handelstidningen* and other newspapers served as a medium for local communication and gave meaning to the rapid change of the city.

¹⁹ Christensen, "Liberalernas stad", 90 et seq.

²⁰ See for example, Mauritz Rubensson, "Det nya Göteborg", *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, August 19, 1875; August 8, 1875.

²¹ Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900*, (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1996), 57.

The newspapers' writing on the city thus both reflected and shaped their middle-class readers' identification with the city: Through the press, the protagonists of Gothenburg Liberalism established their reading of the city as exceptionally open and tolerant: In their point of view, Gothenburg was different: In contrast to Stockholm, Gothenburg had no royal palace and no gentlemen of leisure. It was a city of burghers, characterised above all by entrepreneurial spirit and a civic sense of responsibility. In 1864, Sven Adolf Hedlund attested to this special spirit of Gothenburg in a review of the recently started *Svenske Månadsskrift*:

“It is not a mere coincidence that Svensk Månadsskrift is edited in Gothenburg. It rather is an expression of the many-faceted and industrious spirit which reigns here. Gothenburg's society is young and fortunately enough youthful as well. Hence, [in Gothenburg], courage meets both the freedom and the independence of thinking and acting.”²²

More than half a century later, Torgny Segerstedt, one of Sven Adolf Hedlund's successors as editor-in-chief of the newspaper, published a similar account of Gothenburg's exceptionally open-minded city culture:

“Seafaring, commerce and merchant culture with its cosmopolitanism has constituted the living spirit in Gothenburg life for decennia. [...] The relation to countries overseas has always lent a unique character to the city. [...] In Gothenburg, the same traditions which have made the city truly follow its great founder's [Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden] intentions over hundreds of years, are still alive and form the city's culture.”²³

Also the self-conceptions of Gothenburg's urban Jewish elite were in line with these narratives of Gothenburg as an exceptionally free and outward-looking community. When Robert Jaffé reported about “Jews in Sweden” for the German Jewish newspaper “*Ost und West*”, his local informants provided him with a portrayal of proud descendants of courageous seafarers and self-assertive merchants of Sephardic origin:

“The ancestors of the Swedish Jews came from across the sea as tall and upright men. They encountered the Swedes with all their [courtly] manners, which they had acquired when they had been grand marshals at the Royal Court of Spain. [...] Until today, these

²² *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, March 17, 1864, as quoted in Frauke Hillebrecht, *Göteborg in der nordischen Kulturideologie*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000), 99, fn. 1; all translations are my own.

²³ Torgny Segerstedt, “Göteborg”, *Svenska turistföreningens årskrift*, 1924, 96.

men's descendants distinguish themselves by their decent behaviour, their dignified conduct of life, and their respectable attitude."²⁴

Thus, along with the socio-economic dynamics of an emerging port city it were also cultural perceptions of Gothenburg's peculiar urban identity that constituted the framework for the integration of Jews into the city's middle-class. The presence of a prosperous Jewish community in the city could serve as a proof for the progressive attitudes of middle-class liberalism: for Gothenburg's political elite, attitudes of tolerance were a fundamental component of self-identification and added to the allegedly exceptional character of liberal Gothenburg's political culture. In 1859, Victor Rydberg published a literary description of Gothenburg's new cityscape. He takes his literary visitor on a boat trip in order to visit the "very latest Gothenburg". Soon the boat reaches *Stora Nygatan* and Gothenburg synagogue which brings Rydberg to reflect on the inauguration ceremony which he attended four years before. What emerges from his account is nothing less than a liberal utopia:

"I wished, that you, as I did, would have had the opportunity to attend the inauguration of the Gothenburg synagogue. [...] A Catholic had composed the most beautiful hymns, a Protestant had written their lyrics and Protestants raised their voices together with Abraham's children to praise Jehovah"²⁵

A similar argumentation became apparent, when in 1872 the above-mentioned Aron Philipsson ran for parliament. Only one year before, a revision of the *Regeringsform* had given Jewish citizens eligibility for the *Riksdag*. During the local election meeting, Philipsson's candidature was proposed and supported by Charles Dickson, one of the city's representatives in the first chamber of the Swedish *Riksdag* and member of one of the most influential families of the town. Dickson emphasised Philipsson's merits for the city but argued as well, that it should be a "matter of the heart" for all Gothenburgers, to see their city among the first to implement the emancipatory reform of the *Regeringsform*.²⁶ Philipsson could count on the support of all relevant political factions and consequently was elected to the *Riksdag*. However, the primarily symbolical meaning of this election was obvious: The liberal *Handelstidning* was surely delighted about the outcome of the election, but it gave as well a vague criticism: Some Gothenburg citizens had wished to hear at least something about Philipsson's thoughts in the political issues of the time.

²⁴ Robert Jaffé, "Die Juden in Schweden", *Ost und West*, 3/12 (1903): 815-822, 815.

²⁵ Viktor Rydberg, "Stora Nygatan med Synagogan", *Vandringar i Göteborg*, ed. Albert Ekmans Fond (Göteborg 1963 [1859]), 9.

²⁶ *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, September 03, 1872.

Thus, the *modus vivendi* which had come to exist between liberal middle-class Gothenburg and its Jewish peers was a reciprocal relationship. Jews had achieved social acceptance, economic success, and the possibility to develop the institutions of a religious community. The Gothenburg liberal elite, in turn, saw its liberal attitudes and practices verified, which, amongst others, legitimated its own idealist re-creation of Gothenburg city culture. For prominent liberals like Sven Adolf Hedlund or Victor Rydberg, the involvement of Jews in the city served as a proof for the city's exceptional progress with regard to modernity and tolerance.

It was this special character of Gothenburg Liberalism which made the city a preferred target for anti-Semitic attacks from parts of the conservative movement in the mid-1880s. After Germany, as Sweden's most important trading partner, had abandoned her free trade policy in 1878, the political dispute about protective tariffs intensified and led to a lasting politicisation of Swedish society. Gothenburg, as a trading city and traditional stronghold of Liberalism was soon at the centre of a heated debate, which quickly changed from the field of economics to questions of "true patriotism" and national identity. As many of the arguments on both sides of the controversy stemmed from the German debate, it comes as no surprise that parts of the protectionist movement turned out to be rather receptive for the anti-Semitic overtones of anti-liberal campaigns in Germany. In Gothenburg, the establishment of the conservative newspaper *Göteborgs Aftonblad* in 1888 provided a platform for anti-Semitic ideas and, even more important, gave new legitimacy to anti-Semitic opinions. For *Göteborgs Aftonblad*, the Jewish presence in city politics repeatedly served as a powerful counter-model for delineating its own, putatively "Swedish" alternative against the dominating culture of the liberal elite. It is hardly surprising that such debates often evolved around some of the large (and expensive) educational projects which formed a core element of Gothenburg liberalism. Anti-Semites perceived Gothenburg liberalism as essentially alien and rootless, controlled and led astray by the dubious plans of the Jews. However, also these anti-Semitic attacks on liberal Gothenburg, decrying cosmopolitan "*Jödeborg*" as threateningly "un-Swedish", were constructed against and around liberal imaginations of the city as a place of exceptional freedom and openness. Thus, in a twisted way, anti-Semitic accusations and conspiracy theories confirmed the outstanding role of Jewish participation for the city's political culture. It is important to note, though, that antisemitism neither was a permanent aspect of conservative propaganda in Gothenburg, nor became an integral part of conservative doctrine and thinking, as Shulamit Volkov has famously argued for the German case.²⁷

²⁷ Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 100 et seq.

Against these anti-Semitic attacks from the right, Jews could count on Gothenburg liberalism as a reliable ally: In October 1886, a small newspaper from Gothenburg's neighbouring town Borås joined the ongoing debate about free trade policies. It railed against rapacious Jewish merchants in Gothenburg who had no interest whatsoever in the common good of the Swedish people but would do anything to prevent a patriotic tariff policy. Hence, for *Borås Tidning*, the question of protective tariffs was nothing less than a "question of nationality."²⁸ Gothenburg *Handelstidning* published an equally short as harsh reply, rebuking its small counterpart for its racial definition of nationality:

"We cannot in any way accept if people who are born in Sweden and Swedish citizens – fully incorporated into our country and its interests – are referred to as "alien nationality" (*nationalitet*). To produce arguments of race in order to avoid being accused of religious intolerance has been part of the scandalous quarrels in Germany, after which one could hardly speak of nationality anymore. When it comes to race, it is all about talent and character and here does the Semitic race surely not fall behind its Aryan counterpart. It does not in any way depend on race, if a man belongs to one or another nationality. Germans and Swedes, Russians and Frenchmen belong to the same race, but have different nationalities, whereas the Swedish constitute an foreign race in Finland, something that does not deter them from being "good Finns" in nationality."²⁹

Liberal ambiguities

The quotation seems to resemble a classic voluntarist model of "Western" liberal nationalism: *Handelstidningen's* anonymous author rejects any racial definition of nationality, he unambiguously defends Jewish emancipation and presents an inclusive "civic" understanding of nationality that in deed seems to open up for ideas of ethnic and cultural plurality.

Yet, while legally arguing above reproach, it is just this confinement to the merely judicial term of *nationalitet*, which gives reason to throw a little doubt on the efficacy of those traditions of tolerance and cultural pluralism. Liberal Swedish nationalism was on a much larger extend founded upon ideas of common descent and a homogeneous cultural heritage, than the above-mentioned quotation seems to suggest. Anthony D. Smith's argument, that any

²⁸ *Borås Tidning*, October 07, 1886, October 12, 1886.

²⁹ *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, October 13, 1886 (edition A) . For the polemics see as well: Benny Jacobsson, "Sverige åt svenskarna - eller åt medborgarna? Två 'idealtypiska' nationalismen 1886", *Nationalism: en kursredovisning från Avdelningen för idéhistoria vid Stockholms universitet*, ed. Bo Lindberg, (Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 1997), 40-56.

concept of nation is composed “of different elements and dimensions, which we choose to label voluntarist and organic, civic and ethnic, primordial and instrumental”³⁰ seems as well to apply on the Swedish case. Also liberal *Handelstidningen* did, in other contexts, base its conceptions of the Swedish nation and “Swedishness” on myths of origin and shared memories and customs. Imaginations of an “old Norse” past as a natural society of unlimited freedom and equality were an important argument for liberal reformers: *Handelstidningen*’s campaigns for the formation of volunteer rifle corps (*skarpskytteföreningar*) as well as its demand for radical reforms in the field of political representation and its ideas for a new, national education were very much based on those conceptions of a free and unified Swedish *folk*. In its announcement for 1870, the newspaper published a programme for re-constructing an authentic Nordic and Swedish national culture:

“All the peoples (folk) of the Nordic peninsula [...] are beginning to sense that the prerequisites of true education (*bildning*) are rather to find within and to develop out of themselves. These prerequisites are their ancient antiquities (*fornminnen*) and their folk culture (*folklivet*); and it is not until a folk, through those, has found itself, has grown strong, self-sufficient, and complete, that it is strong enough to properly acquire other peoples’ education and let its own light shine for others. [...] The old mores, a world view (*livsåskådning*) of simplicity and sincerity, the old Norse spirit, and even a pure, Swedish language is still to be discovered, and it is most likely to be found in the midst of the people in the countryside, who are still nearly untouched by any ‘foreign make-up’.”³¹

Swedish Liberals strongly rejected the conservatives’ belief in natural ties between the institutions of the Crown, the Church and the Swedish people, they opposed conservative celebrations of long-gone military greatness but they widely agreed to an understanding that the Swedish nation was made up of people with a common ancestry, language, and culture. Ideas of *folkligbet* and “Swedishness” were pivotal constituencies of liberal conceptions of the nation. At the same time, these ideas reveal the exclusionary potential of Swedish liberal nationalism. As Zygmunt Bauman put it: “Jews have been Europe’s prototypical strangers. In the continent of nations and nationalism, they were the only reminder of the relativity of nationhood and the outer limits of nationalism.”³² On a national level, Swedish liberalism had no better answers to

³⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Hanover (NH): Brandeis University Press, 2000), 25.

³¹ *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, December 12, 1871, as quoted in Hillebrecht, “Göteborg”, 162, fn.

³² Zygmunt Bauman, “‘Strangers’: The Social Construction of Universality and Particularity”, *Telos* 78 (1988): 7-42, 26.

the challenge of religious difference than its continental counterparts. How should a Jewish minority be integrated into imaginations of a culturally authentic core of the nation? In a manuscript dealing with the Danish-Jewish author Meïr Aron Goldschmidt, *Handelstidningen's* editor-in-chief Sven Adolf Hedlund suggested that Jews either could be members of the Jewish nation or “cosmopolitans” amongst the nations – the latter specifically meant as a positive quality because Jews, by virtue of their singular nature, could have a reconciliatory influence on the people of the world.³³ However well-intentioned, Hedlund’s argument does as well reveal that he was not really able to break with the liberal ideal of national homogeneity and to include visions of cultural plurality into his cultural construction of nations. Jews were still imagined as being outside the national community.

These ambiguities of liberal thinking did only rarely find their way into public debate: Sweden never experienced a public dispute similar to the Berlin *Antisemitismusstreit* which brought to light the problematic perceptions of Jews in the German bourgeois elite. Neither gave the severe crisis which led to the dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden in 1905 any reason to discuss a purported influence of international Jewry as for example was the case during the Boer War in Britain. With regard to the local level of integration and participation, the peculiar character of communal politics has to be taken into account: As attitudes of toleration and religious pluralism constituted an important part of Gothenburg liberalism’s self-perception, they formed a strong obstacle to expressing anti-Jewish resentments in public. Moreover, the rhetoric of political antisemitism, well known from the ongoing polemics in Germany, would have violated a set of unspoken rules of Gothenburg middle-class politics, which perceived of itself as primarily “un-political” and exceptionally harmonious.

However, these obstacles fell away when writing under the protection of satire,³⁴ or when reporting about “foreign Jews”: When *Handelstidningen's* correspondent in Vienna wrote a critique on Theodor Herzl’s play *Das neue Ghetto*, he praised the author for showing “the real character of Judaism” and acknowledged Herzl’s contribution to the ongoing debate about the “Jewish Question”. Yet, the critic took a sceptical view towards the ideas of Zionism. In stead, he advised to openly address “the faults and shortcomings” of Judaism, which “has not as much been reformed internally as it appears from the outside”. Thus, both the “Jewish Problem” and the problem of antisemitism was primarily caused by the Jews themselves, who nevertheless used the press and their financial power to put the blame on others.³⁵ Also Fritz Henriksson, writing for the same newspaper from Berlin, failed to notice

³³ Sven Adolf Hedlund, “Omdömen om den danske skriftställare Goldschmidt”, Sven Adolf Hedlunds papers, file 2:43, Gothenburg University Library.

³⁴ See Andersson, “En jude är en jude är en jude” 2000.

³⁵ *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, January 26, 1898.

the anti-Semitic overtones in his report from the German capital. He felt disgusted by organised antisemitism and strongly condemned its fanatic leaders. However, also he found that the spreading of organised antisemitism in Germany was partly to blame on the Jews themselves: wasn't it strange how Jews dominated Berlin? And this in spite of the fact, that – “here like anywhere else and at all times” – Jews did not have their strengths in the field of creation, but rather choose to appropriate and make use of the work of others. “And although they never [...] will melt into the surrounding *folk* nor join their nationality, they hold a hegemonic position in the German capital: Thus it didn't come as a big surprise that the surrounding *folk*'s hate turns against them.”³⁶ In both reports, Jews constituted an essentially alien element and a “problem on principle” in their national surroundings, which only did not make itself felt in Sweden because of the small overall number of Jews. However, it would be misleading to understand the two correspondents as simply being infected by Viennese or Berlin illiberality. Rather does their readiness to accept anti-Semitic accusations reveal the difficulties of Swedish liberalism to deal with questions of cultural diversity and to include conceptions of difference into their vision of national identity.³⁷

When in the 1880s and 1890s, the political dispute about protective tariffs led to a politicisation of national identity and to new forms of political rhetoric, these inconsistencies of liberal thought became more apparent within local politics. In 1886, the above-mentioned town councillor Philip Leman ran for one of Gothenburg's seats in the Second Chamber of the Swedish *Riksdag*. Until then, the electoral districts of the city had widely been regarded “safe seats” for the nominees of the town council and some influential associations. By the time of the election, Leman had been serving as a town councillor for more than 10 years and was a respected and successful associate in one of the city's most distinguished law firms. His candidature was not only supported by the powerful *Merkantila förening*, but as well by both important liberal newspapers. In short, the outcome of the election seemed to be a mere formality. However, Leman lost the election against a local schoolteacher, who had unsuccessfully run for parliament several times before and who was even by conservative observers considered a “weak” candidate. In spite of this setback which the local press blamed on the low voter turnout, Leman was nominated candidate two times in 1892. During these election campaigns, Leman was confronted with anti-Semitic articles and commentaries in the conservative press. Again, he lost both elections against prominent members of the conservative opposition. In contrast to the election of Aron Philipsson only ten years before, nationalist arguments had supplanted notions of

³⁶ Fritz Henriksson, *Från det moderna tyskland: Studier, bilder och intryck*, (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1901), 327.

³⁷ On the complex relationship between liberalism and *fin-de-siècle* nationalism see the inspiring article by Pieter M. Judson: “Rethinking the Liberal Legacy”, *Rethinking Vienna 1900* ed. Steven Beller, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 57-79.

Gothenburg's liberal exceptionalism and attitudes of toleration. Even the subsequent delegation of Philip Leman to the First Chamber of the *Riksdag* by his fellow town councillors in 1895 could not hide the fact, that a considerable number of liberal voters had refused to approve the nomination of Leman. Also liberal observers had to acknowledge that the conservative campaign had been a success: they had effectively cast doubts on Leman's "national" credibility and reminded liberal voters of the cultural basis of their conceptions of the national community. Until the end of World War I, Aron Philipsson should remain the only Jewish representative of Gothenburg in the Second Chamber of the *Riksdag*. As a commentary put it in *Handelstidningen*:

"Anti-Semitism is much more spread in our society than we can imagine. On the top of society as well as at its bottom one comes across the idea: No Jews to the Riksdag! There are only few who want to articulate this idea in public, but in private, amongst friends, this happens quite often. This may be the most important lesson of the recent election."³⁸

Negotiating urban and national identities

By 1870, Gothenburg Jewry had achieved social acceptance, economic success and space in which to develop the institutions of a vivid religious community. The modes and spheres of interaction in the city were very much formed by the values and ambitions of a new and heterogeneous urban elite, that gradually took over more and more power from older governmental agencies and self-confidently began to re-define Gothenburg's city culture. A small Jewish elite of some ten to fifteen families had early gained access to the networks of sociability of this new urban elite. As entrepreneurs in some of the times most prosperous branches of industry and commerce they actively took part in the formation of Gothenburg's urban culture and likewise accepted a role as mediators of middle-class values into the Jewish community.

By the middle of the century, with bourgeois power consolidated, town guides and the local press praised the civic qualities of the Jews which provided proof, that Jews had merited the privilege of equality. For Gothenburg liberalism, the presence of a vivid Jewish community in the city added to the allegedly exceptional character of Gothenburg's culture of tolerance and served as a proof for the progressive attitudes of middle-class liberalism. This is not to say that Jews merely had a passive, "decorative" role in Gothenburg Liberalism. Bourgeois Jews defined the character of many of the economic, cultural, and educational associations that constituted the liberal milieu of the city and paved

³⁸ "Från allmänheten. Hvad har inträffat?", *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, October 10, 1892.

the way for later liberal organisations.. As long as the communal census suffrage was in effect, Gothenburg Jewry decisively influenced central aspects of municipal politics and civic culture. Thus, the heyday of Gothenburg communal liberalism between 1848 and 1900 opened up a window of opportunity for the Jewish group which actively participated in creating “new Gothenburg’s” urban culture. Until World War I, relations between Jews and gentiles in politics and civil society were close and the extent of participation high. Anti-Semites in Gothenburg remained a small minority which never was able to exert considerable influence on communal politics or the city’s associational life. With regard to urban sociability and communal politics, the middle-class protagonists of Gothenburg liberalism cultivated a pluralist image of the city, where Jews were regarded as fellow citizens on equal terms.

This perception of Gothenburg as a particularly modern and open-minded city was both a prerequisite to the participation of Jews and a core element in the liberal conceptions of an urban identity of Gothenburg. At the same time, the world view of the protagonists of Gothenburg liberalism and their ideas of a national community were very much built upon ideas of a common, and authentic culture, which had been exceptionally well-preserved in the Nordic countries. The question of the relation of Jews to these liberal concepts of the Swedish nation was by far less un-controversial than the liberties of Gothenburg culture suggests. These ambiguities of liberal thinking did only rarely affect day-to-day relations between Jews and non-Jews in the city. But with the politicisation of national identity during the political debates of the 1880s, the unanswered question whether Jews “really” could be Swedes was posed anew.

In Gothenburg, the contradictory streams of thought within liberal doctrine intertwined with different elements of national and urban self-identifications. Eric Hobsbawm has argued that “we cannot assume that for most people national identification [...] excludes or is always or ever superior to, the remainder of the set of identifications which constitute the social being”³⁹ The self-identification of middle-class Gothenburgers as participants in modern urban life represented a strong sense of belonging, even if it was inextricably interwoven with national and various other forms of identifications. Given the situational and variable character of identities, the idea and sense of belonging to a nation is not necessarily the dominant factor in everyday encounters in the city. In local politics and associational life, urban identifications could overlap and sometimes even outweigh national ones.⁴⁰ During the election campaign for Aron Philipsson in 1872, notions of urban self-identification prevailed.

³⁹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11.

⁴⁰ This is an idea particularly emphasised by Nathaniel D. Wood: “Urban Self-Identification in East Central Europe Before the Great War: The Case of Cracow”, *East Central Europe* 33/1-2 (2006): 9-29.

Attitudes of tolerance were presented as integral part of Gothenburg's civic pride and as fundamental to its distinctive character as a city. In contrast to this, when Philip Leman ran for parliament in 1886 and 1892, questions of national identification were put forward by a strengthening conservative opposition and gave cause for concerns amongst liberal voters. Thus, considering the similarities of the two candidacies – both candidates were long-standing members of the city council, both participated in a number of voluntary associations, and both were wealthy and respected lawyers – the different outcome witnesses the delicate balance of liberal tolerance in Gothenburg; in a way, it was easier to become a Gothenburger than a Swede.

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Russians, Jews, and Poles: Russification and Antisemitism 1881-1914

by Theodore R. Weeks

Abstract

Relations between Poles and Jews deteriorated significantly in the three decades leading up to World War I. Many reasons for this phenomenon can be given, for example: economic competition, a general atmosphere of acute nationalism, increased migration, perceived threats to traditional forms of life and religion. Exacerbating all of these factors, however, was the fact of Polish statelessness and the extreme sensitivity of Poles to perceived threats to their culture and nation. In particular within the Russian Empire, Poles perceived the very future of their nation at risk. In such circumstances the continued existence of Jewish cultural difference combined with the development of specifically Jewish forms of national awakening (e.g., the Bund and Zionism) were understood by many in Polish society as ingratitude and collaboration with the Russian occupier.

The rise of modern Polish antisemitism cannot be understood outside the context of Polish statelessness in the nineteenth century. The perceived and real threat to Polish culture and nationality was particularly acute in the Russian Empire after the failed insurrection of 1863. This period of russification lasted, in a broad sense, to the end of Russian rule over Polish lands. This half-century to 1914 also witnessed aggressive anti-Polish politics in the German Empire (the *Kulturkampf* and German attempts colonization in Poznan) and the rise of Ukrainian nationalism challenging Polish hegemony in Galicia. In short, these were years in which Polish patriots could reasonably (if with some exaggeration) argue that their very national existence was under threat. The perceived failure of Jewish assimilation to Polish culture in these years added impetus to antisemitic agitation. With the nation under threat, so the argument went, anyone not with us (and *ipso facto* fighting actively against the Polish nation's enemies) was denigrated as an enemy. In what follows I will argue that given this hostile environment for Polish patriotism a crisis in Polish-Jewish relations was well-nigh inevitable. And given that the Russian Empire pursued the most aggressively anti-Polish policies, it was logical that modern Polish antisemitism took shape in that empire.

Definitions and Historical Background to 1881

For the Russian authorities, the Insurrection of 1863 proved beyond a doubt the unreliable nature of the Poles and discredited any attempts to reconcile Polish national interests with those of the Russian imperial state. While Poles would not agree that pre-1863 Russian policy had been particularly benevolent, the period following the uprising were far more brutal. The policy that

characterized these decades into the early twentieth century is generally labeled “russification.” The complexities of this term and of the actual policies pursued by St. Petersburg need not concern us overly here: for our purposes what is more important is Polish perceptions.¹

While present-day historians generally agree that Russian policy did not, in fact, aim for the cultural assimilation of Poles (though this perception continues to linger in Polish historical memory), a contemporary Pole could well feel threatened. After all, education in Polish was severely curtailed and the one Polish-language university in Russian Poland converted into the Russian-language and russifying University of Warsaw. The official name “Kingdom of Poland” was abolished in favor of the more anodyne “Vistula land” (to be sure, the old name continued to be used widely), implying the end of cultural separateness. While it was not illegal *per se* to teach or learn literacy in Polish in the “Vistula land,” the school system nearly always favored Russian (especially at the secondary level) and, more importantly, stagnated in this period. In the early twentieth century it appeared that literacy in Polish had actually fallen in the past decades.² While publishing in Polish grew, including in Warsaw and Łódź, censorship was harsh and arbitrary. Add to this the strict administration by imported Russian officials and the overbearing presence of the Russian military in the Polish provinces and one can easily understand why Poles could perceive a real danger for the further development, even existence, of their nation.³

The Insurrection of 1863 formed a watershed in modern Polish history. Its failure ended the period of “romantic nationalism,” to use Andrzej Walicki’s term, and ushered in an era of more sober Polish national politics.⁴ This generation in Polish history – roughly to the mid-1880s – is generally described with the phrases “positivism” and “organic work.” The Warsaw positivists, most famous among them Bolesław Prus and Aleksander Świętochowski, espoused liberal values like education, hard work, and sobriety, calling on Poles

¹ There is a huge literature on Russification. For an overview, see Theodore R. Weeks, “Russification: Word and Practice 1863-1914,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 148/4 (2004): 471-489; and Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on Russia’s Western Frontier 1863-1914*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).

² See, for example, Adolf Suligowski, *Miasto analfabetów* (Kraków: W.L. Anczyc, 1905). While the argument of stagnating or even falling rates of Polish literacy seem convincing, the dearth of reliable statistics makes it difficult to be absolutely certain.

³ Recently scholars have pointed out that more Poles served within the Russian administration than had been traditionally believed. However, they also corroborate the fact that Poles (and often Catholics in general) mainly held low-level positions without much responsibility or prestige. Andrzej Chwalba, *Polacy w służbie Moskali*, (Warsaw: PWN, 1999); Katya Vladimirov, *The World of Provincial Bureaucracy in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Russian Poland*, (New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 2004).

⁴ Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

to educate themselves and work hard, rather than press for specific political goals. In many ways the positivists were typical liberal figures: skeptical about religion (but not atheists), obsessed with education as the means for self-improvement, and moderate in their politics. Given the national trauma felt in the wake of the 1863 defeat and anti-Polish measures afterwards, positivism provided middle-class Poles with a welcome psychological respite, allowing them to cultivate culture and education rather than risk confrontation on the public stage.⁵

The positivists, like other liberals, were not especially interested in questions of religion and nationality. Their main interest was cultivating the *Polish* nationality, not in examining the prickly issue of Poles' relationship to other nations, including those who had for centuries lived within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (i.e., Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews). The positivists' attitude toward the Jews was doubly complicated by their reluctance (or disinterest) toward both nationality and religion. For liberals (and the left more generally) throughout Europe, the "Jewish question" was fundamentally a mirage. As societies progressed toward modernity, secularism would grow, literacy would increase, and simultaneously prejudice against Jews and Jewish separatism would wither away. Obviously such a belief was far easier to hold in Turin or Paris than in Warsaw or Lublin, but both Prus and Świętochowski steadfastly argued in this period that as Polish society itself matured (by incorporating the peasantry into itself, for example), Jews would also naturally gravitate toward Polish culture. Thus the positivists saw assimilation (but not necessarily total cultural identification nor religious conversion) as the fundamental solution to the problem of Poles and Jews living together in one country.⁶

When discussing Jews and Poles in the context of the Russian Empire, one must distinguish between Jews living within the Polish provinces (Kingdom of Poland, Vistula land) and those residing to the east, within the Pale of Settlement proper. The legal situation of Jews in these two areas was quite distinct. In 1862 Jews in the Kingdom of Poland were granted "legal emancipation" (*równouprawnienie*) and henceforth would enjoy rather better legal conditions of life than their brethren to the east in the Ukrainian, Lithuanian,

⁵ There is a large literature on positivism, though more on its literary than cultural-social aspects. See, for example, Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski: biografia*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: PIW, 1987); and Janina Kulczycka-Saloni and Ewa Ihnatowicz, eds., *Warszawa pozytywistów* (Warsaw: Instytut Literatury Polskiej UW, 1992).

⁶ I have tried to develop these ideas in *From Assimilation and Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850-1914*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 57-64. See also Stanley Blejwas, "Polish Positivism and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies*, 46/1 (1984): 21-36; and Agnieszka Friedrich, *Bolesław Prus wobec kwestii żydowskiej*, (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008).

and Belarusian provinces (the so-called “Western land” – *Zapadnyi kraj*).⁷ Clearly even after 1862, within the overall legal context of the Russian Empire, Jews in the “Vistula country” did not truly enjoy equal rights. But equally clearly, Jews in the Polish provinces were better off than their coreligionists residing in the Pale. This fact was to grow in importance in the decades before 1914 as thousands of Jews migrated west in search of employment, a migration demonized by Polish antisemites in the figure of the “Litwak.” Another issue related to the 1862 “emancipation” needs to be considered: in the 1880s and 1890s, one argument frequently cited against the Jews was the “failure of assimilation” despite a generation of “equal rights.”

Significant numbers of Jews in Warsaw did support the Polish struggle against the Russians in 1863, though outside the capital city Jews tended to try to keep out of the conflict altogether.⁸ After 1863, Jews in the Polish provinces were in a peculiar position: the Russian authorities wished to keep Jews apart from Poles (i.e., to prevent assimilation to Polish culture), but the Russian attitude toward Jews – in particular among conservative and administrative circles – was far from judeophobic. Even in the Pale of Settlement and in Russia proper, the official attitude toward Jewish assimilation toward Russian culture was shot through with contradictions.⁹ Certainly the authorities did not, with rare exceptions, like Jews in their present socio-economic and cultural condition. But as befits the servitors of a deeply conservative empire, Russian officials viewed with misgivings the muddying or mingling of categories of identification like “Russian” or “Jew.”¹⁰ In the Polish provinces, Jews were forbidden to use Polish within the rare reform synagogues, but it is clear that despite all restrictions, in the decades after 1863 increasing numbers of Jews were taking on Polish language, outward appearance, and culture.¹¹

Deteriorating Relations: 1881-1904

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the long process culminating in emancipation, see Artur Eisenbach, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Poland, 1770-1870*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

⁸ On the myth of 1863, see Israel Bartal and Magdalena Opalski, *Poles and Jews: A Failed Brotherhood*, (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1992).

⁹ This comes through, for example, in the so-called “Rabbinical seminaries” set up by the Russian authorities ostensibly to produce modern, enlightened, and Russian-speaking Jewish elites. See, e.g., Verena Dohrn, *Jüdische Eliten im Russischen Reich: Aufklärung und Integration im 19. Jahrhundert*, (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008).

¹⁰ On the complicated issue of Russian attitudes toward Jewish assimilation, see, for example, Eugen M. Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Hans Rogger, *Jewish Politics and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). John Klier has pointed out that Jewish attitudes toward Russification were often positive, but his examples are from the Pale, not the Kingdom of Poland: J. Klier, “The Polish Revolt of 1863 and the Birth of Russification: Bad for the Jews?”, *Polin* 1 (1986): 96-110.

¹¹ On attitudes toward assimilation among both Poles and Jews, see Alina Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864-1897): Postawy, konflikty, stereotypy*, (Warsaw: PIW, 1989).

The period beginning with the pogrom wave after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II to the Russo-Japanese War witnessed a steady deterioration of Polish-Jewish relations. It was during this period that the first programmatically antisemitic periodical in Polish, *Rola*, began publication (on *Rola* see the article by Maciej Moszyński). The political passivity (real or perceived) of the positivist generation increasingly appeared out-dated, even cowardly and anti-patriotic. New, more activist political groupings took shape, among them the Polish Socialist Party, founded in 1892. The failure of the new tsar, Nicholas II, to offer any serious cultural or political concessions to the Poles pushed the youth further toward radical solutions. Toward the end of this period, the National Democratic Party took shape and in its 1903 party program took a clear antisemitic stance. In short, this was a period of increasing national consciousness, continued resentment toward the Russian authorities, and a growing perception that Jews were turning their backs on Poles while taking advantage of economic growth and doing better than Poles.

The pogroms of 1881, as is well known, began in the south-western provinces (today's Ukraine) several months after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II on 1 March 1881.¹² Reactions in the Polish press to the pogroms during the summer months were muted, in part no doubt due to censorship. Most of Polish society, it seems clear, felt that this primitive anti-Jewish violence could not spread over into the Polish provinces. They were thus shocked when Warsaw witnessed a pogrom against its Jewish citizens beginning on Christmas Day 1881. The pogrom caused extensive damage to Jewish neighborhoods closest to downtown (the riot began at the Church of the Holy Cross on Nowy Świat street).

Attempts to explain the pogrom may be divided into three categories. First of all, there was the "outside agitator" thesis, i.e., that either Russian or German revolutionaries or antisemites egged on the ignorant rabble to attack and rob the Jews. Second, some blamed the Russian authorities though, of course, censorship would prevent any such opinions from being published within the Russian Empire. Finally, the pogrom could be seen as a warning sign that relations between Poles and Jews were seriously strained and that new, more energetic measures needed to be taken to integrate Jews into Polish culture and society. Very few specifically antisemitic voices were heard in the pogrom's immediate aftermath. In late 1881 and early 1882, Polish society seemed most interested in helping the pogrom victims and explaining away the violence as a regrettable but atypical outbreak. Few writers – Świętochowski is the major

¹² John D. Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881-1882*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

exception – used the occasion to examine more deeply the fundamental assumptions that underlay Polish-Jewish relations.¹³

Jan Jeleński, the father of modern Polish antisemitism, began publishing his weekly *Rola* on 6 January 1883 (new style). The periodical would outlive its editor and principle author who died in 1909. While Polish society before the turn of the century tended to mock Jeleński as a hack probably in the pay of the Russians (Prus's satires are particularly sharp – and amusing), by the time of his death he would be praised as a prophet for Polish patriotism. These changing attitudes toward the man and his ideas reflect a shift in Polish attitudes toward Jews.

At the same time, acculturation was proceeding apace among Jews both in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Russian Empire proper. Interestingly, in the 1882 Warsaw census, an overwhelming majority of Jews signed up as of the “Polish nationality” (*natsional’nost’* / *narodowość*). Given the existing socio-linguistic realities of the day, this figure seems quite unbelievable. Stephen Corrsin provides the answer, based on Jacob Shatzky’s memoirs: the assimilationist Warsaw *kehilla* (Jewish community) put out the word that Jews should declare themselves Jewish by religion but Polish by nationality. This incident is telling in two ways: it reveals that for most Warsaw Jews in 1882, “nationality” was a category without great significance. Secondly, it shows the influence of a Polish-speaking and assimilationist *élite* in the city.

Looking at the far more thorough and scientific census of 1897, Corrsin notes that by that point 13.7% of Warsaw Jews declared their native tongue (*rodnoi iazyk*) as Polish (83.7% - Yiddish, 2.2% Russian).¹⁴ Two points need to be made here: first, the census recorded only “native tongue” and insisted that respondents choose one language only. Second, from anecdotal evidence we know that many Jews, both in privileged and working classes, spoke Polish with varying degrees of fluency by this point. It is remarkable that already at this point one out of seven Jews in Warsaw spoke Polish as his *native* language. No doubt many others spoke Polish on a frequent basis, including at home, despite the obvious predominance of Yiddish.

Warsaw was obviously unusual in its large numbers of Polish-speaking (including native speakers) Jews. When one looks at the Kingdom of Poland as a whole, the figures were much smaller, merely 3.5% of Jews claiming to be native speakers of Polish.¹⁵ Still, even in small towns many Jews knew enough

¹³ Świętochowski’s articles *preceding* the Warsaw pogrom and arguing that Polish-Jewish relations were intolerably strained were published in *Pravda*, n. 18, 19, 21 (May 1881, n.s.). For more on the 1881 Warsaw pogrom, see Weeks, “*From Assimilation to Antisemitism*,” 71-86.

¹⁴ Stephen D. Corrsin, “Aspects of Population Change and of Acculturation of Jewish Warsaw at the end of the Nineteenth Century: The Censuses of 1882 and 1897,” *Polin*, 3 (1988): 128-132.

¹⁵ Stephen D. Corrsin, “Language Use in Cultural and Political Change in Pre-1914 Warsaw: Poles, Jews, and Russification,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, 68/1 (1990): 72.

Polish to trade with the local peasantry. More importantly, during these decades hundreds of thousands of Jews and Polish peasants emigrated to industrializing cities (especially Warsaw and Łódź) to seek employment. In other words, more and more Poles and Jews came into direct contact with one another in a new, rough, urban environment. The increased friction between Jews and Poles as neighbors and competitors (for employment, housing, etc.) in burgeoning urban areas also added to tensions.¹⁶

Another factor complicating Polish-Jewish relations was the migration of Jews from the Pale of Settlement to the Polish provinces. François Guesnet and other scholars have shown that this so-called “Litwak invasion” so often bewailed by contemporary Polish commentators was more a myth than an actual demographical reality. Nonetheless, the myth played a very important – and negative – role in exacerbating Polish-Jewish relations.¹⁷ While the flood of Russian-speaking Litwaks taking over Polish cities was certainly a paranoid fantasy of perfervid Polish patriots, the experience of meeting, seeing, or hearing about recently-arrived Jews speaking a Russian patois would have been real enough for many Poles. Compared with the economically moribund Pale of Settlement, the Polish provinces offered diverse opportunities for commerce and employment. And it was only natural that a Jew from, say, Berdichev, would address a Gentile in the only non-Jewish language he knew, a kind of east-Slavic jargon that sounded alarmingly like Russian to a Pole. Unfortunately, this harmless attempt at communication could easily be blown up into a scenario of “Litwaks as agents of the Russian linguistic invasion” by zealous nationalists.

Poles were not the only ones affected by an increased atmosphere of national feelings. In the 1890s the two modern Jewish political movements that would dominate until the *shoah*, Zionism and the Bund (Yiddish-based Jewish socialism) came together. The Bund was officially founded in Vilna (today’s Vilnius) in October 1897. Zionism in its modern form (emphasizing Jews as an ethnicity, not simply a religious group) was taking shape from the 1880s but was electrified by the publication of Theodor Herzl’s *Judenstaat* in 1896.¹⁸ Both of these movements were deeply troubling to liberal Polish society, as both suggested – in very different ways, to be sure – that Jews should retain some

¹⁶ The city of Łódź which practically arose from nothing in the second half of the nineteenth century is perhaps an even better example of new urban Polish-Jewish relations than Warsaw. On the city and national-religious relations, see, for example: “The Jews in Łódź 1820-1939”, *Polin*, vol. 6 (1991); *Polen, Deutsche und Juden in Łódź, 1820-1939: eine schwierige Nachbarschaft*, ed. Jürgen Hensel (Osnabrück: Fibre, 1999); *Polacy, Niemcy, Żydzi w Łodzi w XIX - XX w. Sąsiedzi dalecy i bliscy*, ed. Paweł Samuś (Łódź: Ibidem., 1997).

¹⁷ On demography and the “Litwaken-Mythos,” see François Guesnet, *Polnische Juden im 19. Jahrhundert: Lebensbedingungen, Rechtsnormen und Organisation im Wandel*, (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), 29-86.

¹⁸ On this early period, the work of David Vital has not been surpassed. David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

level of identity *as Jews*, even in the modern state. At first antisemites welcomed the Zionist idea or at least the idea of exporting Jews to their own country, but soon antisemites denounced Zionism as another Jewish *szywidl*. As for the Bund, its socialist views and ideal of Poles and Jews living together in harmony in a socialist republic were anathema to most patriotic Poles. The fundamental difficulty was simple: Polish society as a whole, with rare exception, could not accept the idea of Polish Jews retaining in the long run anything more than a religious difference from other Poles. This belief was hardly limited to Poles – even in the USA and western Europe such ideas were common. But given the strong ethno-linguistic difference between (Christian) Poles and Jews even into the early twentieth century, this inability to accept a measure of cultural difference between Poles and Jews did not augur well for future relations.

Revolution of 1905

The Revolution of 1905 has been called – by V.I. Lenin, no less – the “dress rehearsal” for the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Obviously such a statement benefits overly from hindsight. Still, even at the time the revolution seems to mark a new era in Russian politics – and in policy toward non-Russians. After 1905, censorship would be considerably lightened (though by no means non-existent), allowing a much freer discussion of relations between Poles and Jews. The year 1905 started hopefully – if with considerable violence – with broad segments of Polish society seeing real hope for more cultural autonomy (at least) for their nation. For most of the year, the Polish press was relatively free of antisemitic sentiment. It appears that for the most part, Poles and Jews were fighting together against the Russians. When the tide began to turn against the revolution late in the year and into 1906, Polish society, following the lead of the National Democrats (Endeks), turned increasingly antisemitic.¹⁹

Throughout the revolution, the leader of the Endeks, Roman Dmowski, was consistent in his disapproval of armed struggle against the Russian Empire while the Russo-Japanese War continued.²⁰ Dmowski even traveled to Tokyo to counter his countryman Józef Piłsudski’s attempts to gain Japanese support for the Polish cause. Dmowski held that socialists like Piłsudski much overestimated the ability of Poles to wrest their own freedom from Russian hands. Once the tide had shifted, in particular as Russian troops were brought back to Europe to crush the revolution, Dmowski and his party comrades were able to argue a) that “real Poles” had not supported the revolution and b) that

¹⁹ In general on the revolution of 1905, see Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 2 vols., (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, 1992); and Robert Blobaum, *Revolucja: Russian Poland 1904-1907*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

²⁰ For an energetic new interpretation of the National Democrats’ leader in this period, see Grzegorz Krzywiec, *Szywiniżm po polsku. Przypadek Romana Dmowskiego (1886-1905)*, (Warsaw: Neriton, 2009).

it was socialists and Jews (as well as, of course, Jewish socialists) who had pressed hapless Poles into the unequal struggle. After the bitter disappointment of 1905, when in fact Poles gained no major concessions on autonomy, Dmowski's cynical ploy was very effective. A wounded nation sought a scapegoat which was conveniently provided in the form of "the Jews."²¹

In a sense both the accomplishments and the failures of 1905 ended up working to the detriment of Polish-Jewish relations. Among the accomplishments that were not entirely swept away (though, to be sure, considerably abridged and narrowed) were an elected Parliament (the Duma), religious freedom (for the first time the right to convert *out of* Orthodoxy), and broadened the freedom of the press.²² As we will see in slightly more detail below, the election campaigns to all Dumas (four in all, the final election taking place in 1912) served to aggravate relations between Poles and Jews, culminating in the anti-Jewish boycott after elections to the fourth Duma in 1912. As for the right to convert from Orthodoxy, this new freedom had the effect of many tens of thousands of officially Russian Orthodox peasants converting to Catholicism to the considerable dismay of tsarist officials. The mass conversions were blamed on Polish Catholic pressure (quite unfairly, in fact); Russian authorities consequently increased pressure on Catholic clergy to restrict their activities, once again heightening Polish sentiments that their culture was under attack.²³ Finally, increased press freedom allowed for the first time the creation of a large and vibrant Yiddish-language press in Russian Poland. Some Poles even claimed, gloomily, that the Yiddish press in Warsaw published more newspapers than the Polish press. The claim was absurd, but indicates the degree of shock felt by many Poles at the swift transition from absolutely no daily press in Yiddish (the first Yiddish daily had been allowed – in St. Petersburg – just before 1905) to numerous dailies, weeklies, and other visible Yiddish-language periodicals.²⁴

²¹ I have developed my ideas on 1905 as a key-event in Polish-Jewish relations in "1905 as a Watershed in Polish-Jewish Relations", *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews*, eds. Stefani Hoffmann and Ezra Mendelsohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 128-139. See also the important new work, Scott Ury, *Red Banner, Blue Star: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

²² Peter Waldron, "Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia", *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, ed. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 103-119.

²³ The most egregious government project to "protect Orthodox people against Catholics" was the creation of a separate Kholm (Chełm) province out of the eastern districts of Siedlce and Lublin provinces. On this project, see Weeks, "Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia", 172-192; and Matteo Piccin, "La politica etno-confessionale zarista nel Regno di Polonia: la questione uniate di Cholm come esempio di *nation-building* russo (1831-1912)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Università "Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2011).

²⁴ The Yiddish press in Russian Poland and the Russian Empire more generally certainly deserves more scholarly attention. Meanwhile, see the excellent comparative work Sarah Stein, *Making Jews Modern: the Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Thus the overall political situation in Russian Poland after the Revolution of 1905 was far from propitious or conducive to improved inter-ethnic relations. Poles were embittered at the failure of the revolution to bring the autonomy that they had hoped for, the National Democratic party openly called the revolution a Jewish attempt to push their own, anti-Polish interests, and Jews, particularly of the younger generation, were generally unwilling to accept without question the superiority of Polish culture or to agree to unconditional assimilation. The repressions carried out by the Russian authorities in the wake of the revolution served only further to embitter relations. The heightened feelings of anger and resentment against the Russians made arguments against the Jews all the more palatable to broad expanses of the Polish public.

Increasing Tensions, 1906-1914

As we have seen, already in the immediate aftermath of 1905 relations between Poles and Jews were very strained. Various events of the subsequent years were to push these strains to the point of a total breakdown. As mentioned, Duma elections from the start intensified national feeling, inevitably leading to a rise in antisemitic expression. In their election rhetoric, the National Democrats were quite adept and consistent in their equating of any political opponents (Jew or Gentile) with anti-Polish Jews. In this atmosphere, Polish progressives increasingly felt the need to distance themselves rhetorically from Jews, even polonized Jews of quite similar political outlook. By the eve of World War I, aside from the socialists and the aristocratic conservatives ("realists"), Polish society had nearly entirely turned its back on the idea of integrating Jews into the Polish nation.

The most notorious example of liberal alienation from a generally pro-Jewish, pro-assimilationist stance was the episode in Polish political and intellectual history known as "progressive antisemitism" (*antysemityzm postępowy*).²⁵ The best known "antisemitic progressives" were the publicist and educational reformer, Iza Moszczeńska, and the journalist and publisher, Andrzej Niemojewski. Both of these figures had impeccable progressive records of opposing national chauvinism and clericalism. For example, in 1906 Moszczeńska published a series of articles in the assimilationist *Izraelita* in 1906 where she emphasized cooperation between Poles and Jews. By 1911 Moszczeńska had given up on the possibility of Poles and Jews working together and developed this new position in a book entitled *Progressivism at a Crossroads*.²⁶

Moszczeńska describes Polish progressivism as a cause that "must serve the Polish cause and nothing else." Patriotism was a simple instinct for self-

²⁵ For more detail, see Theodore R. Weeks, "Polish 'Progressive Antisemitism,' 1905-1914," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 25/2 (1995): 49-68.

²⁶ Moszczeńska's series of articles, entitled "Kwestja żydowska w Królestwie Polskim" (The Polish Question in the Kingdom of Poland) in the first eight issues of *Izraelita* for 1906.

preservation, hence “A Pole who is a sincere progressive, must be a sincere patriot...”²⁷ She then proceeded to argue against the recently-prevalent conception of progressivism and Jews as extremely closely linked, if not synonymous. Far from being intrinsically progressive, “specifically Jewish traits” were “slavery and fanaticism”; progressive ideals such as freedom of conscience, religious toleration, and equality before the law regardless of origin developed among the “Aryan peoples” in a “Christian atmosphere.”²⁸ Jews at present did not constitute a nation, but demonstrated the “petrified” remains of one. Existing traditional Jewish society was full of backwardness, intolerance, and hatred for the modern world – a fact reflected in Orzeszkowa’s *Meir Eziofowicz*.²⁹

To be sure, both Jewish and Polish progressives had long bewailed the backwardness of Jewish religious circles. What was truly new here was Moszczeńska’s open disavowal of assimilation: “two chosen peoples in one territory must sooner or later clash.” And Jewish defeat was also inevitable “for they [Jews] cannot exist without Aryans, while Aryans can live without Jews.”³⁰ In order to achieve the necessary polonization of towns and the economy, Poles must learn to live without the Jews. The only solution is through Polish strength: “The strong always have the Jews on their side; the weak – against them. Thus, let us be strong. This is the best solution of the Jewish question ...”³¹

Even more than Moszczeńska, Andrzej Niemojewski reflected the shift in progressive opinion on the Polish-Jewish relations, in particular in his journal *Myśl Niepodległa* (Independent Thought). Niemojewski was a considerably more radical, anti-clerical figure, but firmly within the progressive camps. Up to around 1906, he had consistently criticized nationalists, antisemites, and the religious (mainly, as befits a radical *à la française*, the Catholic clergy, but not sparing Jewish Orthodoxy). Very rapidly the Jewish question became an almost constant feature in *Myśl niepodległa*, and references to Polish Jewry were seldom friendly or conciliatory. Like Moszczeńska, he criticized the equating of Jews and progressivism, but also excoriated Polish liberals who – according to Niemojewski – refused to countenance any criticism of the Jews. Now, he insisted, Polish progressives must regard the matter with less sentiment and more realism, and while not advocating legal restrictions on Jews, should take on those Jewish elements who hurt the development of Polish culture and

²⁷ Iza Moszczeńska, *Postęp na rozdrożu*, (Warsaw: E. Wende, 1911), 3-5, 11, 25-28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51-52, 63-65.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 67-70. Moszczeńska’s use of Orzeszkowa’s novel is, of course, one-sided but not entirely false. For a recent discussion of the novel, see Gabriella Safran, *Rewriting the Jew: Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire*, (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000), 80-87.

³⁰ Moszczeńska, *Postęp na rozdrożu*, 75.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

economy. To do any less would be to abdicate their duty as Polish intellectuals and progressives.³²

Niemojewski's rhetoric about "the Jews" became increasingly strident, even shrill, in the next years. In 1910 *Myśl Niepodległa* published an article entitled "Critique of Assimilation" that at least in the present political situation, when Poles lacked their own state and political power, assimilation as "the answer" to Polish-Jewish relations could no longer be accepted. What future principles should guide Polish-Jewish relations he did not spell out, but he seemed to foresee a more combative relationship: "We can not trifle with sentiments. Life is struggle."³³ Later articles became even less friendly to the Jews and more openly embracing of antisemitism, as titles such as "Antisemitism as a Struggle for Culture" and "Antisemitism or Battling the Invasion" suggest.³⁴

The next years saw a sharpening in Niemojewski's attacks on the Jews, culminating a series of articles entitled "The Composition and Attack of the Army of the Fifth Partition." In these rambling, disjointed pages Niemojewski attacks socialism, Esperanto, the nascent Lithuanian national movement, "social anarchism," and finally the Jews. Despite the fact that Jews had lived in Poland for 600 years, they remained a foreign body or caste. Jews continue to live apart from Poles, and the Talmud justifies their disdain for and mistreatment of "goys." The falsity of assimilated Jews can be seen in their attempts to defend the Talmud or to deny that its tenets continue to affect Jewish behavior. In any case, assimilated Jews took on at best the external trappings of Polishness but never its deep spiritual essence. Whether assimilated or traditional, Zionist or "progressive," all Jews constituted the "army of the fifth partition," opposing Polish interests, defaming Poles, and acting against the most sacred Polish values. Niemojewski ended by declaring emotionally that "as long as he could hold his pen," he would defend Poland against this army.³⁵ From this point on, Niemojewski became a full-fledged antisemite, obsessed with Jewish plots, as his works denouncing the (false) "ethic of the Talmud" reflect.³⁶

Both Niemojewski and Moszczeńska, for all their differences, agreed on a fundamental shift in Polish-Jewish relations. Whereas before 1905 Jews were seen primarily as potential members of Polish society, within a few years after the revolution even progressives like these saw Poles and Jews as antagonists in a long-term struggle. In economic matters, Niemojewski and Moszczeńska alike argued that Jewish influence must be reduced, and that cities must be

³² "Kwestja żydowska," *Myśl niepodległa*, 61/5 (1908), 577-604.

³³ "Krytyka asymilacji," *Myśl niepodległa*, 149/10 (1910), 1393-1404, quotation from 1403.

³⁴ "Antysemityzm jako walka o kulturę," *Myśl niepodległa*, 150/10 (1910), 1461-9;

"Antysemityzm czy walka z najazdem," *Myśl niepodległa*, no. 193 (January 1912), 1-12.

³⁵ Andrzej Niemojewski, *Skład i pochod armii piątego zaboru*, (Warsaw: "Myśl Niepodległa," 1911).

³⁶ A. Niemojewski, *Dusza żydowska w zwiernadzie Talmudu* (Warsaw: Biliński i Maślenkiewicz, 1914); *Etyka Talmudu. Odczyt* (Warsaw: Druk. "Jan Cotty", 1917).

“polonized.” And both, revealingly, noted that Jews conspired with the Polish nation’s enemies – foremost among them, of course, Russia. While censorship prevented open attacks on the Russian government *per se*, its “agents” – the Jews – could be attacked rather openly.

The “Russian connection” was made even clearer in the figure of the “Litwak,” or Jew from the Russian Pale of Settlement. An article of 1909 in the liberal *Kultura Polska* may serve as emblematic of depictions of the “Litwak menace.” It began with the provocative statement, “The Jewish question in Poland (*u nas*) is either a nightmare that torments the nation and keeps it in a constant feverish state, or an old nag that serves to drag garish signboards or shrill slogans around the country.” Why this exacerbation of the Jewish question? Very simply, because of Russian policy: “Russia, systematically and ever more energetically draining its fields of Jewish waters, has designated the Kingdom of Poland as the main reservoir for this outflow.” In other words, Russia aimed to rid itself of Jews by pressing them to emigrate to the Polish provinces. Russian policy, the article continued, had created a situation in which “more and more the Kingdom of Poland has been transformed into some sort of caricature of a Polish-Jewish-German Switzerland...”³⁷ In other words, St. Petersburg was now pursuing a new kind of russification, with the Litwaks as its agents.

The increasing difficulty of reconciling Polish and Jewish identities caused different reactions among polonized Jews. The most common of these, it would seem, was to protest ever more strongly their commitment to the Polish nation and society, explicitly distancing themselves from “Jewish solidarity” with Russian-speaking Litwaks. This was the approach taken by the long-standing organ of Polish assimilationism, *Izraelita*, in the years after 1905.³⁸ A diametrically opposed defensive reaction was that adopted by the erstwhile socialist Józef Unszlicht who, initially publishing under the more Polish-sounding pseudonym “W. Sedecki,” combined socialist fractionalism (PPS vs. SDKPiL) and nationalism in a poisonous antisemitic brew. Sedecki/Unszlicht explicitly accused the members of the non-Polish-patriotic SDKPiL as serving Russian interests, dubbing the party’s platform *sojallitwactwo* (“Social(ist) Litwakdom”). After being “outed” as a Jew (by birth), Unszlicht made a virtue of necessity by arguing that only those Jews who entirely broke with the ethnicity (from his point of view) of their birth and indeed criticized Jews as the enemies of Poles (as he did) could be accepted as true Poles.³⁹

³⁷ *Kultura Polska*, 2/12 (1909): 1-3 (see quotations 1, 2).

³⁸ On the ideology of assimilationism and the so-called “Pole-Jews” (*Żydzi-Polacy*), see Theodore R. Weeks, “The Best of both Worlds: Creating the *Żyd-Polak*,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 34/2 (2004): 1-20.

³⁹ This is expressed most explicitly in Julian Unszlicht, *O pogromy ludu polskiego (Rola sojallitwactwa w niedawnej rewolucji)*, (Kraków: Druk. Związkowa, 1912). On Unszlicht’s remarkable life (he ended up a Catholic priest), see Grzegorz Krzywiec, “Nadwiślański Weiniger? Przypadki Juliana Unszlichta (1883-1953),” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, 5 (2009): 243-257.

For all the mounting tensions in Polish-Jewish relations, a dialogue more or less remained open until the end of 1912. The failure to reach a compromise on the “non-Russian representative” from Warsaw to the Fourth State Duma provided the incident that brought a near complete severing of relations.⁴⁰ The salient facts are quickly told.⁴¹ According to the electoral law of June 3, 1907, the city of Warsaw sent only two delegates to the Duma. One of these delegates was elected by the Russian population of the city, the other by all non-Russians voting together. Due to peculiarities of the voting system, which was neither direct nor universal, by late summer 1912 it became evident that Jewish electors would elect the single non-Russian representative from Warsaw. These were mainly acculturated, wealthy businessmen, far from Jewish nationalism and with no interest in exacerbating already strained relations. Hence they sought a compromise with their Polish neighbors, offering to vote for any Polish candidate who would unconditionally support Jewish equal rights.

Unfortunately for all concerned, one of the major topics of the day was the form that elective city government should take in the Russian Poland. The endek-dominated *Koło* demanded that Jewish representation in the future city governments must be restricted by statute, in order to prevent Jewish domination of urban administrations (after all, in most of the cities of Russian Poland, Jews made up a third or more of the population). The Polish candidate, Jan Kucharczyński, who was not, by all accounts, an antisemite, refused to disavow publicly possible restrictions in the future city governments. The Jewish electors thus voted for another Pole who did promise to support equal rights for Jews, the otherwise unremarkable socialist candidate Eugeniusz Jagiełło, and the latter became Warsaw’s non-Russian representative in the Fourth Duma.⁴²

Once again, the Russian government’s policies to restrict Polish rights had the unintended effect of exacerbating Polish-Jewish relations. Had Warsaw been allowed a more reasonable (given the city’s population and ethnic make-up) number of Duma representatives instead of the absurd two, one of whom was reserved for the small Russian community, it seems likely that the 1912 elections would not have been so bitter. With only one representative for all “non-Russians” in Warsaw, a clash between the Polish majority and the large Jewish minority (ca. one third of the total population) was only too likely. The Polish response, led by the *Endeks*, was immediate and furious. The antisemitic press urged Poles to avoid not just Jewish shops, but Jewish

⁴⁰ For some contemporary accounts of the events of 1912, see Stephen D. Corrsin, trans., “The Jews, the Left, and the State Duma Elections in Warsaw in 1912: Selected Sources,” *Polin* 9 (1996): 45-54.

⁴¹ For more detail on the 1912 Duma election in Warsaw, see Corrsin, “*Warsaw before the First World War*,” 89-104; and Grunbaum, “*Milḥamat yehudei polin*,” 153-161.

⁴² More generally on the elections and boycott, see Robert Blobaum, “The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Warsaw,” *Journal of Modern History* vol. 73 no.2 (2001): 275-306.

doctors, lawyers, singers, performers -- in short, all relations between Poles and Jews was to cease.⁴³ This campaign was led by the endek papers *Gazeta Poranna* - 2 *Grosze* and *Gazeta Warszawska* but found wide resonance across the political spectrum. *Pravda* printed a furious editorial denouncing the behavior of the Jewish electors: "Polish society must answer battle with battle: the instinct of national self-defense demands it of us." "Polish Jews (*Żydzi-Polacy*), or the so-called assimilators, have too long deluded us with pretensions of their influence over the broad waves of the Semite flood. They wanted to play the role of some sort of Polish Embassy among Jews, and Jewish Embassy among Poles." Such double-dealing could no longer be tolerated: "... there will be henceforth no place for mediation, there will be no place for half measures, for half-Poles and half-Jews. *On one side stand the Jews, on the other - without distinction of race, religion, or origin - stand the Poles.*"⁴⁴ By the end of 1912, *Rola* had good reason to celebrate the "Victory of the idea."⁴⁵ The idea, that is, propagated by the journal's founder, Jan Jeleński, of antisemitism, strict separation between Poles and Jews, and, over the long run, a uniformly Catholic Poland.

The anti-Jewish boycott ran from November 1912 to the outbreak of World War I. It seems clear that the boycott was generally ignored by the peasantry and on the whole not very effective economically.⁴⁶ The importance of the boycott, however, went far beyond the economic sphere. It was generally noted at the time that the larger and wealthier Jewish businesses suffered little from the boycott while smaller shops and professionals were much more hard-hit.⁴⁷

The moral impact, in any case, was enormous. Even if the Jewish community in Poland was not devastated by the boycott, relations between Poles and Jews in some sense never recovered. The boycott crystallized the rhetoric of antisemitism in Polish society, emphasized the stark and unbridgeable differences between "Poles" and "Jews," and made possible for broad sections of Polish society to advocate radical measures such as expulsion and economic coercion. Jews in Poland, whether "acculturated" or Orthodox, came to be seen almost universally as "ungrateful guests" – to quote the title of Konstanty Wzdulski's 1912 pamphlet – rather than potential brothers. Henceforth

⁴³ For a detailed *ex post facto* account of the boycott by a contemporary, see S. Hirszhorn, *Historja Żydów w Polsce od Sejmu Czteroletniego do wojny europejskiej (1788-1914)*, (Warsaw: B-cia Lewin-Epstein i S-ka, 1921), 302-333.

⁴⁴ *Pravda*, November 16, 1912, 2-4 (quotations 2-4). Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁵ "Zwycięstwo idei," *Rola*, November 23, 1912, 739-40.

⁴⁶ Blobaum, "The Politics of Antisemitism," 275-306; see also Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881-1922: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Europa*, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1981), 106-119. For a contemporary's view (from a Zionist perspective), see Isaac Grunbaum, "מלחמות החרם כנגד יהודי פולין" (1913-1940) (The anti-Jewish Boycott 'Wars' in Poland), (Jerusalem: Khvarim, 1941), 1-15 (originally published in *Ha-olam* העולם in 1913).

⁴⁷ Both Polish and Russian liberal opinion emphasized the economic harmfulness (for both Poles and Jews) of the boycott. See, for example, "Polożenie ekonomiczne," *Nowa Gazeta*, Morning edition, January 6, 1913.

“Polish” and “Jewish” interests would almost invariably be seen as mutually exclusive and antagonistic.

Conclusions

Many factors contributed to the deterioration and near total collapse in Polish-Jewish relations during the two generations preceding World War I. Economic competition, a general atmosphere of acute nationalism, increased migration, perceived threats to traditional forms of life and religion – all of these elements combined to effect a heightening of tensions between Poles and Jews. But throughout this period and as a background and general context, the fact of Polish statelessness and seemingly relentless anti-Polish policies pursued by the Russian authorities served to further aggravate the situation. Poles felt, with some justification, that their culture and religion were under direct attack from the Russian authorities. In 1863 and for two or three decades afterwards, Jews were regarded as allies – at least potential allies – in this struggle against the Russian occupier. So when from around the turn of the century broad segments of Polish society began to perceive Jews as having rejected assimilation, tensions rapidly led to a showdown.

Throughout this period, a binary opposition was at work: “us” and “them.” While in 1863 Jews could be included, at least by liberal Poles, as “ours,” after 1905 Jews were nearly always seen as alien and hostile. The growth in numbers of educated Russian-speaking Jews (outside of the Polish provinces) certainly was a factor in this development. Similarly, the rise of specifically Jewish identities (whether Bundist or Zionist) among the younger generation was often perceived in this strained atmosphere as a “betrayal” of the Polish cause.

The tragedy of Polish-Jewish relations in these years (and, in a sense, even more so in the interwar period) was the failure to recognize as normal, even beneficial, the realities of ethno-cultural difference. The Russian desire to “russify” the Polish provinces, to control this region and spread Russian culture at least as a unifying element for the empire (if not as an attempt at total assimilation) exacerbated Polish feelings of national vulnerability. These feelings of vulnerability made good relations with Jews contingent, ironically, on their agreement to shed their own national-cultural identity. The Jewish “spurning” of this offer of Polish culture, increasingly perceived from the later 1880s, shocked and incensed liberal Poles, paving the way for the demonization of the Jewish other.⁴⁸ Ironically russification did succeed in making Poles more like Russians – but only in the sense of intensifying Poles’ demands that other ethnicities take on Polish culture entirely or be considered

⁴⁸ While concentrating mainly on the interwar and later period, there are many insights to be found in Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

an enemy. In this way one form of chauvinism gave birth to another, possibly even more virulent, form of aggression towards the ethnic other.

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**“Because words are not deeds.”
Antisemitic Practice and Nationality Policies
in Upper Hungary around 1900**

by *Miloslav Szabó*

Abstract

The study deals with the processes of transformation within political antisemitism in Hungary around 1900. It mainly investigates the extent to which the crisis of Hungarian political antisemitism in the early 1890s fostered antisemitic practice, namely, the social and economic boycott of rural Jews in particular through the establishment of cooperatives and credit unions. It is to be assumed that antisemitic practice was not restricted to a strictly antisemitic milieu, but propagated and executed by diverse anti-liberal actors such as political Catholicism, the agrarian lobby and the Slovak nationalists. The study illuminates antisemitic practice in the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary in the context of agrarian and nationality policies. In the rural parts of Upper Hungary this practice was accompanied by propaganda against “usury” as a way of legitimizing cooperatives and credit unions. The study will elaborate to what extent the Hungarian campaigns against the Jewish money-lenders united ethnically diverse, non-Jewish actors, such as Hungarian conservatives and Slovak nationalists.

This article deals with the processes of transformation within political antisemitism in Hungary around 1900. It mainly investigates the extent to which the crisis of Hungarian political antisemitism in the early 1890s fostered anti-Semitic practice, namely, the social and economic boycott of rural Jews in particular through the establishment of cooperatives and credit unions. It is to be assumed that anti-Semitic practice was not restricted to a strictly anti-Semitic milieu, but propagated and executed by diverse anti-liberal actors.

I will first briefly describe the development of Hungarian antisemitism in the latter part of the nineteenth century and elaborate on so-called “practical anti-Semitism” as a legitimizing strategy for the boycott of land Jews. I argue that this legitimizing strategy diverged in part from that of political antisemitism in a narrow sense: its supporters distanced themselves explicitly from the anti-emancipatory tendency of modern anti-Jewishness by contrasting the latter with the emancipatory aims of the cooperative movement. At the same time, however, they distorted socioeconomic practices such as “usury” by imposing ethnic and even racial stereotypes on Hungarian land Jews.

I illuminate anti-Semitic practice in the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary in the context of agrarian and nationality policies at the turn of the century. On the one hand, these were a reaction to the increased pauperization of the non-Magyar rural population in Upper Hungary in particular; on the other hand, they sought to accelerate the “assimilation” or “magyarization” of non-Magyar nationalities. Against this background, I refer to two case studies to show the extent to which the “ethno-populist” legitimizing strategy that underpinned

anti-Semitic practice was a basis for cross-party political consensus. The first case study is concerned with state assistance granted to Ruthenian small farmers in the Bereg County in the North-East of the country. As this campaign aimed to “magyarize” Ruthenian small farmers, I will explore the question of whether anti-Semitic practice was encouraged not only in oppositional anti-liberal milieus, but also in sections of the liberal establishment.

The second case study is situated at a centre of the Slovak nationalist movement in Northwest Hungary. In the Nyitra County, the anti-Semitic cooperative movement drew its support not from the state, but from members of the opposition, including many Slovak nationalists. Although they aspired to the “ethno-populist” legitimizing strategy and referred explicitly to the Ruthenian example, their efforts were utterly rejected by the Hungarian establishment. I clarify the extent to which the negative stereotypes propagated by official nationalism impeded the integrative force of anti-Semitic practice in this case.

1. The Transformation of Political Antisemitism in Hungary in the Early 1890s and the Legitimizing Strategies of Antisemitic Practice in Rural Upper Hungary

Following the granting of equal rights to Hungarian Jews in 1867, the “Jewish question” became increasingly virulent. In the early 1880s, the allegations of ritual murder in the Hungarian village of Tiszaeszlár prompted the establishment of an anti-Semitic party, which, however, disbanded after two legislative periods. In spite of isolated attempts, no further anti-Semitic party was established in Hungary before 1918. Nevertheless, from the 1890s there was a revival in anti-Semitic propaganda in other anti-liberal circles such as political Catholicism and the agrarian lobby.¹ Yet neither the Catholic People’s Party nor the agrarians within the Liberal Party included antisemitism in their official programmes. Both did, however, encourage practices aimed at the exclusion of Jews from the Hungarian economy and society. In the rural parts of Upper Hungary this practise was accompanied by propaganda against “usury” as a way of legitimizing cooperatives and credit unions.

Isolated calls to boycott Hungarian Jews appeared in newspapers close to political Catholicism as early as the late 1880s.² An anonymous seven-point programme which appeared in the Hungarian-, German-, and Slovak-language press in the run-up to the parliamentary elections of 1896 epitomizes this

¹ For a comprehensive overview of Hungarian antisemitism see: János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. Politikai eszmétörténet*, (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001); Ralf Fischer, *Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn 1867-1939. Die Zerstörung der magyarisch-jüdischen Symbiose*, (Munich: Oldenburg, 1988).

² See for example Tamás Dersi, *A századvég katolikus sajtója*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), 67.

tendency. This seven-point programme was first published in the largest Catholic daily newspaper, *Magyar Allam*, and reprinted without delay by other anti-liberal press organs. It provided a summary of what it referred to as “true anti-Semitism,” which encompassed far more than just hostility towards Jews. The individual points did not deal with religious questions, rather, their authors called for the exclusion of Jews from the Hungarian economy and public sphere. In the first point, this intent is stated in no uncertain terms: “Jewish capital must be paralyzed, the power of Jewish money must be diminished through our freeing of the Christian people from the hands of the Jews.”³ The second point indicates that this is to be achieved principally through the boycotting of Jewish business. Yet the wording of the fourth point shows that the demands were not solely restricted to economic relations. Here, the reading of “Jewish newspapers” and membership of associations with Jewish members is forbidden. In an ominous recommendation, the authors also advised their readers to “burn their [the Jews’, M. S.] immoral books.” The following points prohibit any form of subordination of “Christians” to Jews in a social or work context, as well as any “close relationships” between Christians and Jews. Thus, the seven-point programme complemented the official programme of the Catholic People’s Party, which avoided openly anti-Semitic demands.

In largely agricultural Hungary, calls for the social and economic suppression of Jews gave rise to campaigns against “usury” – a phenomenon that had its roots not only in the capitalist transformation of the countryside, but also in the protracted crisis of agriculture in Europe. This crisis dealt a particularly severe blow to Hungary, a country dependent on the export of its agricultural produce, as only modernized factory farms could compete with low-priced grain from Russia and abroad. Some traditional big landowners saw the solution to this problem in the leasing of their land, while increasing numbers of indebted medium-scale and small farmers who had lost their land had no option but to emigrate.⁴

Accusations of “usury,” which were particularly virulent in Hungary for the reasons explained above, gave rise to legislation in the 1870s and 1880s. Furthermore, individual agrarians around Count Sándor Károlyi began to accumulate the necessary funds for the economic rescue of small farmers through the systematic establishment of credit unions.⁵ They were followed by further anti-liberal groupings, which generally alleged a causal relationship between “usury” and Jewish money-lenders and tradespeople. It is true that Jews were penalized for offences in connection with “usury” far more often

³ Fischer, “Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn,” 105.

⁴ For a discussion of this emigration with reference to nationality policies see Tibor Frank, “From Austria-Hungary to the United States: National Minorities and Emigration 1880-1914”, *Nationalities Papers*, 3 (1996), 409-423.

⁵ See András Vári, *Herren und Landwirte. Ungarische Aristokraten und Agrarier auf dem Weg in die Moderne (1821-1910)*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 159-176.

than Christians in Hungary around the turn of the century.⁶ Yet here we must take the employment structure of the Jewish population into consideration, which greatly increased the risk of such an offence. This fact may well explain anti-Jewish sentiment in sections of the Hungarian media, but it does not account for the interpretation of these offences in anti-liberal circles.

The organisers of Catholic cooperatives and credit unions also played on the supposed analogy between “usury” and the employment structure of the Jewish population in their use of the term “practical anti-Semitism” (*gyakorlati antiszemitizmus*).⁷ This term was shaped by the radical German anti-Semite, Otto Böckel, who had used it in the late 1880s to legitimize the expansion of cooperatives and credit unions in Hessen. Crucial for my investigation is the fact that Böckel emphasised that “something positive” could be achieved by encouraging anti-Semitic practice.⁸ What was meant here was the notion of self-help, which social reformers such as Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen had been proposing as an alternative to the capitalist reorganisation of agriculture since the mid-nineteenth century. With the help of cooperatives and credit unions, middlemen and “usury” would be stamped out and necessary loans secured at favourable rates on the basis of the borrower’s own capital contributions.

The historian David Peal, who investigated the transformation of German agriculture in the late nineteenth century, compared the anti-capitalism of the cooperative movement in Hessen with the populist movement emerging at the same time in the USA.⁹ Although anti-Semitic Shylock metaphors for “usury” were widespread in media close to late nineteenth century US populism, recent historical scholarship usually refrains from describing the populist movement as anti-Semitic because of its emancipatory character.¹⁰ Thus Peal argues for a terminological distinction between “practical” and “political” antisemitism, “between combating Jews as usurers and combating them as an evil race,”¹¹ based on the fact that in Hessen, cooperatives were also founded by other groupings apart from Böckel’s followers. In what follows, I will provide a more precise definition of Peal’s distinction while at the same time querying its analytical value. How can one distinguish between the socio-political and the ethnic motives of the founders of cooperatives at the turn of the century?

The Hungarian cooperative movement did not have an exclusively socio-economic character at this time. It was more accurately a performative,

⁶ For example, in 1904, for every single Christian convicted of “usury” in Hungary, four Jews were convicted. See Jakob Thon, “Die Kriminalität der Christen und Juden in Ungarn im Jahre 1904”, *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, 7 (1907), 106.

⁷ See Dániel Szabó, “A magyar Néppárt ‘hosszú menetelése.’ A politikai katolicizmus előttörténetéből”, *Társadalmi Szemle*, 8-9 (1991), 128.

⁸ See David Peal, “Antisemitism by Other Means? The Rural Cooperative Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany”, *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, vol. 32 (1987), 142.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 144, note 20.

¹⁰ See for example Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6, 151-152, 319, note 47.

¹¹ Peal, “Antisemitism by Other Means”, 146.

populist practice, which was supposed to protect the “people” from liberal social and economic policies. I will explain this in detail with reference to the theory of populism formulated by the political scientist, Ernesto Laclau.¹² In Hungarian populism, the term “people” corresponded to Laclau’s definition precisely because it was an empty signifier, it polarized society. Thus in Hungary too, it appeared that the signifier “people” had the potential to channel the largely diffuse demands of broad sections of the populace into a programme for political action across various social classes. In what follows, I will explore under what conditions these assumptions could give rise to “ethno-populism.” In Laclau’s definition, this is distinguished from true populism in its distortion of the fundamental populist re-drawing of boundaries that places the *plebs* in the position of the *populus*. In the ethnicization of “people” by “ethno-populism,” the ethnically “other” is excluded from the outset, thus diverting attention from the real populist antagonism.¹³ I will explore whether this distinction is relevant to the ethnically heterogeneous Hungarian anti-liberalism at the turn of the century. To what extent did the Hungarian campaigns against Khazars, the stigmatizing Hungarian term to denote Eastern European Jews (*Ostjuden*), unite ethnically diverse, non-Jewish actors, such as Hungarian conservatives and Slovak nationalists?

2. The “Ruthenian Action”

In the early 1890s, the well-known agrarian politician Sándor Károlyi distanced himself from antisemitism and claimed that the cooperative movement had a purely “social character.”¹⁴ The agrarian lobby, which like the Catholic People’s Party was opposed to liberal social and economic policies, used the terms “cosmopolitan” and “mobile” as antonyms to “Magyar” and “fixed capital.”¹⁵ This dichotomy functioned as a linguistic code that could be inferred as anti-Semitic although it did not explicitly allude to “Jews.” This was characteristic of the partial transformation of Hungarian antisemitism around 1900. The dilemma of anti-liberals who didn’t want to be characterized as anti-Semites despite the fact that their views evinced significant anti-Semitic elements demanded a shift of emphasis with regard to the political antisemitism of the preceding decades. The cardinal aim of undoing Jewish emancipation now yielded to demands for the removal of Jews from their social and economic positions. Yet the desire to distance oneself from radical antisemitism necessitated new strategies of legitimization to “justify” such demands. As the “assimilated” Jewish citizens of Budapest and other provincial towns could not be openly criticized in the context of Hungary’s liberal-nationalist

¹² Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, (London: Verso, 2007).

¹³ Ibid, 196.

¹⁴ See Vári, “Herren und Landwirte”, 174.

¹⁵ Fischer, “Entwicklungsstufen des Antisemitismus in Ungarn”, 96.

political culture, land Jews were targeted as a scapegoat for the social fallout of capitalist re-organization and the agricultural crisis. Notwithstanding Károlyi's demand, the anti-liberal press was not satisfied with mere social criticism and increasingly stigmatized land Jews as "foreign usurers," uncivilized and immoral migrants from the "East." This was an obvious line to take, given the long tradition of the *Ostjude* stereotype in Hungary.¹⁶ As in the period preceding Jewish emancipation in the first half of the nineteenth century, the discussion of Eastern Jews aimed to put pressure on "assimilated" Jewish citizens. Károlyi's cynical call to his followers in 1898 to ally with "big" Jews (i.e. acculturated Jews) against "small Jews" in order to stop the latter's alleged "immigration" from Galicia can be understood in this context.¹⁷

This kind of propaganda was the backside of the cooperatives and credit unions that had been spreading rapidly throughout the Hungarian countryside since the 1890s. In this way, established agrarians like Károlyi hoped to gain some legitimacy for the anti-Semitic views of which they were ashamed and which they strove to conceal in public – as seen in the parliamentary debate on credit unions in May 1898, or the "Usury" survey conducted amongst Hungarian lawyers in 1902.¹⁸ Thus it is hardly surprising that it wasn't the cooperative movement initiated by Károlyi in Central and Western Hungary that became the most important context for propaganda against "Eastern Jews," but the so-called "Ruthenian" or "Highland" Action conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 1900, the north-eastern Counties were among the poorest agricultural regions in the Kingdom of Hungary with a large Ruthenian population.¹⁹ In the 1890s, members of the region's small intellectual class, composed mainly of Greek Catholic priests, abandoned the Russophile orientation of their predecessors. They began to emphasize Hungarian nationalism, limiting their demands to language rights only, and taking a decidedly anti-liberal stance on religious, social, and economic issues. As a result, representatives of the Catholic People's Party, which had been established in the Carpathian region in 1895, were hopeful of a successful outcome in the parliamentary elections planned for autumn 1896.

¹⁶ The stereotype of the *Ostjude* impacted negatively on debates on Jewish emancipation in the first half of the nineteenth century. See for example Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996) 230-239. In the context of the Tiszaeszlár affair in the 1880s the stereotype was revived.

¹⁷ See Vári, "Herren und Landwirte", 212. According to Walter Piesch the "immigration" of Jews from Galicia in the second half of the nineteenth century alleged by contemporaries is not confirmed by Hungarian statistics. See Walter Piesch, "Die jüdische Auswanderung aus Galizien und das Judentum in Ungarn", *Zwischen Reform und Orthodoxie. Der Eintritt des ungarischen Judentums in die moderne Welt*, (Berlin: Philo, 1999), 21-39.

¹⁸ *Az uszóra ellen. Jogi tanulmányok és a Magyar gazdaszövetség szaktanácskozása*, (Budapest: Magyar Gazdaszövetség, 1902); See Éva Kovács, "Államosítás vagy államosodás? Az 1898-as gazdasági és hitelszövetkezetekről szóló XXIII. törvény", *Regio*, 18/2 (2007): 113-139.

¹⁹ See Maria Mayer, *The Rusyns of Hungary. Political and Social Developments, 1860-1910*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 74-123.

Against this background, the Hungarian establishment resolved to stifle any rapprochement between the Greek Catholic clergy and the Catholic People's Party. The authorities managed to recruit the Greek-Catholic Bishop of Munkács (Mukatschewo), Gyula Firczák, who was able to prevent the success of the Catholic People's Party in the election. In return for this, he demanded improvements in the living conditions of the "Ruthenian people" from the government. The Hungarian historian Mária Mayer claims that this was the immediate impetus for the "Ruthenian" or "Highland" Action. These two designations were used to describe the programme implemented by the economist Ede Egan, to lease land to Ruthenian farmers in the Bereg County and organise them into cooperatives on behalf of the Hungarian Minister for Agriculture, Ignác Darányi. Yet the real motivation for the "Ruthenian/Highland Action" was political; it sought to limit the political influence of the Catholic People's Party, prevent an agrarian-socialist movement from taking root, and raise support among the non-Magyar population for the "concept of the Hungarian state."²⁰

In his attempt to thwart the Catholic People's Party, the representative of the liberal Minister for Agriculture tapped not least into the antisemitism it had been stirring up. This was particularly prevalent among the Greek-Catholic clergy, from whose ranks Egan's staff was locally recruited. However, it would be wrong to attribute this antisemitism solely to Catholic People's Party politicians. An official memorandum from early 1897 in which Bishop Firczák and members of parliament in Ruthenian districts called on Hungarian ministers for help shows that it had become a cross-party consensus not restricted to any single religious group.²¹ This memorandum makes clear that the antisemitism that accompanied the "Highland Action" was not merely a reaction to the real or supposed exploitation of Ruthenian farmers on the part of Jewish innkeepers and money-lenders allegedly entering the country in their droves.²² It was aimed far more at invoking the concept of a "moral community" beyond linguistic and cultural barriers represented by the "Ruthenian people," for which "Jewish emigrants" were a negative other.²³

²⁰ On the agrarian-socialist movement that gripped entire regions of the Hungarian Lowlands in the 1890s see Peter Hanák, *Der Garten und die Werkstatt. Ein kulturgeschichtlicher Vergleich. Wien und Budapest um 1900*, (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992), 185-201.

²¹ See Mayer, "The Rusyns of Hungary", 277-298.

²² According to the Israeli historian, Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, Jews from Galicia continued to migrate to the northwest Carpathian region of the Hungarian Kingdom in the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet in his opinion this did not constitute a mass influx, not least because many of supposed "immigrants" were actually refugees from Russian and Romania who emigrated overseas shortly afterwards. See Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora. The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus' and Mukachevo, 1848-1948*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 31-36.

²³ Thus the "Ruthenian Action" corresponds with Bernhard Gießen's definition of propaganda. See Bernhard Gießen, *Kollektive Identität. Die Intellektuellen und die Nation 2*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), 97-102. With the aim of "renewing the moral centre" (the Hungarian state), anti-Semitic propaganda in Hungary at the turn of the century invoked a dichotomy between "victims" (non-Magyar nationalities) and "perpetrators" (Jews), who were

Thus the memorandum alleged that a “people proud of its patriotism” was being suffocated by the “overwhelming flood” of “intellectually backward” Jewish immigrants from Russia. It accuses these alleged “spies” and draft dodgers first and foremost of undermining “patriotic values” with their “cosmopolitan views,” which would distract people from their “patriotic duties.” The allegation that these “imposters” were engaged in “usury” and responsible for poverty throughout the region was secondary.²⁴

Initiated at the end of 1897, the “Ruthenian action” began to make headlines from the spring of 1900. On 12 February 1900 at a conference in Munkács attended by both liberal MEPs from Ruthenian districts and many of the Greek-Catholic clergy led by Bishop Firczák, the Government Commissar Ede Egan reported on a journey to the Bereg County. After he had portrayed the social and economic predicament of the Ruthenian farmers and made suggestions as to how they could be helped, Egan named those who he believed to be responsible for this state of affairs. The logic of his argumentation is paradigmatic for the transformation of Hungarian antisemitism into ethno-Populism at the turn of the century. Egan assured his listeners that he was no anti-Semite and even called for the swifter assimilation of Hungary’s Jews. Yet his verbal attacks of Jewish innkeepers and money-lenders (“Jewish proletariat”) in north-eastern Hungary were far from measured. On the contrary, Egan propounded their ethnicization by representing them as a “race” allegedly distinct from established Hungarian Jews. For Egan, key physical features such as height, hair colour, and skull shape demonstrated the alleged cultural backwardness and moral deficiencies of these “renegade Caspian Khasars, who became Jewish only later.” However, Egan was not consistent in his distinction between “assimilated Jews” and “Khazars” with the result that his racist remarks extended to all Jews. Thus he asserted that he feared for the “national character of the country” and indeed for “its very existence,” if the influence of the Jews were to increase. Egan threatened Hungarian Jews with exclusion if they were to seek solidarity with their co-religionists in the “East” rather than support the cause of Hungarian nationalism.²⁵

Egan’s remarks were seized on immediately by the Budapest press. Just two days later, Minister for Agriculture Darányi was asked by the MEP Lajos Fest if the reports of Egan’s speech in the press “and in particular of his criticism of a religious confession (amusement on the benches of the Catholic People’s Party)” were accurate.²⁶

Shortly afterwards Minister Darányi read out a statement by Egan to the assembled parliament, in which the latter maintained his critical stance on the “proletarian elements from Galicia,” while at the same time regretting any

both situated at the margins of society. While the integration of the “victims” was desirable, the “perpetrators” were meant to be excluded.

²⁴ Mayer, “The Rusyns of Hungary”, 284-285.

²⁵ See Gyurgyák, “Zsidókérdés Magyarországon”, 350-355.

²⁶ *Képvisei házj napló*, 1896, vol. 26, 340.

unintended affront to “any recognized [state, M.S.] religion.” Darányi seemed satisfied with this statement. Yet when heckled with calls of “the Jewish element” by People’s Party MEP Ferenc Buzáth, Darányi expressed his conviction that “Hungary’s Jews” (*házi zsidóság*) also approved of Egan’s “castigation” of the Jewish “proletariat.” Thus he claimed that Egan’s speech had not only been “well received” among the Greek-Catholic clergy, but also by a large number of “our Jewish citizens” and indeed by the MEP Ödön Barta, himself a representative of the “Jewish confession.”²⁷

By May 1901 at the latest, the MEP Ödön Barta must have had a change of heart, because at that point he questioned Minister for Agriculture Darányi on the matter in parliament. On this occasion he was highly critical of Government Commissar Egan. During his interpellation, in which he accused Egan of discrimination in his treatment of Jews and non-Jews, Barta was persistently interrupted by antisemitic heckling from People’s Party MEPs. While he acknowledged that not “every Jew in the Carpathians is a gentleman,” Barta exclaimed at this point that he was not prepared to put up with MEPs’ decrying of “Jews” in the Hungarian Parliament. When People’s Party MEP Rakovszky objected that what concerned him was “economic protection” and not assigning blame to a particular race, Barta responded by pointing to the indescribable poverty of the Carpathian Jews and emphasizing that they were engaged to the same extent as Ruthenians in physical labour and were also suffering under the current economic conditions.²⁸

This confrontation between the Jewish member of the oppositional national liberal Independence Party Ödön Barta with People’s Party MEPs was characteristic of populist antisemitism at the turn of the century. Its supporters only betrayed their anti-Jewishness indirectly by using populist phrases such as “the economic protection of the people.” Barta’s speech is scandalous because he sensed the new anti-Semitic strategy of senior state officials. Yet Minister Darányi kept his cool in the face of Barta’s criticism and attempted to appease him in a memorandum which stated that Government Commissar Egan was personally liable for loans to two impoverished Jews.²⁹

The example of Miklós Bartha, like Ödön Barta a member of the Independence Party, shows just how relative such lines of argument were in the context of populist antisemitism. His cry of “At last an end to the slander!”³⁰ in the midst of the heckling prompted by Darányi’s speech is recorded in the parliamentary minutes. Yet it was Bartha in particular, who affirmed the ethno-populist distinction between “Magyars of Jewish faith” and the “racially” distinct “Khasars” alleged by Egan in the Hungarian media. Like Sándor Károlyi and agrarians from the ruling Liberal Party, Miklós Bartha subscribed to statist ideas. From the outset, the respected publicist Bartha was

²⁷ *Képviselői házi napló*, 1896, vol. 26, 431-432.

²⁸ *Képviselői házi napló*, 1896, vol. 36, 276-282. For Barta see, *Magyar zsidó Lexikon*, ed. Péter Ujvári, (Budapest: Pallas, 1929), 92.

²⁹ *Képviselői házi napló*, 1896, vol. 36, 284.

³⁰ Ibid.

highly sympathetic towards Egan's "Mission." He too believed it to be the only feasible way to achieve the total "Magyarization" of Hungary's non-Magyar nationalities. For him, the Carpatho-Ruthenians, in whom he could detect no great national sentiment, represented an ideal group on which to test new "assimilation" policies. In Bartha's view this would require first and foremost the improvement of the socio-economic situation of the Ruthenian farmers. While Miklós Bartha was well aware of the complex origins of this situation, like Egan in his speech at Munkács, he over-emphasized and indeed distorted the activities of Jewish innkeepers and money-lenders.³¹

Shortly before the parliamentary debate of May 1901, Miklós Bartha summarized his views on the "Highland-Action" in a series of articles. The series was later published as a brochure with the striking title *Kazár földön* (In the Land of the Khazars) just a few weeks after Egan's mysterious death in the same year and immediately prompted a huge public reaction. In the articles, Bartha used vivid and at times racist "usury" metaphors to draw a contrast between "Ruthenian-speaking Magyars" and "Khazars," his term for the "Polish Jews" he alleged had emigrated to Hungary mainly after 1868.³²

Miklós Bartha too accused the "Khazars" of a lack of patriotism. The apparent ambivalence of his antisemitism lies in his concept of the nation. Although scathing of liberal economic and social policies, he was nonetheless insistent with regard to the liberal concept of the "assimilation" of ethnic and cultural minorities. He believed the Hungarian/Magyar nation should encompass all cultural and ethnic groups in the country – even the hated "Khazars." In his brochure Bartha called on "Magyars of Jewish faith" to "magyarize" their Jewish brethren: "Teach this people [the Khazars, M. S.] Hungarian; awaken patriotic feelings in it; nurture in them warm feelings towards their homeland and nation; accustomize them to productive work. In a word, encourage them to assume European cultural mores and moral laws."³³

In this way the "Ruthenian Action" could hardly be characterized as antisemitic – as a demand for the reversal of Jewish emancipation or for open persecution of Jews –, as Miklós Bartha was at pains to emphasize.³⁴ However, elements of Bartha's brochure jarred with his assurances to "Magyars of Jewish faith." Thus he appealed to their "love of truth and patriotism" which would prevent them being blinded by the "German-Jewish and Hungarian-Jewish newspapers" insinuating that Egan's "Ruthenian Action" had anti-Jewish

³¹ For a different interpretation see Gyurgyák, "Zsidókérdés Magyarországon", 356-362.

³² Miklós Bartha, *Kazár földön*, (Kolozsvár: Ellenzék Nyomda, 1901), 86. Surprisingly, Bartha resisted the temptation – at least more than Egan did – to describe the historical origins of the "Khazars." Indeed, the history of this stereotype has yet to be written. One possible explanation might be found in the antisemitic reversal of the so-called "Khazar theory" which the Jewish historian and Budapest Rabbi Sámuel Kohn used in the early 1880s to suggest that Hungarians and Jews represented a "community with a common destiny." He claimed that Hungarian Jews were the descendants of Jewish nomads (Khazars) who had come to Europe together with the old Magyars.

³³ Bartha, "Kazár földön", 111-112.

³⁴ Ibid., 322-323.

tendencies. It was precisely through their religious solidarity that “Magyars of Jewish faith” were undermining national morale.³⁵

Miklós Bartha proposed extending Egan’s “Action” to Transylvania and Upper Hungary as a whole.³⁶ He wasn’t the first to flag this idea in public. Just a few weeks after Egan’s Munkács speech in February 1900, in an address to the Hungarian Parliament the People’s Party MEP Rezső Páder claimed that in Counties with a high Slovak population, the “people” was suffering to the same extent as under the Ruthenians. Páder attributed this to the “immigration of eradicators of the people.” At the same time, Páder, who had no connections to the Slovak national movement, attempted to defuse the nationality conflict on the basis of populist antisemitism. Páder suggested that Egan had provoked accusations of antisemitism with his references to the Jews. He warned that if a similar “aid action” were to be initiated among the Slovaks, its organisers would have to prepare themselves for something else, “because the experience there has shown that anybody who protects the people and points to those who seek to destroy it, will be called a pan-Slavist.”³⁷

3. The Slovak Nationalists in the Nyitra County

Progress on the “Ruthenian Action” soon came to halt and the government decided against extending it to the northwestern Counties. Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century cooperatives and credit unions were founded there. Most of these were organised by Károlyi’s organisation *Hangya* (ant), but some were run by Catholic politicians and, increasingly, by Slovak nationalists.³⁸ As was the case with the Transylvanian Saxons, the Magyars, and the Rumanians, in Upper Hungary these cooperatives and credit unions were not only instruments in “ethnic conflicts,”³⁹ but also undergirded antisemitic praxis. Below I will assess the importance of antisemitic praxis for the political mobilization of the Slovak national movement on the basis of developments in the Nyitra County – a stronghold of the Anti-Semitic Party in Upper Hungary throughout the 1880s. To what extent did the aggressive ethnicization of Jewish innkeepers and traders characteristic of the “Ruthenian Action” play a role in this context?

As in other regions of Upper Hungary, in the Nyitra County in the 1890s proponents of political Catholicism were active in associations, usually with a pronounced antisemitic tendency. After the bad result of the 1896

³⁵ Ibid., 184.

³⁶ Ibid., 185.

³⁷ *Képvisei ház napló*, 1896, vol. 27, 262.

³⁸ See *150 rokov slovenského družstevníctva. V 100. výročí a prehľad*, ed. Roman Holec, (Bratislava: Družstevná únia SR vo VOPD Prúdy, 1995), 21-78.

³⁹ See Attila Hunyadi, “Three Paradigms of Cooperative Movements with Nationalist Taxonomy in Transylvania”, *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th Century*, ed. Torsten Lorenz (Berlin: Berliner Wiss.-Verl., 2006), 81.

parliamentary elections, Catholic People's Party politicians called increasingly for the establishment of "Christian" cooperatives. When this demand was reiterated at a meeting of Catholic associations in the summer of 1898 in Budapest, the Hungarian Prime Minister Dezső Bánffy asked the District Supervisor to report to him on the "confessional and political tendencies" of such cooperatives.⁴⁰

Of all the reports from the Nyitra County, that from the Vágújhely district (today Nové Mesto nad Váhom) was the most differentiated. Although Bánffy's circular did not refer explicitly to the anti-Jewish tendencies of "Christian" cooperatives and credit unions, these appear to have been particularly virulent in Vágújhely. While only a "confessional tendency" was acknowledged for a credit union in Podola (Podolie) founded by the Nyitra Industry Association and run by members of the Catholic clergy, the report suggested that the sole aim of a cooperative and credit union founded in 1897 in Pobeďim was "to compete against and eliminate the Israelite hucksters there." In Verbó, where two Anti-Semitic Party candidates were elected to parliament in the 1880s, the notion of "self-help" was the ostensible reason behind the establishment of a commercially-oriented association with "an anti-Semitic character, revealed most tellingly in the fact that it has not had one single Israelite member to date."⁴¹

Although the report makes no reference to the Vágújhely district municipality, in this period it became a new centre of the cooperative movement – led this time by Slovak nationalists. In the parliamentary elections of 1896, the Catholic People's Party put forward its own candidate, a man notorious for his anti-Jewish statements, who also had the support of Slovak nationalists. After his failure to be elected, the anti-liberals in Vágújhely modified their strategy. In January 1897 they founded a People's Bank with the aim of securing the finances necessary for their future politics. The landowner Ágoston Pongrácz was elected president of the new company, although according to the official report he took no active part in its internal affairs. It was envisaged that investment would come – apart from local "priests and pan-Slavists" – from other Hungarian Counties, even from as far afield as Bohemia and Moravia. This and the fact that the management positions in the bank were occupied almost exclusively by Slovak nationalists was proof of its "pan-Slavic" orientation for the reporting official. Although the new bank paid its customers 0.5% more interest than the old Vágújhely Savings Bank, he predicted that it would not be successful there and would fare little better in the surrounding areas that were already served by self-help organisations.⁴²

Similar to the cooperation between Catholics and Slovak nationalists in the 1896 parliamentary elections, the activities of the People's Bank were directed

⁴⁰ Štátny archív v Nitre, ůpa Nitra I, Hlavnóůpanské spisy 1861-1918, dôverné, i. ů. 16-1899-5.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, i. ů. 12-1895-14.

against Jews.⁴³ In contrast to the official report on the People's Bank, which made no mention of the Slovak nationalists' antisemitism, Jewish citizens saw this as a mere symptom of "pan-Slavism," the main enemy of Hungarian nationalists.⁴⁴ Yet the political views and practices of the leading protagonist of the anti-liberal opposition in Vágújhely, Július Markovič, reveal the true extent to which many Slovak nationalists subscribed to an ethno-populist antisemitism. Although a Lutheran, Július Markovič was one of the most prominent supporters of a rapprochement between Slovak nationalists and the Catholic People's Party, for whom he had coordinated the 1896 election campaign. Following the decision to found a "Christian financial institution to protect Christian people from usurers,"⁴⁵ Markovič became one of its most outspoken proponents and was later appointed manager of the new bank.

As a medicine student in 1880's Vienna, Markovič was already preoccupied with the "question of antisemitism," which in his view resulted from "the tremendous pressure exerted by capital on small-scale property." The origins of the contrast the agrarians would later draw between "mobile" and "fixed" capital⁴⁶ are clear in the dichotomy he asserted then between capitalism ("the consumptive element") and the pre-capitalist economic order ("productive element"). Although his dichotomy was also informed by antisemitism, Markovič did not become a radical antisemite. He subscribed rather to a "practical programme," which, through the establishment of cooperatives and credit unions would compete against Jewish traders and financial institutions and eventually drive them out of business. As he was afraid of being labelled a "pan-Slavist" by the authorities, he attempted to implement this "practical

⁴³ In the early modern period, Vágújhely was already home to a significant Jewish community, which was faced with anti-Jewish attacks in the spring of 1848. Thanks to the energetic intervention of local authorities, the community was spared a similar fate in the context of the Tiszaeszlár Affair in the early 1880s. At the turn of the century, the Jews of Vágújhely still made up more than 20% of the total population. Although the majority of them continued to speak German as their mother tongue, they supported the cause of Hungarian nationalism and the "magyarization" of the public sphere. Many of them were members of the upper middle class and active in trade and industry. In the early 1890s, the local council comprised mainly Jewish councillors and the mayor was chosen from among their ranks until 1918. See František Loubal, *Nové Mesto nad Váhom v národnom vývoji slovenskom*, Nové Mesto nad Váhom: J. Trnovský, 1927; on the Jewish religious community of Vágújhely see Ujvári, "Magyar zsidó Lexikon", 933-934.

⁴⁴ See Miloslav Szabó, "Gegen die 'weltvergiftende Idee des Antisemitismus' Publizistik als Gegenwehr. Jüdische Reaktionen auf den Antisemitismus in der ungarischen Provinz um 1900", *Einspruch und Abwehr. Die Reaktion des europäischen Judentums auf die Entstehung des Antisemitismus (1879-1914)*, ed. Ulrich Wyrwa (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2010), 215-229.

⁴⁵ Julius Markovič, *Nitriansky politický trestný proces*, (Turčiansky sv. Martin: Julius Markovič, 1903), 13.

⁴⁶ "Národné hospodárstvo", *Národné noviny*, 99 (1883).

programme” under the auspices of the Catholic People’s Party, which he saw as “an anti-Semitic party.”⁴⁷

Markovič justified this with reference to an alleged incompatibility of Christian and Jewish morality. In a brochure on the history of the anti-liberal movement in Vágújhely, he claimed that “more or less every Christian” took recourse in antisemitism, even though “social position, caution, or dependency often prohibit an open acknowledgement of antisemitic views.”⁴⁸ Yet Markovič did not want to be seen as a “blood-thirsty antisemite.” For him, antisemitism as “common violence that knows only brute force” was “unchristian.” Thus he called on his supporters to fight “Semitism” “in a legal and morally sound way”:

“Let us be firm and constant in our Christian faith. Let us suppress our wayward bodily desires for alcohol and gratuitous luxury. Let us educate ourselves and learn how to live a good life. Let us not be frivolous, but earnest and cautious in our affairs. Let us not envy each other, but hold together. Where one person does not suffice, we shall form associations. Through this kind of antisemitism we shall soon recover our lost positions and win back the place due to us because of our number. Then we will no longer complain about having to serve Jews, we will never again cry that Jews are never the servants of Christians. Let us help ourselves, and God will help us in return!”⁴⁹

This quote displays the principal elements of populist antisemitism: its emphasis on social justice and the attempt to achieve this by practical means. Yet ultimately, the ideas of Markovič and his likeminded contemporaries were unsuccessful due to the contradictions inherent in the alleged emancipatory aim of anti-Semitic practice and the anti-emancipatory basis of the anti-Semitic programme.

Against the authorities’ expectations, the Slovak nationalists in Vágújhely were able to convince increasing sections of the Slovak-speaking population in the surrounding area to lodge their savings in the new People’s Bank and take out loans there. Shortly afterwards, they began to establish cooperatives to serve the rural population and stamp out Jewish innkeepers and middlemen. Igor Hrušovský, a young employee of the People’s Bank, played a particularly active role here. Endowed with expert knowledge and impressive organizational skills, he focused mainly on the Lutheran communities of Alsóbotfalú (Dolné Bzince), Felsőbotfalú (Horné Bzince), Hrušó (Hrušov), and Lubina, which together formed a single administrative unit.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Archív literatúry a umenia Slovenskej národnej knižnice, call n. 85 E 1 (Ivan Dérer, *Politika v Prešporku a na Záhorí*, 173-174); Štátny archív v Nitre, ňupa Nitra I, Hlavné upanské spisy 1861-1918, dôverné, i. ň. 16-1899-17.

⁴⁸ Markovič, “Nitriansky politický trestný process”, 11.

⁴⁹ “ňidovstvo na našich krajoch”, *Považské noviny*, 3 (1903), 17-18.

⁵⁰ See Slovenský národný archív Bratislava, fond Fedor Houdek, i. ň. 52.

Alarmed by the increased activities of Slovak nationalists in the Nyitra County, it was from here that state authorities took action to put a halt to this development. This was prompted by the parliamentary elections of 1901, in which Július Markovič's brother Rudolf stood for election in Vágújhely and lost to a Liberal Party candidate. Shortly afterwards, both Markovič brothers were charged by the official in charge with "incitement of the Hungarian nationality" in their pre-election speeches in Lubina. This official substantiated his charge with reference to the witness statements of several Jewish small traders. In early 1903 all three defendants were convicted and given prison sentences and fines. Yet in the summer of the same year, the Supreme Court in Pressburg overturned this conviction and the Slovak nationalists were freed on the basis that the witnesses who had spoken against them had been biased.

Led by Július Markovič, the Slovak nationalists consciously exploited the turn of public opinion against the "Khazars" in the wake of the campaign, emphasizing that almost all of the witnesses who had testified against them in the Nyitra trial were land Jews, who had indeed suffered under the boycotts launched against them. Throughout the witness hearings and while presenting their own defence, the defendants also sought to convince the jury that the "new immigrants" or "Khazars" were neither "Magyars" nor even "patriots."⁵¹ The public would not have been aware that the authorities in Upper Hungary had denied a "Jewish invasion" in the northwestern Counties at the turn of the century. While a temporary increase in the number of "Russian and Polish Jews" in the Vágújhely district was noted in 1897, "only very few of these settled here" – just five families.⁵²

In his defence statement, Július Markovič made direct reference to the "Ruthenian Action" and claimed that he had become a target of hatred for "usurers and leeches who suck the life-blood out of the people" because they believed he was "some kind of Egan sent by the government."⁵³ Yet like Egan, Július Markovič did not restrict his castigation to "the plague of locusts that destroys everything" and whose "immigration" had allegedly prompted emigration from Hungary,⁵⁴ but extended it to the established Jewish population of Vágújhely. He stated this in no uncertain terms in his letter to the Nyitra County Supervisor in June 1902, in which he complained about the treatment of himself and his comrades by local authorities. For him, the real culprits were elsewhere: "We have over five thousand unproductive parasites

⁵¹ Markovič, "Nitriansky politický trestný process", 205.

⁵² Štátny archív v Nitre, ťupa Nitra I, Hlavné upanské spisy 1861-1918, administratívne, i. . 191-1895-194. The Hungarian government received a similar report in the summer of 1898 at the height of the anti-Jewish violence in Galicia from the border district of Csaca. See Štátny archív v Bytči, Trenčianska ťupa I, hlavné upanské spisy administratívne, i. . 145-1898/I-3.

⁵³ Markovič, "Nitriansky politický trestný process", 181-182.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 240. Even the radical democratic economist Lóránt Hegedüs hinted at a direct connection between Jewish immigration and Ruthenian emigration in 1899. See Frank, "From Austria-Hungary to the United States", 418.

here, who quench their thirst with the sweat of the people.”⁵⁵ It is not entirely clear to whom Markovič was referring with “we” here – Hungarians or only Upper-Hungarians. He did however openly identify the “five thousand unproductive parasites” as Jews. The anti-Semitic practice promoted by his movement had in Markovič’s words not only impacted on “usurers in the narrow sense of the word, [...] but also on Israelite lawyers, doctors, traders, hucksters, innkeepers, etc., because together they form an organic unit.”⁵⁶

In his “political study” on the “Nyitraer trial,” Markovič naturally made no mention of the wide-ranging consequences of his anti-Semitic practice. Instead, he sought to give the impression that his motivation was purely “defensive” and that the protests of Jews were unwarranted. To this end, he alleged that the patriotism of “assimilated” Jews was not genuine. According to Markovič, the latter had come to the defence of their non-assimilated brethren against their better judgement and had “depicted us as persecutors of their race, in the interest of their race.”⁵⁷ Thus the exposure of the Lubina “Khazars,” who identified themselves as “Magyars” although they didn’t speak a word of Hungarian,⁵⁸ was also intended as a dig at “assimilated” Jews who displayed their patriotism so openly and vilified Markovič and his supporters as “pan-Slavists.”

We find the same strategy in the *Považské noviny* newspaper. This was published by Július Markovič between 1902 and 1904 in Vágújhely and edited by credit union employee, Igor Hrušovský. The *Považské noviny* had a relatively high circulation and its editor saw it as an instrument to stir up support for the populist anti-Semitic movement in Vágújhely. Thus in an editorial with the title *Slováci a Židia* (Slovaks and Jews), Markovič polemicized against a “fruitless, inflammatory anti-Semitism.” He prized Egan, the initiator of the “Ruthenian Action” as a counter-example and quoted extensively from his Munkács speech. With reference to the “Jewish solidarity” allegedly used by Jews to gain social and economic dominance, he encouraged anti-Semitic practice: “Let us finally recognize – as the Jews do – *that words are not deeds!*”⁵⁹ While rejecting a view of antisemitism as “reactionary intolerance,” Markovič nevertheless projected racist analogies onto the Hebrew Bible. This allowed him to contemplate a radical solution to “the Jewish question”:

“The Jews have already succeeded once in totally enslaving a farming people. That was the time when they – laden with their hosts’ silver and gold, yet dressed in rags – returned to Palestine from Egypt. There they found a blue-eyed blonde people, which had since settled there. According to the Old Testament, the Jews then forced this people under their control and enslaved

⁵⁵ Štátny archív v Nitre, ťupa Nitra I, Hlavné ťupanské spisy 1861-1918, dôverné, i. č. 16-1899-17.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Markovič, “Nitriansky politický trestný process”, 20.

⁵⁸ “Ein Rundschreiben”, *Neutraer Zeitung*, 7 (1903), 2.

⁵⁹ “Slováci a Židia”, *Považské noviny*, 7 (1902), 55-56.

them. Yet if the Jews think that they can play the role of ‘the chosen people’ in our land, they are gravely mistaken. There are already a great many people here who are more comfortable with the idea of expelling the Jews than they are with the thought of a farmer, sitting and weeping on the roadside next to the property wrenched so cunningly from him. If we were truly fundamental anti-Semites, we wouldn’t give such advice to Jews, because nobody is more responsible for the spread of antisemitism than the Jews themselves, by continuing to act against us. Every race makes its own hell.”⁶⁰

This quote demonstrates how ethno-populism put paid to the emancipatory pretensions of anti-Semitic practice. An emphasis on the “liberating” practice could not downplay the semantics of “national anti-Semitism,” which portrayed allegedly a-national and anti-national Jews as “enemies” of all people and nations and even went as far as contemplating their expulsion.⁶¹ The press trial of the journalist Hrušovský in the spring of 1904 clearly shows that the ethno-populism of Slovak nationalists transcended even their animosity towards the Hungarians. The prosecution charged Hrušovský with attempting to stir up feeling against “the Magyar nationality” in an article in which he had used the term “our true enemies.” Hrušovský protested that members of the jury only needed to read a few editions of the *Považské noviny* to see that he was highly sympathetic towards “true Magyars,” claiming that the “enemies” of the article in question referred to “those permanent enemies of the people, who are ruining the Hungarian people with their ruthless usury and whom Egan was also sent to combat.”⁶²

The fact that Hrušovský was nevertheless found guilty of an “incitement of the Magyar nationality” by the jury is characteristic of the perception of antisemitism among the Slovakian-speaking population of Upper Hungary at the turn of the century. Thus the acquittal of the Markovič brothers, in which Hungarian public opinion against the “Khazars” is sure to have played no small part, did not really set a precedence. In contrast to Egan’s “Ruthenian Action,” the Vágújhely affair did not resonate with Hungarian anti-liberals. This was particularly evident among representatives of political Catholicism such as Rezső Páder, who in a statement in the Hungarian Parliament in the spring of 1900 invoked an anti-Semitic alliance with Slovak nationalists, by suggesting that claims of “Pan-Slavism” were a diversionary tactic on the part of the Jews. The populist antisemitism of Slovak nationalists was overshadowed by the official nationality policy, to which the Catholic People’s Party increasingly subscribed after the turn of the century.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁶¹ See Klaus Holz, *Nationaler Antisemitismus. Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung*, (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2001).

⁶² “Tlačová pravota Považských novín. Příloha „Považských novín”, *Považské noviny*, 2 (1903).

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Antisemitism, “Economic Emancipation” and the Lithuanian Co-operative Movement before World War I

by Klaus Richter

Abstract:

The idea of having to liberate the Christian peasants from the harmful economic and moral influence of Jewish merchants was an essential element of the political agenda of both the secular intelligentsia and the Catholic clergy. Activists of both political camps started founding cooperative shops, which were seen as the most promising tool to “emancipate” the peasants and the founding of which became legally possible after a streak of reforms shortly before the Russian Revolution of 1905/06. The article thus poses the questions of what role antisemitism played in the cooperatives, what tasks these cooperatives were supposed to fulfill and whether they were a success or not. The article comes to the conclusion that after the Revolution, there was a significant dissent between the two groups mentioned: While priests argued that cooperatives needed to be antisemitic in order to be successful, the liberal intelligentsia countered that antisemitism deterred cooperative shops from being economically successful. Both groups, however, celebrated the founding of such shops as a means for Lithuanians to gain foot in the Jewish dominated towns.

1. Introduction

“Would it not be good if Lithuanians lived in the cities and in the towns, Lithuanians in the villages, Lithuanians on the estates; artisans, manufacturers and merchants, if they all were Lithuanians, and if everywhere only the Lithuanian language resounded.”¹ The author, a Lithuanian priest, complained bitterly about the marginalization of the Lithuanian peasantry. For both the secular intelligentsia and the clergy at the turn of the century, Lithuanian history since the Union of Lublin 1569, but particularly since the Partitions of Poland in the late 18th century, represented a history of losses on all levels. Firstly, Lithuania had lost its statehood to Russia, secondly, Lithuanian culture was found to be on the verge of disappearance due to what was perceived as a long process of systematic polonization, and thirdly, the Lithuanians were perceived to have been socially and economically not only marginalized, but to be firmly in the grip of Jewish merchants. The “economic emancipation” of the Lithuanian peasants thus became an essential pillar both for Lithuanian nationalism and for the social efforts of the clergy.

This article will analyze the debate on “economic emancipation” as well as the attempts to implement these policies. After an introduction into the general

¹ *Tėvynės sąrašas*, 1 (1904): 67.

historical context, two phases of the debate will be distinguished. Firstly, the discussion of the “economic emancipation” in the late 19th century will be analyzed. The second part will deal with the continuation of the debate under fundamentally different circumstances, that is, with the onset of the co-operative movement. Here, I will concentrate on disagreements between the intelligentsia and the Catholic movement, thus discussing the following questions: 1. What was the role of antisemitism in the debate of “economic emancipation” and in the co-operative movement? 2. What tasks did the intelligentsia and the clergy assign to the consumer co-operatives? 3. In how far can we speak of a success or a failure of the consumer co-operatives?

The emergence of the Lithuanian co-operative movement was made possible by two waves of reform (the first in 1897 and the second in 1904), preceding the outbreak of the 1905 revolution and aiming especially at facilitating the formation of associations. According to Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, the motivation for founding associations in the Russian Empire was mainly fed by “doubts regarding the legitimacy of the autocratic regime,” thus giving them a significant role in the development of a civil society.² Where local self-administration existed only on a low level – rural units of self-administration, the *zemstva*, were never introduced in Lithuania – civil society drew “its operational strength and attractiveness in comparison to other socio-political conceptions and formations not least from different forms of social self organization”³. The definition of civil society, which has proven feasible for the Russian Empire, will be that of Joseph Bradley: civil society “may be briefly defined as the network of human relationships and institutions outside the direct control of the state that structure individual actions and allow private persons, unconnected by personal attachments, to manage their affairs.”⁴

For the analysis of co-operative movements and their relationship to the Jewry, two approaches may be distinguished: one that focuses on the role of nationalism in the movements, and one that rather emphasizes the discovery of the peasantry as a political factor. Torsten Lorenz observed a symbiosis of co-operatives and national movements in Eastern Europe in the 19th century, which became so inextricably close that it came to be regarded as “natural” after World War I.⁵ His typology is closely linked to Miroslav Hroch’s model

² Stefan-Ludwig Hofmann, *Geselligkeit und Demokratie. Vereine und zivile Gesellschaft im transnationalen Vergleich 1750-1914*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 103 f.

³ Kirsten Bönker, *Jenseits der Metropolen. Öffentlichkeit und Lokalpolitik im Gouvernement Saratov (1890 – 1914)*, (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010), 337. For support of Bönker’s claim see also, Lutz Häfner, *Gesellschaft als lokale Veranstaltung. Die Wolgastädte Kazan und Saratov (1870 – 1914)*, (Köln: Böhlau, 2004); Alexis Hofmeister, *Selbstorganisation und Bürgerlichkeit. Jüdisches Vereinswesen in Odessa um 1900*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

⁴ Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary associations in Tsarist Russia. Science, patriotism, and civil society*, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁵ Torsten Lorenz, introduction to *Cooperatives in ethnic conflicts. Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th century*, ed. Torsten Lorenz, (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006), 17.

of the development of national movements.⁶ Lorenz distinguishes a “transitional phase,” in which co-operatives recruit members rather on the basis of their professional and social belonging than on the basis of nationality. Subsequently, with the rise of the intelligentsia, in the “segregational phase,” the national idea gains in importance – a process which may be slowed down by government intervention, as in the case of the Russian Empire, where the lack of a legal framework impeded the formation of co-operatives before the Revolution of 1905/06. The third phase of “initial mobilization,” which is coined by the causal relationship of capitalist permeation and the expansion of agricultural enterprises, is followed by a fourth and final phase – the “phase of continuing mobilization and state intervention”, which marks the transition to the economic nationalism of the interwar period.⁷ With reference to agrarian circles in the Habsburg crownland of Galicia and co-operatives in the national movements in the Baltic governorates, Lorenz states that “anti-Semitism was a significant element of co-operative propaganda in Eastern Europe.”⁸

In his study of antisemitism and co-operatives in the Kurhessen region in the German Empire, David Peal has analyzed co-operatives as “alternative means of combatting usury as it was understood in the German countryside in the late nineteenth century”.⁹ Like the activists of “political anti-Semitism”, Raiffeisen co-operatists had found usury to be the main culprit for the economic plight of the Kurhessen peasantry. Usury discourse and co-operative movement came to function as a link between antisemitism and anti-capitalism. Raiffeisen co-operative activists had warned not to equate usurers and Jews; for anti-Semites, however, “freedom of usury” (*Wucherfreiheit*) became the “surrogate for the emancipation from the Jews.”¹⁰ For a transnational contextualization of the Lithuanian co-operative movement, this approach needs to be taken into account as well – despite the obvious differences between Lithuania and the German Empire, of which the level of sociality as a result of democratization and the legal emancipation of the German Jews are merely the most striking ones.

To analyze the debate of “economic emancipation” and the co-operative movement in Lithuania, the nature of the sphere of daily interactions between Lithuanians and Jews in the late 19th and early 20th century needs to be taken

⁶ Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁷ Lorenz, “Cooperatives in ethnic conflicts,” 20-24. See also, *Wirtschaftsnationalismus als Entwicklungsstrategie ostmitteleuropäischer Eliten. Die böhmischen Länder und die Tschechoslowakei in vergleichender Perspektive.*, ed. Eduard Kubů and Helga Schultz, (Prag and Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2004).

⁸ Lorenz, “Cooperatives in ethnic conflicts,” 11.

⁹ David Peal, “Antisemitism by Other Means? The Rural Cooperative Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Hostages of Modernization. Studies on Modern Antisemitism 1879 – 1933/39*, ed. Herbert A. Strauss, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 128-149, 128.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

into account, as it had been fundamentally altered by Russian social and nationality politics compared to the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The power of the nobility had been significantly weakened, the serfs had been emancipated. Industrialization and urbanization had found their ways into Lithuania, although to a significantly weaker degree than in other parts of the Russian Empire. Sporadically, people of Lithuanian peasant origin had taken up professions in the towns and cities and enjoyed university education in Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Moscow or even abroad. However, compared to the rest of the Empire, the Lithuanian nobility still owned relatively large land properties, and peasants had received relatively small ones.¹¹ The result was the creation of dependent small farmers and of poor farmers without any land at all. Furthermore, as a result of the Polish uprising and the subsequent repressive measures against Poles and Catholic priests and the lack of presence of the Russian nobility, *zemstva* were never introduced in Lithuania.¹²

For the Lithuanian Jews, after a promising start¹³, the division of Poland meant being deprived of fundamental rights and privileges, which resulted in impoverishment and demographic shifts. The wide-spread supposition that “unproductive” Jews were harming “productive” peasants, which had been prevalent in Poland-Lithuania already, became state policy and found its most extreme manifestation in the creation of the Pale of Settlement, which included Lithuania and out of the borders of which Jews were not allowed to settle.

In Lithuania, Jews accounted for around 14% of the entire population, but for nearly 50% of the urban population and in some towns for more than 80%. The majority of them consisted of petty merchants and artisans. The Lithuanians, in contrast, accounted for around 96% of the rural population.¹⁴ Lithuanian farmers and Jews thus came into contact mainly to do trade. Jewish

¹¹ Prior to World War I, 45% of all land in the governorate of Kovno and 48% in the governorate of Vil'na were still owned by the nobility. In the governorate of Suwałki, which belonged to Vistula Land, the share was significantly lower, with 23,8% of all land owned by the nobility. Pranė Dundulienė, *Žemdirbystė Lietuvoje. Nuo seniausiu laikų iki 1917 metų*, (Vilnius: Valstybinė politinė ir mokslinė literatūros leidykla, 1963).

¹² Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall*, (München: Beck, 1992), 209; Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia. Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 132.

¹³ Alexei Miller states that particularly the period following the first partition of Poland (1772-1790), after the Russian Empire had gained territories with a relatively small Jewish population, “demonstrated the tendency on the part of the authorities toward emancipation and integration of the relatively scarce Jewish subjects of the empire,” and Jews could “consider their situation in the Russian Empire as decisively advantageous compared to the situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in its late stages.” Alexei Miller, “The Romanov Empire and the Jews,” *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism. Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research*, ed. Alexei Miller, (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 93-136, here 98.

¹⁴ *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897*, vol. B, eds. Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler, Brigitte Roth (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1991), 69-76, 156, 197.

peddlers frequently visited farmsteads and estates to sell items for everyday use and thus became firmly established figures in Lithuanian village culture.¹⁵ The more conflict-prone encounter was when Lithuanian peasants came to the *shtetls* to sell agricultural products and buy tools, fertilizer, alcohol etc. Furthermore, peasants would flood the towns on Sundays and on church holidays, as this was where the parish churches were located. On such days, the majority situation was diametrically shifted. Brawls frequently arose on the marketplace when both sides accused each other of fraud, which often resulted in injuries and smashed market stands.¹⁶ The marketplace was thus not only the main zone of contact between Lithuanians and Jews, but also the main zone of conflict. At the same time it was influenced by multiple other factors, particularly when a visit to the market square was preceded by the attendance of a church mass and/or the consumption of alcohol in a Jewish inn. While market days were not *per se* prone to conflict, they could instill fear in the Jewish population of the *shtetls* as it was faced with a large and sometimes volatile crowd of peasants, while the peasants felt they were in a foreign environment, the rules of which they could not fully understand. In the case of anti-Jewish riots, market stands and Jewish shops were most likely to be attacked first and foremost. Even in the case of a ritual-murder accusation – which still happened frequently in Lithuania at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century –, it was not the synagogue that was attacked in the first place, but shops and other economic facilities.¹⁷

2. The debate on “economic emancipation” (1883-1904)

Members of the intelligentsia, although they only half-heartedly rejected such physical conflicts, advocated a different way of coping with what they perceived to be a total dependence on Jewish traders. “If a small Jewish shop is being smashed from time to time, then this will not bring our people their own shops, then our people will not manage to shake off the Jews”¹⁸, the liberal newspaper “The Farmer” (*Ūkininkas*) wrote in 1900. Starting with the newspaper “Dawn” (*Aušra*), it was, however, particularly its successor “The Bell” (*Varpas*), which started advocating an “economic emancipation” of the

¹⁵ Gerhard Bauer/Manfred Klein, *Das Alte Litauen. Dörfliches Leben zwischen 1861 und 1914*, (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), 278 ff. For a detailed literary depiction of a Jewish peddler see Šatrijos Ragana’s autobiographical novel “On the Old Estate.” Marija Pečkauskaitė (Šatrijos ragana), “Sename dvare (1922),” *Raštai*, vol. 1, ed. Marija Pečkauskaitė (Šatrijos ragana), (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2006), 237-423, 272 and ff.

¹⁶ Yaffa Eliach, *There once was a World. A 900-year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok*, (Philadelphia: Little, Brown & Co, 1998), 324.

¹⁷ Vilma Žaltauskaitė, “Smurtas prieš žydus Šiaurės Lietuvoje 1900 metais. Įvykiai ir interpretacijos,” *Kai ksenofobija virsta prievarta. Lietuvių ir žydų santykių dinamika XIX a. – XX a. pirmojoje pusėje*, ed. Vladas Sirutavičius/Darius Staliūnas, (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas Leidykla, 2005), 79-98, 86.

¹⁸ *Ūkininkas*, 10, 1900, 146.

Lithuanians from the Jews. According to its editors, the aim of emancipation could only be reached by the creation of a Lithuanian merchant class in order to complete the socially “unfinished” Lithuanian nation. At first, this debate was dominated by sons of wealthier peasants, who had studied in Warsaw, where they had come into contact with positivism and “organic work.”¹⁹ The concept of “organic work” had been developed after the Polish uprising of 1863 and aimed at strengthening the nation through education and organization of the people. In Poland, it had from the first moment on included demands that the Jews be economically superseded.²⁰ This also became one of the main postulations of the Lithuanian national movement, the others being the dissociation from Polish culture and, later on, the struggle against the Russian administration. In 1889, Jonas Beržanskis wrote in a programmatic article:

“The Lithuanian is sinking into poverty, but the Shlomo is growing and growing [...]. Can our people not do the same as the Jew [...]? After all, the Lithuanian can weigh, transport and sell his crops himself [...]. Who needs these middlemen, who needs these foreigners [...]? The Lithuanians need to achieve what the Jews, Russians and others have achieved already. This means that the Lithuanians will need to think, wake up, open their eyes and blossom [...]. We lack courage! Is this not strange? We look at trade as if it were something wrongful.”²¹

The members of the intelligentsia were not the first who wanted to organize the peasants against the Lithuanian Jews. Already in the 1860s, priests under the helm of the bishop of Samogitia had launched a strong temperance movement, which had managed to organize a significant number of Christian peasants for a longer period of time, using the dense network of Catholic parishes.²² The liberal and secular intelligentsia, being numerically weak and eager to leave the countryside to move into the larger cities, found it more difficult to develop a concept of how to keep in contact with the rural population. While they claimed the leadership of the “Lithuanian awakening”, they bluntly admitted that realistically the priests, who resided in the

¹⁹ On the development of the notion of “organic work” cf. Tibor Iván Berend, *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 99-102.

²⁰ In 1888, Vincas Kudirka and Lithuanian fellow students founded the “Lithuanian Association” (*Lietuvos draugija*) in Warsaw, which advocated the “a) dissemination of knowledge on the improvement of agriculture [...]; b) advancement of artisanship; c) expansion into trade.” Juozas Gabrys, “Biografija,” *Raštai*, vol. 1, ed. Vincas Kudirka, (Tilsit: O. v. Mauderodės spaustuvė, 1909), 21 ff.

²¹ *Varpas* 7 (1889): 97-99.

²² See Antanas Alekna, *Žemaičių Vyskupas Motiejus Valančius*, (Klaipėda: Spauda “Lituanijos,” 1922), 200; Saulius A. Girnius, “Bishop Motiejus Valančius. A Man for all Seasons,” *Lituanus* 22, 2 (1976): 5-28, here 19; Vytautas Merkys, *Motiejus Valančius. Tarp katalikiškojo universalizmo ir tautiškojo*, (Vilnius: Mintis, 1999), 334 ff.

countryside, “can achieve a lot more, as they have the largest influence on the people.”²³ At the same time, they warned that “the intelligentsia must not become too detached”²⁴ from the peasantry.

The motivations of the priests to organize the peasants economically were much less homogenous. Some considered it a traditional task of the parish to help illiterate and uneducated peasants with economic issues. Some – but far from all of them – preached religious prejudices and were eager to limit the influence of Jewish traders.²⁵ A large number of priests also pursued a concept of “Lithuanianness” not unlike that of the intelligentsia and co-operated with them to a high extent.²⁶ Many priests also followed the call of the 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which urged priests to get involved in modern social issues. While, the stance of the liberal intelligentsia changed after the turn of the century as a result of pre-revolutionary tensions and its focus shifted from the Jews as enemies towards the Russian administration, part of the clergy remained stout regarding the question of “economic emancipation,” which increasingly became congruent with the “Jewish question.” “Wherever there are no Christian tradespeople and artisans, you have to bring them there,” wrote the priest Kazimieras Pakalniškis, of whom contemporaries said that he had downright “declared war on the Jews,”²⁷ and added: “Those who love God will help to save our people and our fatherland from the Jews.”²⁸

However, Christian shops set up by Lithuanian peasants in most places proved unsuccessful and many closed down after a short time. Lithuanian nationalists thus had started advocating the formation of consumer co-operatives early on. These, they hoped, could provide the appropriate funds and organizational standards necessary to compete with Jewish traders. However, co-operatives, as associations in general,²⁹ were difficult to found in Lithuania as the Russian

²³ *Vilniaus žinios*, 8th of March, 1905.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The priest Juozas Šnapštys (see also part 3 of this article), for instance, was arrested by the tsarist authorities for preaching hatred against “people of other confessions.” Edita Škirkaitė, “Kunigas Juozas Šnapštys-Margalis. Gyvenimas ir veikla,” *Lietuvių katalikų mokslo metraštis* 21 (2002): 407-430, 417 ff.

²⁶ A particularly prominent example for this movement is the priest Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, who co-operated in some cases with the liberals, but particularly after the Revolution of 1905/06 with the Christian Democrats. For his biography see Aleksandras Merkelis, *Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas*, (Vilnius: Vaga, 1989).

²⁷ Raimondas Vėbra, *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkija ir visuomeninis judėjimas*, (Vilnius: Mintis, 1968), 185. In his newspaper „Review of the Samogitians and of Lithuania,” Pakalniškis described the Lithuanian Jews as “a lousy breed [...] that stuffs our miserable fatherland like an old mushroom.” *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga*, 17, 1891, 129-130.

²⁸ *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga*, 17, 1891, 129-130.

²⁹ The affiliation of co-operatives to associations in general is also evident on the conceptual level. In Russian, consumer co-operatives were called *obščestva potrebitel'ej* („consumers’ association“) and accordingly in Lithuanian *vartotojų draugijos*. The latter is a literal translation from Russian. However, whereas the Russian term *obščestvo* can also mean “society,” the

administration suspected them of being hotbeds for socialism. Thus, the few co-operatives in Lithuania were almost exclusively led by the nobility.³⁰ 1897 witnessed the introduction of a new charter for consumer co-operatives of the Rochdale type, which led to the creation of a handful of co-operatives by Catholic priests.³¹ However, their shares turned out to be much too expensive for peasants to join. This changed with the introduction of a new law on small loans introduced in summer 1904.³²

3. The consumer co-operative movement (1904-1915)

Now, peasants could finally apply for the creation of consumer co-operatives themselves. In the second half of 1904 alone, the governor of Kovno received around 30 applications. Over the next four years, the number of peasant applicants increased steadily while the share of the nobility decreased, until in 1908, consumer co-operatives were almost exclusively founded by Lithuanian peasants,³³ which made the consumer co-operatives the – religiously and socially – most homogenous co-operational associations in Lithuania. On an empire-wide scale, however, the Lithuanian movement was rather weak.³⁴ In 1912, 81 consumer co-operatives operated in Kovno governorate while in Vil'na governorate there were only 22 and in Suwałki governorate – which had a different legislation on associations as a result of its belonging to Vistula Land – merely seven.³⁵

Lithuanian *draugija* has a narrower meaning. Regarding their affiliation to associations, both the Lithuanian and the Russian terms differ fundamentally from the German *Genossenschaften*.

³⁰ Vytautas Žeimantas/Vytautas Vaitkus, *Lietuvos vartotojų kooperacijos. Nuo pirmųjų žingsnių iki 2000 metų*, (Vilnius: Informacijos ir leidybos centras, 2000), 17.

³¹ Petras Šalčius, *Raštai. Lietuvos prekybos istorija*, (Vilnius: Leidykla Margi Raštai, 1998), 182 f.

³² Vincent Barnett, *The Revolutionary Russian Economy 1890-1940. Ideas, debates and alternatives*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 37; I. V. Bubnov, *The Co-operative Movement in Russia, its History, Significance and Character* (Manchester: Co-operative printing Society, 1917), 53.

³³ The share of charter members of consumer co-operatives identifying themselves as Lithuanians or Samogitians rose from 79% in 1905 to 95% in 1908. This calculation was made on the basis of consumer-co-operative charters included in the files of the Vil'na governor general. See Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (LVIA) f. 378, Bendrasis skyrius, ap. 1905; ap. 1906; ap. 1907; ap. 1908.

³⁴ At the beginning of World War I, 3.000 consumer co-operatives operated in the Russian Empire, 600 of them in Kiev governorate alone. *Bendrija 9-14* (1912): 175-179; *Pirmasis Lietuvos vartotojų draugijų kalendorius 1915 metams*, (Kaunas, Josvainių Vartotojų Draugijos Valdyba, 1915), 90.

³⁵ Algimantas Miškinis, *Lietuvos urbanistikos paveldas ir jo vertybės. Užnemunės miestai ir miesteliai*, (Vilnius: Savastis, 1999), 220; A. K. Kubilius, *Vartotojų Kooperacijos Bendrovė*, Kaunas 1928, 13. The low density of consumer co-operatives in Vil'na governorate is confirmed by the annually published Vilnius Calendar. See e. g. *Vilniaus kalendorius 1909 metams*, (Vilnius, Juozapas Zavadskis, 1908), 75; *Vilniaus kalendorius 1910 metams*, (Vilnius, Juozapas Zavadskis, 1909), 106 f.

Apart from the introduction of the new law on small-loans, the year 1904 was also a pivotal year for the co-operative movement as it witnessed the abolishment of the ban on Latin-letter publications, which preceded the onset of the Revolution only by a few weeks. The loosening of state control in the revolutionary months allowed for a relatively free press. Thus, the wave of foundations of consumer co-operatives was accompanied by an intensive debate on the issue of “economic emancipation” in the press, which culminated in a series of articles written by a Lithuanian priest called Juozas Šnapštys, who argued that to solve the question of “economic emancipation” entailed solving the “Jewish question,” and that the instrument to achieve this was the consumer co-operative:

“Just as the Jews are sucking us dry with their unity, our people need to unite in order to shake off these leeches. To achieve this, we need to convey the idea of unity to the people. Let us found consumer co-operatives, let us support Christian traders, then we can defend ourselves against this surge without guns, so we may crawl into their pockets – and these are spacious!”³⁶

The artisan and Christian Democrat Antanas Staugaitis endorsed Šnapštys’s position and defended him against liberal allegations of antisemitism. To establish consumer co-operatives, Staugaitis argued, it was absolutely necessary to agitate against Jews: “How are consumer co-operatives to form, how Christian merchants to appear, how the idea of unity to be established if we are prohibited to warn against the evil deeds of the Jews?”³⁷ Moreover, referring to the antisemitic Russian newspaper “Banner” (*Znamja*) and the Polish journal “The Plough” (*Rola*), Staugaitis advocated the establishment of “at least one antisemitic newspaper,” in which Lithuanians should “boldly write about the Jews.”³⁸

In this debate and in most of those to follow, Catholic priests resorted to a particularly anti-Jewish rhetoric. At the same time, priests were the most committed to founding new co-operatives, which in some regions became an integral institution of the parish. Half of all consumer co-operatives of Kovno governorate in 1906 were headed by priests.³⁹ The nationalistic newspaper “Hope” (*Viltis*) stated in 1910 that “in the end, priests are in charge of all consumer co-operatives”⁴⁰, which was an exaggeration, but nonetheless illustrates the important role of priests in the movement. In 1908, Pakalniškis reflected on the high involvement of priests in the co-operative movement and came to the conclusion that without the management of the priests, the consumer co-operatives would soon fall prey to Jewish merchants:

³⁶ *Lietuvnų laikraštis* 34 (1905): 481.

³⁷ *Lietuvnų laikraštis* 44-45 (1905): 643.

³⁸ Ibid. The antisemitic newspaper proposed by Staugaitis was never established.

³⁹ *Kauno kalendorius 1907 metams*, Kaunas 1906, 77.

⁴⁰ *Viltis*, 25th of July, 1910, p. 1.

“The parish priest needs to travel to this parish today and to another tomorrow, and the co-operative is left behind... without a management [...]. If the chief clerk is an educated man, business of the association will go well, but if he is not, these matters will not be completed, and business will get worse and eventually disband. Already, the Jews have begun to predict ‘kapores’⁴¹ for the co-operatives.”⁴²

Liberals, on the other hand, frequently accused the Catholic movement of using antisemitic agitation in the debate on economic emancipation in order to increase its influence on the rural population. One of the most committed Lithuanian liberal co-operatists, Domas Šidlauskas, criticized that the rhetoric regarding co-operatives had “adopted an antisemitic, nationalistic colouring”⁴³. This diverted the co-operatives from their intended use, which should be the economic empowerment of the peasantry. On the other hand, Šidlauskas criticized that the liberals, “who did not even want to get too close to the peasants” had neglected co-operative work while the priests were “not qualified” for it as a result of their anti-Jewish stance.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the 20th century, the liberal argument had thus changed diametrically: Whereas their mouthpiece – the newspaper *Varpas* – had stipulated that co-operatives should be a tool to achieve “economic emancipation” from the Jews, liberals now argued that the centrality of anti-Jewish agitation was leading towards the downfall of the movement. The culprits, argued Petras Klimas⁴⁵, were the priests, who had begun “to play with the national, sometimes with the religious sentiments of the people (not even to mention the antisemitic ones)” – the Lithuanian co-operatives thus “had from the outset been built on an antisemitic footing”⁴⁶.

The failure of the consumer co-operative movement became apparent all too quickly. It soon became clear that for each newly opened shop, another shop somewhere else closed down. This was mostly attributed to the fact that the Russian administration prohibited the creation of a co-operative federation, which could have carried out wholesale operations.⁴⁷ However, the immediate faults were rather to be found on the micro level. Revenues stagnated; small shops could hardly offer any more goods than herrings, makhorka, sugar, salt

⁴¹ A Yiddish word meaning “broken.”

⁴² *Vienybė* 4 (1908): 51.

⁴³ *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 39 (1907): 581 f.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Petras Klimas, by that time a student at Moscow University, later became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the interwar Republic of Lithuania.

⁴⁶ *Lietuvos žinios*, 14th of July 1910, 2-3.

⁴⁷ Due to the lack of a federation, Lithuanian consumer co-operatives remained reliant on Jewish wholesalers. The same deficit has been observed in the case of the Habsburg Crownland of Galicia. Sławomir Tokarski, *Ethnic Conflict and Economic Development: Jews in Galician Agriculture 1868–1914*, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo “Trio,” 2003), 167.

and petrol.⁴⁸ Moreover, their charters forbade them to sell on credit.⁴⁹ Customers frequently complained about horrible shopping conditions, unskilled clerks and the sloppy way the goods were presented in the shop⁵⁰, while liberal co-operatists criticized on the one hand the heavy drinking and the negligence with which peasants operated the shops⁵¹, and on the other hand the general “ignorance” of the peasant customers, which precluded them from seeing the value of having “Lithuanian” shops of their own.⁵² This “ignorance,” however, was rather a symptom of the economic failure of the co-operative shops. Consumer co-operatives simply had very little to offer to Christian peasants. Nationalists and Catholics had considered the assumingly superstitious and religious peasantry a fruitful soil for their agitation. Lithuanian folk culture indeed had a long tradition of stereotypes of the cunning Jewish usurer, and popular plays, stories and songs which depict the misdoings of Jews in the economic sphere existed in abundance in the late 19th and early 20th century – but at the same time, the word “Jew” and “trader” for peasants was and had always been almost synonymic.⁵³ A trader who was not a Jew was nearly inconceivable, and thus the Jewish shop remained the store of choice.⁵⁴ Moreover, peasants were rational beings and could not be persuaded to refrain from buying at Jewish shops just because they were run by Jews – and more so if the Lithuanian Christian shop was not even cheaper.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the reluctance of Lithuanian peasants to work as clerks was not only a lack of education, but also a result of the enduring traditional belief that the only proper and “moral” work for a Christian Lithuanian was working the soil.

⁴⁸ *Lietuvos žinios*, 11th of January, 1911, 2.

⁴⁹ *Lietuvių laikraštis* 12 (1905): 154.

⁵⁰ *Lietuvos žinios*, 8th of December, 1910, 1-2.

⁵¹ *Vienybė* 35 (1910): 539.

⁵² This was not a distinctly Lithuanian phenomenon. European co-operatists regularly accused peasants of being too “ignorant,” too “stubborn” or too “intimidated” to cherish the high value of co-operatives. Giovanni Federico, *Feeding the World. An Economic History of Agriculture 1800–2000*, (Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 136. In a gross misinterpretation of the peasants’ world, the Catholic Lithuanian newspaper *Šaltinis* wrote in 1907, that for the peasants the co-operative needed to be “the family, for the well-being of which its members dedicate all their hearts [...]. Sometimes one needs to have the courage to say openly if there is something bad going on in the management of the association or if there is misconduct among its members.” *Šaltinis* 24 (1907): 370 f.

⁵³ On stereotypes in Lithuanian folk culture see Laima Anglickienė, *Kitataučių įvaizdis Lietuvių folklore*, (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2006).

⁵⁴ Kai Struve has made similar observations regarding the case of the Habsburg crownland of Galicia. Kai Struve, “Peasant Emancipation and National Integration. Agrarian Circles, Village Reading Rooms, and Cooperatives in Galicia,” *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts. Eastern Europe in the 19th and Early 20th Century*, ed. Torsten Lorenz, (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006), 229-250, here 244 f.

⁵⁵ See *Šaltinis* 30 (1907): 467 f.

4. National and Christian space in Jewish shtetls

The success of the Lithuanian consumer co-operatives was perceived to be rather in the symbolic sphere, as Lithuanian shops were founded in the centers of the shtetls, thus occupying prestigious buildings as spots in a larger space that was generally perceived to be alien and Jewish. The nationalist newspaper “Hope” (*Viltis*) celebrated such acquisitions more than actual economic success, as for instance in the case of a consumer co-operative in Papilė (Telšė district): „In the year 1907, a beautiful and large consumer co-operative was founded in the middle of the city [...]. Upon seeing this, the Jewish grocers were wild with anger and envy.”⁵⁶ A consumer co-operative in Pandėlys was opened at a “very nice place, in the centre of the marketplaces, separated from the Jews”⁵⁷. Upon seeing this, “the Jews were merely standing by and swore horribly as they saw the people flocking to the shop”⁵⁸. Particularly the appropriation of masoned buildings was deemed a drawing level with the Jews, as buildings made of stone were formerly almost exclusively occupied by the larger Jewish shops⁵⁹, as the newspaper *Artojas* noticed in 1910: “It is clear that every merchant wants to become rich, which is why in our country the Jews own the stone houses in the towns [...]. All this wealth they have gained by trade.”⁶⁰

While nationalistic and Catholic visions blended regarding many issues, this interpretation of the establishment of shops as a setting up of “Lithuanian islands” in a larger “Jewish space” – the shtetl – may be contrasted with a different interpretation, which put equally little emphasis on economic matters. The centers of most Lithuanian towns were almost exclusively inhabited by Jews, while Lithuanian peasants populated the outskirts. The church thus represented the only “Catholic” site in the centers, and was encircled by buildings such as the synagogue, the shulhoyf, the Jewish bathhouse and several Jewish shops. Christian shops were thus perceived to be appropriate tools to expand the “Christian space” around the church. In Pašvitinys (Ponevėž district), a newspaper wrote, Jewish merchants were disturbing the Catholic mass on Sundays. “Nowhere in Lithuania do we find another [Jewish] community that is so tightly thronged next to the church as in Pašvitinys” – a problem that was alleviated by the opening of a consumer co-operative store.⁶¹ In the little town Pandėlys (Novoaleksandrovsk district), “a stone church was erected at a rather bad place: The churchyard is walled in on three sides, on the fourth, however, a shabby house is standing, which hosts three more Jewish

⁵⁶ *Vienybė* 45 (1912): 710-712.

⁵⁷ *Viltis*, January 3, 1914, 3.

⁵⁸ *Viltis*, March 22, 1914, 2.

⁵⁹ Lijana Laužikaitė, “Lietuvos miestelių prekybos pastatai,” *Žydų kultūros paveldas Lietuvoje*, ed. Alfredas Jomantas (Vilnius: Savastis, 2005), 157-164, here 160.

⁶⁰ *Artojas*, 13 (1910): 199.

⁶¹ *Vilniaus žinios*, August 7, 1905, 3.

shops.”⁶² The opening of a consumer co-operative in 1914 in “a beautiful place, right in the middle of a market, and separated from the Jews”⁶³ was thus enthusiastically celebrated. However, arguments for the creation of a “Lithuanian” space in the shtetl centers or of a “Christian” space around the church were not brought forward exclusively by members of either the Catholic activists or of the intelligentsia, but were often used interchangeably. As co-operatives tried to establish themselves in the towns, they met with competition by Jewish merchants, who tried to prevent new shops from opening. This was not explicitly directed towards Christians, but also against new Jewish competitors.⁶⁴ Lithuanian-language newspapers, however, perceived this competitive behavior as being directed exclusively against the Lithuanians, which led to a significant overestimation of solidarity among Jews. When the local priest tried to open a consumer co-operative in Garliava (Mariampol district) in 1904, a newspaper reported that the Rabbi of Kovno had forbidden the Jewish landlord to rent out his house to a goy.⁶⁵ Among the Lithuanian Jews, measures against the new competitors were discussed, but on a relatively low scale. The Vilnius-based Hebrew-language newspaper *Ha-Zman* wrote in 1910: “Can we obliterate the co-operative shops? We need to answer in the negative. But as we cannot obliterate them, we still have the opportunity to weaken them. Wholesalers, who are selling goods to co-operative shops, must stop granting them loans.”⁶⁶ However, *Ha-Zman* did not broach the issue of a growing economic competition, but rather of the “hatred” that certain co-operatives displayed against Jews.

While some Lithuanian activists, to whom the logic of capitalism was still alien, perceived the refusal to rent out houses to co-operatives already as a hostile and immoral act⁶⁷, Jews were moreover often accused of physically sabotaging the Lithuanians’ efforts to appropriate space in the shtetls and thus of inhibiting the “economic emancipation” itself. The most frequent allegation was that Jews used arson to rid themselves of their new competitors. This was a serious allegation, as conflagrations were frequent due to the domination of wood as construction material and could deprive families and whole communities of their livelihood over years. The theme of “Jewish revenge” was a familiar one and had already been propagated by early Lithuanian newspapers such as *Ausėja*, which described the fate of a Lithuanian shop owner at the hands of the Jews in drastic words:

⁶² *Vilniaus žinios*, July 8, 1905, 3.

⁶³ *Viltis*, January 3, 1914, 3.

⁶⁴ Eliach, “*There once was a world*,” 270.

⁶⁵ *Šaltinis* 9 (1907): 136.

⁶⁶ As cited in *Litva* 1 (1911).

⁶⁷ In the case of the famous Lithuanian nationalist Vincas Kudirka, the refusal of the Jews of Šakiai to rent out a flat to him had provoked him to pen a series of deeply antisemitic articles in his journal *Varpas* in 1890/91.

“The blackbeards were blind with rage. But that was not enough. One night, with the town in a deep slumber, we hear a noise from the street. Everybody is running outside: The hut of our merchant is ablaze! Barely did he survive, his tuft scorched, as the door had been barricaded by the sons of Israel [...]. It is arduous for the Lithuanian to wrest the trade from the blackbeards’ dirty claws – try, and you and all your belongings will go up in flames.”⁶⁸

In 1905, the liberal newspaper *Vilniaus žinios* accused the Jews of Pašvitinys (Ponevež district) of trying to exact revenge upon the new consumer co-operative: “It is not good that the Jews think this way. If the Lithuanians let them live so close by without feeling any anger towards them, then they should try to get along with us as good as possible.”⁶⁹ In 1914, the Jews of Alsėdžiai (Telšė district) were blamed for smashed windows of the consumer co-operative: “People say that this was the work of the Jews, because the Jewish language was heard [...]. Now people are afraid that the Jews might shoot or do other things”⁷⁰. After the outbreak of World War I, the Jews of Vilkaviškis (Wyłkowiszki district) were accused of having bribed German soldiers into destroying the Lithuanian co-operative shops and warehouses.⁷¹

5. Summary

The movement scored a victory in 1915, when the Russian administration finally lifted the ban on the creation of a co-operative federation.⁷² This triumph, however, was short-lived as the chaos of World War I led to the rapid decline of Christian co-operative shops. Of formerly 150 shops, only a handful survived the war. However, the co-operative movement was still highly significant – firstly as an expression of civil society in the process of consolidation and secondly (and in this study more importantly) because of its effect on Lithuanian-Jewish relations. Although the economic effects of the new competitors on Jewish traders were only marginal, Lithuanian Jews apparently felt threatened by the hostile rhetoric used particularly by the priests. Moreover, in the course of the debate on “economic emancipation” of 1905, voices were raised that called for an antisemitic movement in Lithuania modeled after the Polish example, where calls for boycott of Jewish shops was a central strategy of the anti-Semites.

To summarize what has been said, I deem it plausible to say that antisemitism in Lithuania prior to World War I manifested itself primarily in the debate on

⁶⁸ *Ausėja*, 7-8, 1885, 233 f.

⁶⁹ *Vilniaus žinios*, 7th of August, 1905, 3.

⁷⁰ *Viltis*, 13th of February, 1914.

⁷¹ *Kauno kalendorius 1915 metams*, (Kaunas, Švento Kazimiero Draugija, 1914), p. 76.

⁷² Antanas Svetikas, *Lietuvos vartotojų kooperacijos valdymas rinkos sąlygomis*, (Vilnius, Vilniaus Pedagoginis Universitetas, 2002), 12.

“economic emancipation” and in the attempts at its implementation – in spite of its ultimate failure. I base this statement on the following arguments. 1. The economic sphere was the main sphere of interaction between Jews and Lithuanians. This meant that conflicts between these two groups were most likely to arise in this sphere (and on its topological manifestation – the shtetl’s marketplace). Economic arguments were most often used in antisemitic rhetoric in Lithuania. 2. The vast dominance of Lithuanians in agriculture and of Jews in trade was a social and economic reality. Nationalists and Catholic activists made this issue a central point of their agenda. The consumer co-operative movement had an organizational, modern character, and at its centre stood the calls for supersession of the Jews in the economic sphere. 3. Mobilization of the peasants for the co-operatives failed. Most consumer co-operatives hardly registered any economic growth, many closed down after a short time. Peasants were reluctant to buy in co-operative shops due to bad shopping conditions and long traditions of buying at Jewish stores. This indicates that arguments that it was necessary to complete the Lithuanian peasant nation with a middle class bore only limited relevance for Christian peasants. 4. Openings of new consumer co-operative shops were celebrated by co-operativists of the intelligentsia and of the Catholics alike. The opening was much less interpreted in economic terms, but rather as a successful appropriation of “Lithuanian” or “Christian” space in the shtetls dominated by Jews. 5. In spite of the failure of the consumer co-operative movement, the anti-Jewish semantics and arguments established within the debate became immensely influential after World War I, when economic nationalism flourished in Lithuania. Calls to “buy from your own people” drew from a repertoire which had already been established before 1914, as did the postulation that the Jews were ultimately to blame for the wrongs the Lithuanians had to suffer, as they used their economic superiority to wield power over the peasants. This becomes evident once we look at the rhetoric of the fascist antisemitic combat league “Iron Wolf” (*Geležinis vilkas*), which declared in 1929: “We encourage Lithuanian society to support the consumer co-operatives, we need to make clear that it is about time to get rid of Jewish intermediary trade and of Jewish usury once and for all.”⁷³

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⁷³ Gediminas Rudis, *Antisemitinės tendencijos voldemarininkų judėjime 1928-1940, m.* Report from 2007.

<http://www.komisija.lt/Files/www.komisija.lt/File/2000_seminaras_apie_antisemitizma/G.Rudzio_pranesimas.doc>, accessed on June 6, 2011.

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How antisemitic was the political Catholicism in Croatia-Slavonia around 1900?

by Marija Vulesica

Abstract

Before the Croatian-Slavonian parliamentary elections in 1897, two oppositional parties formed the so called United Opposition which was backed by large segments of the clergy. Afraid, variously, of liberalism, the Hungarian church reforms, the ideas of social democracy and the demands for secularization, the United Opposition chose antisemitism as a political means. Supported by the Catholic paper (Katolički list) and its editor in chief Stjepan Korenić, who openly called for the clergy to organize politically, they blamed Jews for all the putative threats of the modern world. For the first time an election campaign in Croatia-Slavonia had open antisemitic traits. The author shows the impact of antisemitic ideas within some parts of the Croatian opposition since the 1880s, including political Catholicism and the United Opposition, down to the turn of the century. The paper considers in addition the role of the Catholic newspaper and the press in general in the antisemitic campaign in 1897, as well as in the distribution of antisemitic ideas in the 1880s and 1890s in the Habsburg crownland Croatia-Slavonia.

“If somebody answered to the question, should the clergy deal with politics, they should not, this somebody would condemn them to watch quietly and with entangled hands how the politics destroy the foundation pillars of the society and family, how the state suppresses the church, how the parliaments vote for all kinds of unchristian laws”¹

This attitude, expressed in the leading article of the Catholic newspaper (*Katolički list*)² in early May 1897, described the self-image of a part of the Croatian clergy whereupon it had to be politically active to protect and save the fundamental pillars of society and family. Modern politics, this was the implication of these lines, would threaten the Christian basis of society. The clergy should therefore remove its “entangled hands” and act politically. This article appeared in the organ of the Zagreb Archdiocese shortly before the parliamentary elections which took place from the 19th to 22nd of May 1897. The Croatian clergy was neither organized as a movement nor as a political party at that time. Yet it was an important and influential political force in

¹ *Katolički List* (Catholic paper), May 8, 1897. From now on *KL*.

² *Katolički List* was first established in 1849 as *Katolički List Zagreba* i. It is not known how high its circulation was, nevertheless it was one of the most important journals in Croatia and Slavonia and was read by most clergymen. Vlasta Švoger, “Das kroatische Pressewesen”, *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, Vol. III/2, eds. Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch, (Wien: VÖAW, 2006): 2149-2176.

Croatia and contrary to the claims of the Catholic newspaper, it had been fighting actively and successfully for its interests for years.³

Political fortunes of the Croatian parties have been decisively influenced by the priesthood in the last third of the 19th century. Reasons for the influence of the clergy are to be found among others in the socio-cultural nature of the Croatian-Slavonian society.⁴ Social advancement and education of the general population was virtually impossible. Most young men, therefore, became priests, because this profession offered economic safety and the possibility of political participation for the clergy had the right to vote, which was very limited otherwise. Clergymen were thus organized in political parties across the country, held some of the leading positions and formed an important group of voters. A politicization of Catholicism seemed for many years yet unnecessary, as no serious and profound conflicts between Church and State arose.⁵

Around the mid-1890s a change occurred in the political consciousness of some of the Croatian ministers of religion and new voices came forward, demanding and promoting just that politicization and an explicitly Catholic political movement. The Catholic Church in Croatia found itself and its principles threatened in 1894 by the liberal legislation, which was implemented in Hungary. It also rejected the ideas of social democracy and the demands of the younger generation of politicians for secularization.⁶ Although the latter two factors had no power, the clergy felt challenged by several doctrines that were opposed to its position. Inspired by the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 and by the parties set up with an explicitly Christian program like the Christian Social Party in Austria and the Catholic People's Party in Hungary, within a part of the Croatian ministers of religion the intention stirred to organize themselves politically as Catholics and to meet the *new things*, such as social and political challenges.

The motor of political Catholicism in Croatia-Slavonia was the priest Stjepan Korenić, who became the chief editor of the *Katolički list* in 1896.⁷ And while the Catholic newspaper claimed in the early 1890s neither to belong to any

³ On the position and history of the Catholic Church in Croatia: Ivan Vitezić, "Die Römisch-katholische Kirche bei den Kroaten", *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, Vol. IV, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, (Wien: VÖAW, 1985): 332-398.

⁴ Croatia and Slavonia, institutional precursors of today's Republic Croatia, were crownlands of the Habsburg monarchy until 1918. They have been under the Habsburg or Hungarian supremacy since the Middle Ages. In 1868 a Compromise between Croatia, Slavonia and Hungary was achieved, which granted Croatia and Slavonia autonomy over internal affairs, justice and matters of religion and education. Croatia and Slavonia were ruled by a Ban (viceroy). Until the demise of Austro-Hungarian Empire, the political relations between the Croats and Hungarians were tense, not least because of the Hungarian policy of the so called Magyarization. Branka Magaš, *Croatia through history*, (London: Saqi, 2007); Ivo Goldstein. *Croatia. A history*, (London: Hurst, 1999).

⁵ Mario Strecha, *Katoličko Hrvatsvo*, (Zagreb: Barbat, 1997), 57.

⁶ Strecha, *Katoličko Hrvatsvo*, 58f.

⁷ Mario Strecha, "O procesu politizacije katolicizma u Banskoj Hrvatskoj potkraj 19. Stoljeća," *Bosna Franciscana* 26 (2007): 113.

political party nor to support any particular political movement, the Archbishop of Zagreb, Juraj Posilović, the publisher of the paper, called to the clergy in the spring of 1894 not to support the politicians who defended the liberal legislation.⁸ With a call to the clergy to be politically active, he of course held off. Korenić, on the contrary, purported already in the first edition of the Catholic newspaper under his aegis that Christianity was threatened, that the Christian nations should unite against the impending danger and that they should confront with this threat.⁹ Right at the beginning of his term the paper called to the clergy. "On your feet, priests and laymen! [...] At the work that lies ahead of you in your time and in your country. Do not worry about the old morals of the dead, not even about the criticism of the living. Fight anytime, anywhere courageously and persistently for the right thing, then you will gain this century for the Church of God."¹⁰ The message was clear. The clergy and the laity should fight for the interests of the church and ignore the old standards by which the church was to stay out of political life.

During the year 1896, the Catholic paper published over and over again articles which aimed to mobilize the clergy for the political action.¹¹ Besides, antisemitic attitudes and views were expressed more frequently. Support and admiration was declared for the Austrian and Hungarian antisemites. The paper had already positioned itself in the early 1880s towards the rising antisemitism in Europe. Although it held back with antisemitic articles quantitatively until the mid-1890s, its editors made clear their antipathy towards the "Jewish press" and the supposed large influence of Jews.¹² In even stronger terms the Catholic newspaper positioned itself against liberalism and the introduction of civil marriage, considering the Jews as carriers and representative of both these ideas.¹³

The hostility of the Church towards Jews

In 1873 the Croatian Parliament approved the Emancipation Act, granting equal rights to the Croatian Jews.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the representatives of the

⁸ Strecha, "O procesu politizacije," 105.

⁹ *KL*, January 1, 1896.

¹⁰ *KL*, January 9, 1896.

¹¹ *KL*, April 9, 1896, August 6, 1896, October 8, November 19, 1896. For the perception of the Dreyfus Affair in Croatia-Slavonia in this period see, Ljiljana Dobrovšak, *Hrvatska javnost prema Židovima krajem 19. Stoljeća. Za vrijeme Dreyfusove afere od 1894.-1899* (The Croat Public Opinion and the Jews at the End of the Nineteenth Century. The period of the Dreyfus-Affair 1894-1899), Master's thesis University of Zagreb 2002.

¹² *KL*, March 20, 1890; July 2, 1891, November 21, 1895.

¹³ *KL*, February 2, February 11, 1892; March 2, 1893; May 17, 1894; July 11, July 18, July 25, August 1, August 8, August 15, August 22, 1895.

¹⁴ Jews were present in the Croatian lands at least since the end of the 18th century. Their legal status changed several times during the next decades. Since 1873, when the Emancipation act was passed, Jews were to be found in all important branches of the political and economic life. In 1900 about 20.000 Jews lived in Croatia, mostly in the bigger cities like Zagreb or Osijek.

Church did their best to resist against the full emancipation and integration of the minority. Nevertheless, the representatives of the Church prevented full legal equality. In 1877 the Bishop of Đakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer, one of the most respected and influential figures in Croatia in the 19th century, for example, acted strongly against a Jewish teacher who was installed in a public school. By turning to government and politics and by threatening to mobilize the parents to keep their children away from school, he finally achieved the removal of the Jewish teacher.¹⁵ He interpreted the appointment of the Jewish teacher as “death and destruction of our people.”¹⁶ The church shall not allow Jews to educate the youth because this would lead to a loss of their Christianity.¹⁷ Strossmayer took similar efforts in 1884, when Jewish-Christian marriages were debated in Croatia. The Croatian government in April 1884 declared that Jews were to be seen as equal to Christians and therefore Christians would be able to convert to Judaism and to marry Jews.¹⁸ Strossmayer and other senior clerics protested against this decision. He even intervened with the papal nuncio in Vienna, Serafino Vannutelli.¹⁹ In his letter dated 29th of September 1884 he justified his intervention by saying that there was in fact the principle that the clergy should not meddle in politics, but this principle was a device formulated by the Jews and Freemasons in order to “secure their gains” and to harm the Catholic Church. He continued by claiming that the Croatian government wanted to remove the church from “the heart of men,” so that Freemasons and rabbis could work with governmental assistance on the destruction of the Church.²⁰ The agitation of the clergy and circles close to the Croatian Independent National Party, which was opposing the government, eventually caused the withdrawal of the governmental statement concerning the Jewish-Christian marriages.²¹ Conversions to Judaism in general and marriages between Christians who converted to Judaism outside the Croatian lands and Jews remained impossible in Croatia until the collapse of the monarchy. The agitation of the clerical circles showed that they did not accept the full equality

Croatian Jews were in comparison with the non-Jews highly literate. In 1900 42 per cent of Croatian Jews claimed German as their mother tongue. Ljiljana Dobrovšak, “Emancipacija Židova u Kraljevini Hrvatskoj, Slavoniji i Dalmaciji u 19. Stoljeću”, *Radovi*, 37/1(2005), 125-143; *Dva Stoljeća povijest i kulture Židova u Zagrebu i Hrvatskoj*, ed. Ognjen Kraus (Zagreb: Židovska općina Zagreb, 1998).

¹⁵ Ferdo Šišić, *Korespondencija Rački- Strossmayer*, Vol. I., (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija, 1928), 75-84.

¹⁶ Šišić, *Korespondencija Rački- Strossmayer*, 75.

¹⁷ Šišić, *Korespondencija Rački- Strossmayer*, 76.

¹⁸ *Narodne novine* (National paper), April 18, 1884.

¹⁹ *Korespondencija Strossmayer-Vannutelli 1881-1887*, ed. Josip Balabanić, Josip Kolanović (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 1999), 327, 347, 349, 351, 353, 359; Mario Strecha, „To je na svaki način pravi škandal”, Zbornik Mirjane Gross, ed. Božena Vranješ-Šoljan, (Zagreb: Filozofsky Fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1999), 223f.

²⁰ “Strossmayer – Vannutelli”, 361.

²¹ Mario Strecha, “To je na svaki način pravi škandal”, 235.

of Jews. Their success demonstrated as well the great political influence that the clergy had in Croatia.

Political Catholicism and its antisemitism

Korenić demanded right in the first edition of the Catholic paper under his leadership that the Christian nations should unite against the impending dangers and asked them to confront themselves with these dangers too. One of the means for achieving this could also be antisemitism. Although warning about the errors of “modern antisemitism,” like the claims, that everything connected to Judaism, like the Bible, should be removed from public life,²² he proposed that antisemitic forms may well be applied to solve the “social question” if they comply with Christian moral principles.²³ The new editor distinguished between a good and useful antisemitism and a poor and dangerous one for Christianity.

During the year 1896, the Catholic paper published several articles, which aimed to mobilize the political clergy.²⁴ In addition, antisemitic attitudes and views were expressed more frequently and the Catholic paper declared its support and admiration for Austrian and Hungarian antisemites. In this sense, in early May of 1896 the editorial article “Dr. Karl Lueger and antisemitism” was published. Lueger was initially praised as “a Catholic and a patriot.” Then it was said that the antisemitic movement had to be discussed in the Catholic newspaper as a “social phenomenon and because of its socio-religious aspect”. The paper declared that antisemitism was an ancient phenomenon which initially had a religious character. The guilt of the Jews for the death of Jesus, their *speculation* and usury had been the reasons for their expulsions. But “modern antisemitism” (“moderni antisemitizam”) was no longer religious, “it is an expression of outrage against the Semitic tribe because of the exploitation and the monopoly of big business, which is largely in Jewish hands.” It further stated that “patriotic groups” would sympathize with antisemitism, because the major European newspapers were in Jewish hands and this alleged “Jewish press” would “falsify” the public opinion. This “Semitic press”- stated the article- abuses and twists everybody’s freedom under the disguise of liberalism. This kind of journalism which was accused to be at the orders of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* was a crime against ethics and justice. Lueger, the Christian parties and their antisemitism were directed against this “pseudo-liberalism” and against the Jews who dominated the big business and the press. The paper rejected the “vulgar antisemitism” of Herman Ahlwardt²⁵ and Eugen

²² KL, January 1, 1896. ‘

²³ KL, January 9, 1896.

²⁴ KL, April 9, 1896, August 6, 1896, October 8, November 19, 1896.

(21) Hermann Ahlwardt, 1846-1914. He appeared as an antisemitic speaker and publicist since the 1890s. His antisemitic rhetoric was directed primarily against the alleged dominance of Jews in the financial world and in the press. He then unfurled a “Sozialdemagogie” which was directed against big business. Ahlwardt also demanded the expropriation of the Jews and their

Dühring.²⁶ It stated that it supported only Christian antisemitism as a reaction to Judaism, which was ruling over the Christian peoples in the economic, journalistic and political fields. “That’s why we are happy and we welcome Lueger’s victory, like the entire Christian press in and outside of the monarchy, as a victory over the false liberalism and Freemasonry.”²⁷

The orientation of the Catholic newspaper was thus clearly defined. In numerous articles during the years 1896 and 1897 there was a talk about “Jewish liberalism” which threatened the Church in Hungary and Croatia.²⁸ Liberal or pro-governmental newspapers were described automatically as “Jewish” and the *Agramer Zeitung*, a German-speaking Croatian newspaper whose editors were Jewish, was called with the derogatory term *Ćifut*, an expression which has no equivalent in English.²⁹

At least since the 1880s liberalism embodied in the eyes of the Croatian clergy a great danger for the Church. In a series of articles in the summer of 1895, the “anti-Christian meaning” of atheism and liberalism was denounced. Liberalism was pictured as being directed against religious dogmas, as promoting religious indifference, as wanting to remove people from God and installing civil marriage and secular schools.³⁰ In short, liberalism stood for all the evils and dangers that threatened the Catholic Church. It required no longer deliberations to identify liberalism with the Jews, whose rise into the middle of society was related to the liberal ideas and policies of the 19th century. After 1895, the connection between Jews and liberalism in the minds of Catholic political parties became indissoluble.

In 1896 the Catholic paper closely watched the elections in Hungary and did not make a secret of its support and admiration for the Hungarian People’s Party. In September 1896 it wrote about the People’s Party “it has to contend with so much suffering and difficulties which were caused to her by the Jewish liberalism.” In the same issue it was said: “Jewish liberalism, which is responsible for today’s religious-political situation in Hungary has begun to falter.”³¹ In the edition of the 12th of November 1896 a correspondent’s report from *Medjimurje* appeared. This region on the Croatian-Hungarian border with a majority of Croat population politically formed a part of Hungary, but in canonically matters it belonged to the archdiocese of Zagreb. The election for the Hungarian parliament was held here in the fall 1896. About the outcome of

expulsion. Christoph Jahr, “Hermann Ahlwardt”, *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. 2/1, ed. Wolfgang Benz, (Berlin – München: De Gruyter Saur, 2009), 7; Thomas Gondermann, “Vom politischen Antisemitismus zum politischen Antiamerikanismus. Der Wandel sozialer Demagogie bei Hermann Ahlwardt,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 17 (2008): 198-203.

²⁶ Werner Bergmann, “Eugen Karl Dühring, 1833-1921,” *Handbuch des Antisemitismus*, Vol. 2/1, 188-191. Dühring must be seen as a mastermind of racial antisemitism.

²⁷ *KL*, May 7, 1896.

²⁸ *KL*, September 24, October 8, 1896.

²⁹ *KL*, October 1, 1896.

³⁰ *KL*, July 11, July 18, July 25, August 1, August 8, August 15, 1895.

³¹ *KL*, September 24, 1896.

the election, which had to be repeated in this region, the correspondent wrote: "[...] These elections have shown that all this is a Judeo-Magyars 'švindl' (German: Schwindel, dizziness, MV) and a lie." Later in that report the author accused "Judeo-Magyar liberalism" to corrupt and to loot the Croats. "Jews, they are a misfortune for this nation," the author concluded.³² The resemblance to Heinrich von Treitschke's phrase "The Jews are our misfortune" from 1879 was certainly not by chance.³³ In reference to the renowned German historian who had made antisemitism "socially acceptable" in Germany, the Catholic paper wanted to underpin the correctness of its own anti-Jewish attitude. The report also stated that the Jewish journal "Muraköz" (Hungarian: *Medjimurje*) promoted the destruction and demoralization of the people and that it would ridicule the faith and the priests. Furthermore, according to the correspondent, on the Election Day Jews had insulted the priests and bribed voters with money.³⁴ The detailed report from *Medjimurje* gathered all the accusations that were raised by Croatian antisemites. The drawing of such a picture in view of the upcoming elections fitted into their political strategy. They insisted that the Jews would manipulate the elections and determine the nation's policy by corrupting the minds of the people and by stimulating agitations against the church and the clergy.

In the same issue the Catholic paper celebrated the victory of the Christian Social Party in Lower and Upper Austria. "The Jewish and Masonic liberalism had poisoned and sucked the Christian element in Austria into the political, economic and educational field for years." But Lueger and the Christian idea dealt them a decisive blow, the magazine continued. In Vienna and Leopoldstadt, "the Jewish island," Jewish liberalism was about to crash. "The truth," said the paper, "which was kicked and suppressed over the decades in the Jewish press has finally triumphed."³⁵

In the following editions the Catholic paper alleged repeatedly that Jews stood behind liberalism.³⁶ The Catholic paper furthermore stoked fears with the

³² KL, November 12, 1896.

³³ The historian Heinrich von Treitschke broke in 1879 with his essay "Our prospects", in which the above mentioned rate fell, the so-called Berlin Antisemitism Controversy: *Der "Berliner Antisemitismusstreit" 1879-1881. Eine Kontroverse um die Zugehörigkeit der deutschen Juden zur Nation. Kommentierte Quellenedition*, ed. Karsten Krieger (München: K.G.Saur, 2003); Karsten Krieger, "Heinrich von Treitschke", *Handbuch des Antisemitismus*, Bd.2/2, 838f; Ulrich Wyrwa, "Heinrich von Treitschke. Geschichtsschreibung und öffentliche Meinung im Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 51 (2003): 781-792. Ulrich Wyrwa, "Genese und Entfaltung antisemitischer Motive in Heinrich von Treitschkes 'Deutscher Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert'", *Antisemitische Geschichtsbilder*, eds. Werner Bergmann, Ulrich Sieg, (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2009), 83-101. The sentence "The Jews are our misfortune" could be read on every front page of the Nazi newspaper "Der Stürmer" since 1927. To the importance of this momentous antisemitic slogan: Jacob Katz, "Die Juden sind unser Unglück". Reflexionen über ein antisemitisches Schlagwort", Jacob Katz, *Zwischen Messianismus und Zionismus. Zur Jüdischen Sozialgeschichte*, (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1993), 108-118.

³⁴ KL, November 12, 1896.

³⁵ KL, November 12, 1896.

³⁶ KL, November 19, 1896.

debate around the interconfessional laws which aimed to allow a conversion from Christianity to Judaism. At the end of November 1896 the paper declared it had to be particularly attentive, because Christianity experienced a “capitulation to Judaism,” making reference to the Hungarian situation.³⁷ Therefore, the paper referred to this issue so that Croatia should not be surprised at such legislative proposals.

At the beginning of 1897 the Catholic paper expressed its satisfaction with the victory of the antisemites in Austria, but over the next few months any rhetoric related to elections stopped. Although anti-Jewish remarks appeared over and over again, they did not appear in connection to the parliamentary elections in Croatia. Reasons for this were that the government of Banus Khuen-Hédévary officially disapproved the interference of the Church in politics. The pro-governmental press condemned such attempts as well. Secondly, the highest ranking members of the Croatian clergy, led by the Archbishop of Zagreb, Posilović, tried to deny the participation of the Church and the clergy in politics. The reluctance of the Catholic paper concerning open intervention in the May elections was linked to this official line of the Church in Croatia.

Although the Catholic paper avoided direct attacks against Jews during the election campaign, there nevertheless appeared articles which were meant to instruct the Catholic voters indirectly. In the spring of 1897 a series of articles entitled *Christianity and Liberalism* was published. Their aim was to refer to the dangers which threatened the Church and Catholicism. Hence liberalism stood for attacks on Rome, it was an enemy of the Church, which promoted religious indifference in the society and disseminated disbelief in the schools and families.³⁸

The fear of a loss of religion was the most important issue in the clergys’s campaigns. Liberalism was identified as the greatest threat and the readers had been informed in detail in the previous year that its representatives were the Jews. The organ of the Catholic Church in Croatia had therefore dispensed with open antisemitic propaganda during the campaign. But in the months after the election antisemitic remarks were expressed loudly again. In mid-June 1897 it was said in conjunction with Social Democracy:

“It is known that the most important founders of socialism were Jews. [...] It is also proven that Jews are even now in some countries at the forefront of social democracy. [...] With good cause we hope that the Jews are going to be the first to distribute their money to the poor, if a socialist state is to be established.”³⁹

And at the beginning of July an editorial article praised Lueger’s antisemitism. It also blamed a Jewish capital and the *Alliance Israélite* to dominate the legislation with the help of the press and of a false liberalism.⁴⁰

³⁷ KL, November 26, 1896.

³⁸ KL, March 11, 1897; March 18, 1897; April 1, 1897.

³⁹ KL, June 17, 1897.

⁴⁰ KL, July 8, 1897.

An abusive antisemitic language which occurred again after the election suggests that the chief editor of the Catholic paper abandoned it during the election campaign only in order to present the Catholics as apolitical. But after the encouraging election results he went ahead with the old arguments.⁴¹ Although political Catholicism in Croatia was in 1897 neither organized as a political movement nor as a party his ideas and goals celebrated a first major success in the parliamentary elections. Why was that the case?

The parliamentary elections in 1897

In the 1897 elections, the Independent National Party and the Party of Right for the first time acted together as a closed group. They formed the United Opposition, which was backed by large segments of the clergy. At the beginning of 1897 the Catholic paper gradually announced its support for the united opposition.⁴² The Independent National Party had always been closely connected to the clergy, the Party of Right had its supporters also among the clergy.

Since the early 1890s, the Croatian opposition had been weak so that it could hardly offer any resistance to the so called Magyarizing policy of Banus Khuen-Hédervary. Aware of their weak position, the Independent National Party formed a coalition with the Party of Right.⁴³ These two political parties found common ground in their rejection of "Hungarian" liberalism, of the Hungarian church reforms and in their hatred of Jews. The voices of the clergy, which had called for greater political participation and influence in the wake of the "culture war" in Hungary, got a hearing within the United Opposition.

At the same time the United Opposition leant on the moral and financial power of the clergy to mobilise voters.⁴⁴ With the help of the clergy, the United Opposition won one-third of all mandates (29 of 88 seats).⁴⁵ For the first time an election campaign was dominated by religious issues. Particularly a fear of repression of Catholicism by the liberal legislation, by secularism and by the Social Democracy was fomented.⁴⁶

While the Catholic paper as an organ of political Catholicism held back with antisemitic rhetoric during the campaign, the three organs of the United

⁴¹ For the election campaign and the results of the election of 1897 see, Marija Vulesica, *Die Formierung des politischen Antisemitismus in den Kronländern Kroatien-Slawonien 1879-1906*, Ph.D. Technische Universität Berlin 2011; forthcoming publication..

⁴² KL, January 28, 1897, February 4, 1897, February 25, 1897, Strecha, "Katoličko hrvatstvo", 62-65.

⁴³ Jaroslav Šidak, Mirjana Gross, Igor Karaman, Dragovan Šepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860-1914*, (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), 155f; Mirjana Gross, *Povijest Pravaške ideologije*, (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1973), 313-316; Strecha, "O procesu", 101-103.

⁴⁴ Stjepan Matković, "Afirmacija Khuenove autokracije. Izbori za Hrvatski sabor 1897," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 29, 3(1997): 478; Strecha, "O procesu", 106f.

⁴⁵ Stjepan Matković, *Čista stranka prava 1895-1903*, (Zagreb: Hrvatski Inst. za Povijest, 2001), 88f.

⁴⁶ Matković, "Izbori", 478; Strecha, "O procesu", 107f.

Opposition, *Obzor* (Horizon, organ of the Independent National Party), *Hrvatska Domovina* (Croatian homeland, organ of the Party of Right) and the paper of the workers wing of the Party of Right, *Hrvatski Radnički Glas* (HRG, Croatian workers voice) made use of direct antisemitic propaganda and attacks. *Obzor* at the beginning of 1897 attacked the “pseudo-liberalism” or “Semitic liberalism” which allegedly prevailed in Hungary.⁴⁷

The political opponent, the Pure Party of Right was defamed as a “Jewish-liberal party” and its organ, *Hrvatsko pravo* (Croat Law), as an organ of Judaism. The Pure Party of Right was designated as the representative of the Jews and their interests.⁴⁸ A large part of the Croatian Jews actually gave their vote to the ruling National Party or to the Pure Party of Right, which was led by Josip Frank, a converted Jew. Therefore the United Opposition and its organs accused the Jews to serve the Hungarians. If non-Jews gave their vote to the ruling parties, the National Party or the Pure Party of Right, it was said that they had sold themselves out to the Jews.⁴⁹

This motif was most frequently used by the United Opposition. Equating the political opponent with Jews and Judaism was an expression of the convinced antisemitism of some members of the United Opposition. By staging this accusation they tried to insinuate that their political opponents would not fight for Croatian interests and the interests of the Catholic Church, which in the eyes of the United Opposition were identical. This attitude of *Obzor* had already been apparent in recent years, with the upcoming election it gained in political explosiveness.

In addition to the attacks on liberalism as the root evil of government and society, *Obzor* in the months before the elections published plenty of antisemitic news. The range of accusations was wide. Jews would mock the Christian traditions,⁵⁰ proliferate rapidly,⁵¹ corrupt politics⁵² and as a ‘state within a state’ support liberalism and social democracy in all countries, enrich themselves and fight against Christianity.⁵³ Antisemitism was seen as a necessary resistance, as a means to combat Jewish influence.⁵⁴

Obzor reproduced the most antisemitic notes from foreign newspapers. The paper enlisted these international phenomena, not uncommon in the absence of local news, as a proof for the Jewish nature worldwide. It communicated that Jews were the same everywhere and were a threat to every nation. At the same time the paper held that everywhere in Europe various actors and movements were about to stand up against the Jewish threat. *Obzor*’s intention was to stir up fear of Jewish power and to present the Independent National

⁴⁷ *Obzor*, January 16, 1897.

⁴⁸ *Obzor*, January 18, 1897.

⁴⁹ Ljiljana Dobrovšak, *Hrvatska javnost prema Židovima krajem 19. Stoljeća*, 88f.

⁵⁰ *Obzor*, January 5, 1897.

⁵¹ *Obzor*, January 13, February 1, 1897.

⁵² *Obzor*, January 19, March 3, March 6, 1897.

⁵³ *Obzor*, February 3, March 13, March 17, March 19, April 1, 1897.

⁵⁴ *Obzor*, March 31, 1897.

Party or the United Opposition as the sole defenders of Croatian interests and as patrons of Christianity. To substantiate this position several news stories were published at the end of March 1897 where Jews were accused to have mocked the Christian religion during the Purim festival.⁵⁵

The culmination of such a slanderous antisemitic campaign was the accusation that Jews had baptized a cat during the Purim celebration in the town of Sisak. This note, which first appeared in the local paper *Banovac*, was taken over by the organs of the United Opposition, who marked this rumor as an evidence for the "Jewish insolence."⁵⁶ Accordingly, the rabbi or the cantor of Sisak, joined by a group of Jews, had trapped a cat, wrapped it in a pillow "like a child is wrapped for baptism," stole baptismal water from the Catholic Church and christened the cat. The maid of Cantor Heller was said to have observed this play and reported the incident to the parish priest and to the police.⁵⁷ The Catholic paper reproduced this note and finally asked rhetorically how such an insult could not cause antisemitism.⁵⁸ A few days later *Hrvatska Domovina* announced that the prosecutors had filed charges against the Jews.⁵⁹ In fact, not Jews but the editors of the papers *Banovac*, *Obzor*, *Hrvatska Domovina* and the maid Ana Rudančić had to stand trial. The maid was sentenced to fourteen days and *Obzor*'s chief editor Josip Pasarić to four months in prison for defamation. Vjekoslav Fleišer, editor in chief of *Hrvatska Domovina*, was acquitted.⁶⁰ At the end of July the chief editor of *Banovac*, Dragutin Benko, was sentenced to 14 days in prison, the sentence was commuted to a fine and a corrective statement.⁶¹

The trials against the editors took place only after the elections. But the note about the baptism of a cat in the pre-election campaign was taken by the United Opposition as welcome election propaganda. Not only direct antisemitic notes and articles which aimed to fuel anti-Jewish resentment and a fear of the Jews, but also the direct appeal to voters and the clergy secured a considerable gain of votes to the United Opposition. The plea to the Croats to vote for "true Croats" only, and not for the pro-government "Magyars" and certainly not for Jews brought the United Opposition one third of all mandates.⁶²

Even more than *Obzor* the organ of the Party of Right, *Hrvatska domovina*, agitated against Jews during the campaign. Their main target was the leader of the Pure Party of Right and converted Jew Josip Frank.⁶³ The former political

⁵⁵ *Obzor*, March 23, 1897.

⁵⁶ *Obzor*, March 29, 1897.

⁵⁷ *Obzor*, March 29, 1897, *HD*, March 29, March 30, 1897.

⁵⁸ *KL*, April 1, 1897.

⁵⁹ *HD*, April 1, 1897.

⁶⁰ *HD*, December 10, 1897; *AZ*, December 18, 1897.

⁶¹ *HD*, July 3, 1897.

⁶² Matković, "Izbori za Hrvatski sabor 1897", 483.

⁶³ Josip Frank (1844-1911) converted most likely in 1874 to Catholicism in order, as he claimed, to secure social and economic opportunities for his children. Matković, *Čista stranka prava*, 23.

comrade became the object of hatred within the Party of Right which was lead by Grga Tuškan and David Starčević. They took Frank's Jewish origins as an pretext to start an antisemitic campaign against him, his political allies and the Jews in general.⁶⁴ His party was assumed to be under the influence of the *Alliance Israélite*.⁶⁵ *Hrvatska Domovina* furthermore claimed that Jews had no feelings for a homeland and therefore could not serve Croatia as their homeland. They were seen as strangers who did not want to learn and adopt the Croatian language.⁶⁶ The organ of the Party of Right stoked specifically and deliberately fears of the "foreign elements".⁶⁷ It distributed a national threat scenario which putatively came from Vienna and Pest, "the heart of the Judeo-Magyar" and would menace the Croats.⁶⁸

In April 1897, *Hrvatska Domovina* published a special Easter edition, taken from the magazine *Hrvatski narod* (Croat People), where various poems and folk songs were printed. The folk song "Marija and the Jews" was about the Virgin Mary who attempted to protect her child Jesus from the Jews. But the Jews stole the child and tortured it. In addition to that, the story about the alleged baptised cat in Sisak was reproduced once again.⁶⁹

The emphasis on Christianity, the religious feelings of the people and the anti-Jewish sentiments were used to elicit a religiously based aversion. Thus secular political antisemites exploited traditional religious anti-Judaism during the election campaign to gain votes and finally win the elections.

Another magazine, closely connected to the United Opposition, was the antisemitic *Hrvatski Radnički glas* (HRG, Croatian worker's voice). The paper was first edited at the beginning of 1897. From its start it agitated openly against Jews in general and Josip Frank in particular.⁷⁰ Shortly before the elections took place in May 1897 the paper focused its coverage almost exclusively on attacks against Frank and the Jews. It called upon voters to vote for Tuškan as a Croatian and Christian candidate, whose ancestors were already real Croats and and who had fought earlier against Croatian enemies like the Turks.⁷¹ The aim was to defame Frank not to be a genuine Croat, as a "Croatian enemy," who was only supported by the Jews. "Who goes with Jews is against the Croatians, against us." The magazine continued that in case of a Jewish victory they would dominate Croatia as they already dominated the whole world. And furthermore stated that they would buy the needed votes to introduce civil marriage in Croatia, as they already did in Hungary.⁷² The antisemitic propaganda during the campaign was fed by crude attacks and

⁶⁴ HD, January 5, January 12, March 20, 1897.

⁶⁵ HD, January 9, 1897.

⁶⁶ HD, February 5, 1897.

⁶⁷ HD, February 24, March 5, March 6, March 15, April 14, April 15, 1897.

⁶⁸ HD, February 16, 1897.

⁶⁹ *Hrvatski narod* (Croatian people), April 15, 1897.

⁷⁰ HRG, February 1, February 15, March 15, April 1, May 1, 1897.

⁷¹ HRG, May 15, 1897.

⁷² HRG, May 15, 1897.

provoking fear. The anti-Jewish agitation of the United Opposition undoubtedly led to Tuškans success in Sisak. He won the mandate.

Inspired by the electoral successes of the Christian Social Party in Austria and the founding of the People's Party in Hungary, the United Opposition formed a Christian front against the government and against everybody, who according to its point of view was undermining a Christian dominated society. Jews appeared to them once more as the appropriate target. For the first time an election campaign in Croatia had antisemitic traits.

Reactions to the antisemitic campaign

Croatian Jews reported to Dr. Blochs *Österreichische Wochenschrift*, a magazine based in Vienna which claimed to stand for Jewish interests, about the antisemitic campaign in Croatia. In the issue of 5th March 1897 a Zagreb correspondent, who called himself Argus, marked *Obzor* as “an antisemitic baiting-organ” that uses “brutality and dispraise” against the Croatian Jews.⁷³ The same issue published a report written by rabbi Kaufman from Virovitica, a town in Slavonia, in which he in fact doubted that the Croatian people would be receptive to antisemitism, but he nevertheless referred to the current political situation. “Now we see what unfortunately cannot be denied that there is within the opposition party, (...) which previously worshiped the liberal principles and condemned the clerical antisemitism of the Obzorpartei in the strongest terms, an antisemitic flow which shall not be underestimated [...].”⁷⁴

In the following issue of the *Wochenschrift* another report from Zagreb appeared. The anonymous author disagreed with Kaufman and claimed that antisemitism was absolutely about to fall on fertile ground. “Especially within the ordinary population antisemitism will take roots and the ‘black robe men’ who agitate daily in their baiting-organs *Obzor*’ and ‘*Katolicki List*’ add to that honestly.”⁷⁵ Responsible for the antisemitic campaign, the report continued, was the United Opposition and the clergy. “(...) at the forefront of the agitation there are the often mentioned leaders of the clerical Party. But who is this antisemitic party in Croatia? The clerical *Obzor* and David Starcsevics Party which are about to decrease. (...) The government must make an end to this party, because she causes the biggest inconvenience to this country with the help of the label antisemitism and she is harming the Jewish citizens in provincial towns with her hateful articles.”⁷⁶

The government did not act against the United Opposition or rather against its antisemitism in a special way. Although there were trials against individuals who agitated in an antisemitic manner,⁷⁷ the government did not make an

⁷³ Dr. Blochs *Österreichische Wochenschrift*, March 5, 1897.

⁷⁴ Dr. Blochs, March 5, 1897.

⁷⁵ Dr. Blochs, March 12, 1897.

⁷⁶ Dr. Blochs, March 12, 1897.

⁷⁷ HD, October 14, 1897; HDA, PRZV 1897-1899, Dok.-n.. 233, Kiste 527.

explicit statement in which it condemned the antisemitic campaign. Not even the press which supported the regime's line like *Narodne Novine*, the german-speaking newspapers *Die Drau* (The Drava, name of a tributary of the Danube) or the *Agramer Zeitung* (Newspaper of Agram) to the antisemitic campaign of the clergy. That can only be explained by their fear of making antisemitism more popular than it already was. In the main, the reaction of the Croatian Jews to antisemitism was to marginalize it, to emphasize the peaceful and tolerant coexistence between Jews and Christians in Croatia and Slavonia, and to emphasize their own merits for the welfare of the country.⁷⁸

How antisemitic was political Catholicism now?

Although in 1897 political Catholicism in Croatia was neither a movement nor a party its ideas and goals gained major success in the parliamentary elections. This was due to the presence of the United Opposition which was supported by the Catholic paper since early 1897.⁷⁹ But in the years after 1897 the Catholic paper did not publish programmatic statements and explanations about its antisemitism. This did not mean that its antisemitic articles and notes did not appear. In different reports it blamed over and over again the "liberal-Jewish press" or the "false Jewish liberalism" for political and social grievances.⁸⁰ Actual attacks against Croatian Jews were not explicitly encouraged nor as an endorsement of a political antisemitism communicated directly. Nevertheless, Jews were still associated with perceived negative effects and dangers like the press which had been critical to the Church, or the Social Democrats, whose leaders were said to be Jews.⁸¹ Significantly, the paper did not introduce the Polish priest and politician Stanislaw Stojalowski in detail. At a same time it called him in March 1898 a "darling of the people" who is going to protect the people and the faith.⁸² Stojalowski, who was an advocate of Christian social policy and an antisemite⁸³ must have been known to the readers of the Catholic paper. In 1898 his open hatred against Jews was generally known. That he was mentioned by the Catholic paper so benevolently meant that it agreed with his anti-Jewish views. Although the paper did not take a stand to antisemitism openly, the organ of political Catholicism found ways and means to disseminate its views indirectly. At the beginning of 1899 it solicited a brochure written by an author called J. Seidl

⁷⁸ Marija Vulesica, " ...dieses Pfäfflein erlaubte sich von der Kanzel herab die Bevölkerung unseres ruhigen Städtchens gegen Juden und Serbenaufzuregen. Die Reaktion der kroatischen Juden auf den Antisemitismus", *Einspruch und Abwehr. Die Reaktion des europäischen Judentums auf die Entstehung des Antisemitismus (1879-1914)*, ed. Ulrich Wyrwa, (Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 2010), 230-247.

⁷⁹ KL, January 28, 1897; February 4, 1897; February 25, 1897; Strecha, "Katoličko hrvatstvo", 62-65.

⁸⁰ KL, April 14, 1898; April 28, 1898; November 10, 1898; February 2, 1899.

⁸¹ KL, May 5, 1898.

⁸² KL, March 3, 1898.

⁸³ *Handbuch des Antisemitismus*, Vol. 2/2, 802f.

and published in Graz with the title *The Jew of the 19th century or why we are antisemites*.⁸⁴ Without commenting on the specific contents of the booklet, it recommended “this very interesting book” explicitly.⁸⁵ In May 1899 the organ of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith), *Im deutschen Reich* (In the German Reich), informed that this “antisemitic diatribe” sold about 6.000 copies until the end of April when it was confiscated.⁸⁶ Certainly the editors of the Catholic paper knew exactly what goals the antisemitic pamphlet pursued. Even if the paper had not described the content, but solicited and recommended it, this was enough to express its affirmative attitude toward antisemitism. This method of indirect support for antisemitism was familiar to the Catholic paper since the 1870s. The indirect communication of anti-Jewish views was a deliberately chosen means which could be interpreted by the political and Church circles without difficulty.

Thus, an open agitation in favor of antisemitism declined in the Catholic paper after 1897. On the one hand the view prevailed that antisemitism had done its duty with the electoral success of 1897. On the other, the paper ceded its antisemitism to the organs of the United Opposition, and here especially to the organ of the Christian social wing of the Party of Right to go on with antisemitic rhetoric. Besides that, a vouch for political Catholicism or a demand for Catholic political organization declined. In 1896 and 1897 the momentum for a Catholic political movement was set in Croatia-Slavonia. For the founding of an explicitly Catholic party, however, the time seemed not yet ripe enough. Firstly, the politically active clergy was already organized in the existing parties. Secondly, the higher circles in Church did not give their blessing to a Catholic party because they saw their interests already represented by the United Opposition. And for the third Korenić himself rejected the foundation of an explicitly Catholic party, because in his view a Croatian National Catholic movement should have worked as an integrative ideology across party lines.⁸⁷

To Korenić's efforts for a Catholic political movement Pope Leo XIII also paid tribute. In early April 1900 he praised Korenić's dedication to the interests of the Catholic Church and encouraged him and his followers to continue in this sense.⁸⁸ Korenić's commitment towards a political Catholicism culminated in the First Croatian Catholic Conference which took place in Zagreb in 1900.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ In the directory of the Austrian National Library the brochure titled “The Jew of the 19th century, or why are we antisemitic” is to be found. Here too, the first name of the author is given only as “J”.

⁸⁵ *KL*, January 12, 1899.

⁸⁶ *Im deutschen Reich*, May 1899.

⁸⁷ Strecha, “Katoličko hrvatstvo”, 68-71, 74.

⁸⁸ Strecha, “Katoličko hrvatstvo”, 132.

⁸⁹ Strecha, “Katoličko hrvatstvo”, 129-168; Mario Strecha, “Prvi hrvatski Katolički kongres – korak naprijed u afirmaciji političkog katolicizma u Banskjoj Hrvatskoj”, *Hrvatski Katolički*

This meeting of the Catholic clergy and laity, supported by Archbishop Posilović and Bishop Strossmayer, was accompanied by an extensive coverage and great enthusiasm in *Obzor* and *Hrvatska Domovina*. *Obzor* claimed that the congress was about to express the will of the Croatian people for independence. Furthermore, it should illustrate the fight of the Croatian clergy against the “so-called liberalism” and religious indifference. Beyond that it should symbolise the unity of the Church in Croatia.⁹⁰

The congress lasted for three days and was divided into several sections. During the sections on “Catholic press” and the “Social question” anti-Jewish rhetoric was propagated. Ivan Ružić, the editor in chief of *Hrvatski narod*, a journal related to the United Opposition, broached the issue of a Jewish controlled press in his lecture on media inquiries. He swore to have nothing against the Jewish people, but stated that their press would “poison” the opinion of millions of people. Their “godless press” had damaged humanity, it would loot the Christian people and do harm to small traders and workers. Ružić explained that a Catholic press which would defend the Church and the homeland was necessary.⁹¹ Following his lecture, a debate was held on the necessity for a Catholic press and on the suppression of the “godless press” instead. None of the subsequent speakers expressed antisemitic views.

Things were very different, however, in the section dedicated to the “Social question.” The speaker Juraj Vrbanić said that this issue was very important and urgent, but that in Croatia-Slavonia it was not as “pointed” as elsewhere. While he neither mentioned Jews nor antisemitism in his talk, the second speaker Grga Tuškan pointed out that Jews stood behind all grievances and social tension in Europe. “Cherchez les Juifs,” he exclaimed, earning applause and shoutings of approval from the audience.⁹² As he made the workers question into a Jewish question, the chairman Matija Oršić advised him to stick to the issue of the resolution. Tuškan replied: “We are all anxious, in parliament and in society. If the Jews are allowed to talk then I must also say that it is not right for me that this is not mentioned in the resolution.”⁹³ After another critique by the chairman, he ended his run. Two following speakers agreed with Tuškan and said that while there was of course the Christian principle of charity, the Jews were now a threat to which it was necessary to respond.⁹⁴ In the final resolution Tuškans claims and observations were ignored, although they had received wide approval.⁹⁵ Indeed, the Congress to

pokret, Zbornik radova, published by Zlatko Matijević, (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2002), 171-183.

⁹⁰ *Obzor*, August 31, November 19, 1900.

⁹¹ Stjepan Korenić, *Prvi Hrvatski Katolički Sastanak* (PHKS), (Zagreb: C. Albrecht, 1900), 99-106.

⁹² Korenić, “PHKS”, 136.

⁹³ Korenić, “PHKS”, 137.

⁹⁴ Korenić, “PHKS”, 138f.

⁹⁵ Korenić, “PHKS”, 163-169.

which the higher Catholic circles pinned big hopes did get much attention. Practically, however, it had very few consequences. Antisemitic statements were expressed during the Congress, but they did not find a place in the final resolution.

The impetus of Catholics to organize themselves politically arose only in the mid-1890s in Croatia-Slavonia. The mental connection between the Croatian national cause and the development of outspoken Christian movements within the empire was obvious. To speak in an antisemitic way meant to oppose everything that could hurt the supremacy of the Catholic Church and hereby inevitably the interests of the Croatian nation, which were seen as being closely connected. Liberalism, secularism, disbelief, Hungarians and Germans and the press which acted in opposition to the Church, all these were perceived as being embodied by Jews. For the clergy and the constituent political Catholicism in Croatia it was not difficult to secularize the traditional dislike of Jews as traitors and murderers of Christ into a modern political program. It was made easier for them by the fact that they found successful role models in their immediate surroundings.

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“Learning from Vienna Means Learning to Win”: the Cracovian Christian Socials and the ‘Antisemitic turn’ of 1896

by *Tim Buchen*

Abstract

This article describes how it came to pass that the clerical milieu in Cracow deployed the concepts “antisemitism” and “Aryan people”, why Karl Lueger, accused of German nationalism, served as a bearer of hope, and how all of this came to a head in the call for an antisemitic movement in 1897. The reference to Vienna was not a mere copy of Viennese antisemitic ideas. Rather it made up one element in a larger strategy of the Cracovian Clericals to gain votes in the ballot box. Analyzing these strategies and rhetorics allows a better understanding of antisemitism in the Catholic milieu in particular and in antisemitic agitation in Galicia in general.

“The key issue of the present elections is the struggle of the Jews against the Christian population. Jewry has posted its lines everywhere to maintain its predominance over the Aryans, to push forward their reign through their exploitative handicraft of alien work. This time Jewry placed dynamite amongst the Aryan people in Austria by waving the flags of social-democratic overthrow. The Jew-millionaire, the Jew - doctor, the caftan-Jew: they were all fighting everywhere for the social-democratic candidate because they see profit in social upheaval. [...] A semitic attack! With their money the Jews beat us everywhere, because we are unorganized and run back and forth like sheep. Despite the great victory of the antisemites in Vienna and lower Austria the Deutsches Volksblatt shouts out: Aryans unite!

[...] The union of all Aryans would mean a deadly strike against Jewry. Against an international gang only an international fight will help. Therefore, we need international tolerance and understanding and at this point one has to reproach the Austrian antisemites. For local reasons, they leant toward the German-national side and got into antagonism with the Slawic peoples. But a national league cannot undermine the domination of the Jews. It has to be based on the absolute national and social equality of the host-nations. Lueger’s former program of equal rights for all Aryan people must again find attentive ears.”¹

The above cited words were pronounced not by a racist antisemite, who in 1897 at the moment of Luegers electoral triumph wanted to encourage the chauvinistic party of Lueger toward a more consequent antisemitic and “Aryan” politics. This is rather the desperate voice of a Polish Catholic newspaper from the Habsburg Crownland Galicia, immediately after the Social-Democrats election victory in Cracow, which places all hope in a mighty

¹ *Głos Narodu*, March 20, 1897.

movement from Vienna and in the same time trying to subscribe into this movement.

How was it possible, that a catholic argue for an Aryan movement? Why did a polish newspaper look to Vienna? And to what extend became the fantasy of an Aryan union against the Jews part of the reality in Habsburg politics? Did the logics of political business drive catholics towards racist and secular categories to describe people, or was it rather the clerical entrepreneurs on the political markets, that made antisemitism a key word of political communication in the *fin-de-siecle*?²

In my remarks I will describe how it came to pass that the clerical milieu in Cracow played with the concepts “antisemitism” and “Aryan people”, and why precisely Lueger, accused of German nationalism, served as a bearer of hope and how this all came to culminate in the call for an antisemitic movement. The above quotation from *Głos Narodu* [The Nation’s Voice] dated from the 20th of March 1897 shows the appropriation of Viennese antisemitism by the Cracovian clericals. The reference to Vienna was not a mere copy of the Viennese antisemites’ ideas. Rather it made up one element in a larger strategy of the Cracovian Clericals to gain votes in the ballot box. Analyzing these strategies and rhetorics allows a better understanding of antisemitism in the Catholic milieu in particular and in antisemitic agitation in Galicia in general.

Political Catholicism in Galicia and the mass politics.

In the 1890s the ultramontane- oriented Catholics changed their behaviour towards politics. They struggled to find a Catholic way into modern times and to present their goals to the believers by newspapers, associations and parties alike. To simplify somewhat: Pope Leon XIII. abandoned the self-chosen isolation of the papacy since the Italian unification and appealed for an active Catholic participation in public life.³ His 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* from 1891 not only proclaimed a struggle against liberalism, universal human rights and socialism, it also called upon all Christians to show social responsibility.⁴ The “social pope”⁵ and his assistant secretary Rampolla favorably supported Catholic parties interested in the social question.⁵ In July 1893 the Catholic

² Galicia was an invention of the Habsburg state, transforming their parts of the partition of Poland into a political entity. The process of becoming a reality out of an idea has now been explained by Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³ See David Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Pope’s Plot to Capture Italy from the New Italian State*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

⁴ The Christian social doctrine enabled the Christian-social movement and was of course older than *Rerum Novarum*. It rooted in the Raiffeisen-movement, the ideas of bishop Emanuel Ketteler and in Austria especially in Karl von Vogelsangs writings. See Albert Fuchs, *Geistige Strömungen in Österreich. 1867-1918*, (Wien: Löcker, 1978).

⁵ Especially Luegers anti-Semitic Christlich-soziale Partei was supported by the Vatican in 1895, see John W. Boyer, *Karl Lueger. Christlich-soziale Politik als Beruf*, (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), 64.

Assembly of Cracow marked the point of departure for political Catholicism.⁶ The calls for establishing working-class associations, working houses, credit banks and Catholic newspapers, were to function as means of economic and cultural self-defense of Christians against their powerful enemies, i.e., socialists, capitalists, Freemasons, free thinkers and liberals. The *missing link* between these different camps was Jewry, which many clergymen associated with all of the mentioned phenomena. This connection did not always have to be in the foreground and at times – though rarely in the period 1895-98- was even totally missing.⁷ A unifying factor such as a common enemy was urgently needed, because no movement in Galicia was more splintered and diverse than Political Catholicism. Also it was the latest to evolve in the Galician political landscape before the Great War.⁸

It is also quite probable, that no other *milieu* had produced so many parties and newspapers. Political practise constantly contradicted the idea of a close unity of Catholic interests, a unity that supposedly the church's enemies aimed to sabotage. Still, the Cracow Catholic assembly did at least succeed in establishing the catholic-national newspaper *Głos Narodu* directed at the Catholic people [*lud katolicki*]. In 1898, *Głos Narodu*, with a circulation of 5000 copies, became the biggest daily in Cracow.⁹ In the following years, other weekly papers and monthly newspapers appeared, which often functioned as press organs of the numerous new founded Catholic associations and organisations. They attempted to convince readers for the Christian social doctrine and to "protect" them from the influence of social democracy. In 1895 a weekly paper for Catholic workers *Grzmot* [Thunder] was founded in Lemberg, the city where the second Catholic assembly had taken place. A year later the paper moved to Cracow and its circulation trebled, reaching 1500 copies. In the same year appeared *Prawda* [The Truth], which defined itself as a "newspaper for religious, national, political, economic and amusing matters". Its message was directed to villages and provincial towns. It was published by

⁶ See Michał Śliwa, *Obcy czy swóiz: dziejów poglądów na kwestię żydowską w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku*, (Krakow: Wydawn. Nauk. WSP, 1997), 28, and Brian Porter, "Antisemitism and the Search for a Catholic Identity", in *Antisemitism and its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 103-123. The occupation of public spheres by the catholic church in Poland is concisely described in Viktoria Pollman, "Introduction", *Untermieter im christlichen Haus. Die Kirche und die "jüdische Frage" in Polen anhand der Bistumsprese der Metropole Krakau 1926-1939*, ed. Viktoria Pollman, (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2001).

⁷ Michał Śliwa, "Obcy czy swój".

⁸ The development of the political scene in the Habsburg Monarchy is strongly connected to the growth of political rights since the constitution of 1867. Accompanied by the huge growth of newspapers, both in numbers and edition the enlargement of franchise to the Viennies Reichsrat in 1882, 1896 and 1906 led to a democratization of politics also in Galicia, where the illiteracy-rate was about 80% around 1900. I described the emergence of political Catholicism in Galicia more deeply in my Ph.D. Dissertation: Tim Buchen, "Antisemitismus in Galizien. Agitation, Gewalt und Politik gegen Juden in der Habsburgermonarchie um 1900", (Ph. D. dissertation, Technische Universität, Berlin, Germany, 2011).

⁹ Central Historical State Archive L'viv, CDIAL 146 fond 4, spraw 4733, 80.

the later bishop Jan Puzyna and edited exclusively by priests.¹⁰ When we consider these newspapers, the appropriation of the Viennese Christian-social in different shades becomes apparent, as a common pattern. Hence they referred to each other and called themselves the newspapers of the Catholic working-class associations, they are representative of a considerable part of the Cracovian Christian social movement, even if it did not use this title.¹¹ The variety of the Catholic newspapers, which were addressed partly to certain target groups shows the differentiation of the society and the struggle of Catholic circles to spread their vision of a social order under new social conditions. *Grzymot* for instance published since 1897 the monthly supplement *Przyjaciół Sług* [Friend of the domestic]. It tried to transmit a moral life-style to the growing group of young women, coming mostly from the country to the cities, as well as to maintain social control in these new surroundings. One searches in vain for political subjects in its pages, since women possessed no right to vote. On the other hand much more men were encouraged to vote after the creation of the fifth curia, giving the vote to less prosperous elements in 1896. From this moment on, the parliament offered a chance for politics directed to the underclasses.

The election campaign of 1897

The parties that appealed to the Polish underclasses, were in western Galicia: the three People's or Peasant Parties, Social Democracy and candidates of the conservative Central Electoral Committee (CKW)¹² The Catholic camp around the paper *Głos Narodu* did not have its own political party and had to concentrate on the implementation of its own candidates in existing parties or to deliver electoral recommendations for existing lists.¹³ Thanks to the efforts of the Catholic working-class association *Przyjaźń* [Friendship], the railway worker Feliks Gawłowicz was placed as candidate of the CKW for the fifth Curia in Cracow and surroundings. Nevertheless, his open hostility towards

¹⁰ See Harald Binder, "Das polnische Pressewesen", *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, ed. Adam Wandruszka, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 2037-2090.

¹¹ GN, February 12, 1897. Further Newspapers were *Jedność* [Unity], *Łączność* [the Bond], *Obrona ludu* [People's Defence] and *Pochodnia* [the Torch].

¹² The CKW was a political organization, somehow prior to a political party. It became active only in the context of elections, and was initialized by the Galician government. Its main goal was to organize the candidatures of politicians from political conservatism, loyal to the ruling elites of Galicia but declaring themselves as "non-partisan" candidates for all people and classes. See Harald Binder, *Galizien in Wien. Parteien, Wahlen, Fraktionen und Abgeordnete im Übergang zur Massenpolitik*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 183-222.

¹³ At the 5th of January 1897 appeared in GN a leading article in which the program of the "national-catholics" for the elections was drafted. It was a pure antisemitic, predominantly economically arguing program which nevertheless was not followed by a party-founding before the elections. GN, January 5, 1897.

Jews led to his downfall as the Jewish members of the Cracow CKW protested against his nomination. The committee backed down and nominated the landowner Prince Aleksander Poniński.¹⁴ The *éclat* around Gawłowicz was of great importance for the course of the election campaign. *Głos Narodu* interpreted the displacement as a proof of Jewish misuse of power and recommended voting for a different candidate. The catholic camp also rejected the secular Stronnictwo Ludowe [People's Party], a democratic party which enjoyed the support of the liberal democrats around the newspaper *Nova Reforma*. The Christian People's Party (SChL) of Stanisław Stojałowski was popular among peasants and unambiguously stressed Catholicism. Also its critical position towards authority appealed to workers from non-rural environments.¹⁵ But before the election campaigns started, Stojałowski made an arrangement with the social democrats, agreeing that they would concentrate only on cities while he would limit himself to the countryside. Besides tactical calculation there existed a programmatic closeness between him and the socialists which, however fell apart quickly after the elections.¹⁶ Therefore *Głos Narodu* only remained to propagate the Peasants Union as the right party for the Catholic people – a conservatively rural party which was successful above all in the area around Nowy Sącz among rather well-to-do farmers and was hardly attractive to the urban underclass.¹⁷ In Cracow the clerical camp disposed neither of people nor parties who would have embodied the Catholic breakthrough in big politics. Hence, the Cracovian Christian-Socials directed their view across the Galician borders toward Vienna.

Finally, the elections to the Reichsrat took place in a wider context. Both disputes over nationality in many crownlands and the new fifth curia¹⁸ promised a radically different parliament. The social democrats were expected to become a new force. Though divided into national parties they would be unified in one faction in parliament. And, the best example of a successful mobilization of lower strata so far was a distinct opponent of the socialists- the

¹⁴ See Binder, "Galizien in Wien", 211.

¹⁵ Stojałowski himself was not present during the campaign, he stayed in Hungary because of an arrest warrant in Austria, see Tim Buchen, "Herrschaft in der Krise – der 'Demagoge in der Soutane' fordert die 'Galizischen Allerheiligen'", *Imperiale Herrschaft in der Provinz. Repräsentationen politischer Macht im späten Zarenreich*, eds. Jörg Baberowski, David Feest, Christoph Gumb, (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2008), 331-355.

¹⁶ See Kerstin S. Jobst, "Die antisemitischen Bauernunruhen im westlichen Galizien 1898. Stojałowski und die polnischen Sozialdemokraten", *Zwischen Abgrenzung und Assimilation. Deutsche, Polen und Juden. Schauplätze ihres Zusammenlebens von der Zeit der Aufklärung bis zum Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, eds. Robert Maier, Georg Stöber, (Hannover: Hahn, 1996), 139-150.

¹⁷ *Pravda* promoted the Peasants Union from the beginning as they shared a common habit.

¹⁸ In 1896 the Prime-minister of Cisleithania, the Galician born Count Kasimir Badeni enlarged the political franchise, opening a fifth Curia for all men older than 24 years, who were not allowed to vote in the other curias, due to the lack of tax payments or membership of the economic chambers.

Viennese mayor and leader of the Christian- Socials, Karl Lueger.¹⁹ He had been elected mayor several times since 1895, however, gained entry to office only in 1896, after Franz Joseph had to overlook his reservations against this open antisemite.²⁰ Thus Karl Lueger became the bearer of hope of the Cracovian clericals during the Reichsrat elections. They tried to inscribe themselves in his success-story. The electoral success of his Christian-Socials carried by lower clergy fortified the Cracovians also to be able to win over “their” petits bourgeois for a clerical - anti-liberal and anti-capitalistic program. In the early nineties there had already been a call to found a similar party to the Christian- Socials in Galicia which should, in case of an electoral success, be placed in the Reichsrat in a common faction.²¹ Lueger’s most outstanding characteristics were his rhetorical abilities, his populism, and his antisemitism. One could cite his speeches, but not produce his charisma that moved the masses so easily. Hence, Lueger was referred to in the Cracovian newspapers as one of them. As a successful fighter against the rule of liberalism and capitalism and for the rights of the God-fearing Christian masses, the Cracovians aimed to use some of his “reflected glory”, getting success “on the street.” Finally, his antisemitism was rather easy to copy.

How much hatred is allowed to a Christian? “Asemitism” and two “antisemitic turns”

Reading the three newspapers *Głos Narodu*, *Prawda* and *Grzmot*, one notes that the takeover of this antisemitism occurred in 1896. Here Jews functioned as a code for liberalism, socialism, capitalism and the betrayal of the rights, the sensations and needs of the (Catholic) man in the street. Within a few months, all three organs went through an “antisemitic turn”. Since the beginning of their existence the newspapers had clearly been anti-Jewish. They characterized Jews above all by using jokes and mixed announcements, presenting them as swindlers and shameless blasphemers. Within 1896 the “Jewish issue” appeared more and more often in articles and announcements and set the tone for the papers’ political rhetoric. Now Jews were mentioned no longer as individuals or connected to concrete events but as the embodiment of all enemies. All three newspapers – and one could mention others – now sketched

¹⁹ On the emergence of catholic mass politics in Austria as a result of the 1882 enlargement of suffrage lowering the entry to the fourth curia for an annual tax rate of 5 gulden, see John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), on the later years of Christian-social reign in the capital please see of the same author: *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

²⁰ The Vatican intervened in this question and also played a role in the domestication of Stojałowski, see Kertzer, *The Popes* and Buchen, “Herrschaft.”

²¹ Stojałowski was several times in Vienna to discuss a cooperation with the Christian socials before he founded his Christian People’s Party, see Anna L. Staudacher, “Der Bauernagitator Stanisław Stojałowski. Priester, Journalist und Abgeordneter zum Österreichischen Reichsrat, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 25 (1983), 165-202.

antisemitic scenarios of world conspiracies on their pages. Obviously the massive increase in antisemitism surprised some readers of *Pravda*. In the beginning of 1897, the editorial board felt constrained to explain this change in tone towards “the Jews” and also had to deal with the problem of antisemitism for Christians. In the papers fourth issue of 1897 one reads beneath the title “An honest confession of a Jew”: “Perhaps the reader is surprised that *Pravda* attacks the Jews so sharply, although our faith demands for charity. But we fulfilled this demand by taking in the Jews in Poland. But now they want to govern us. We should light their candles for them and kindle their fire and feed their children with Christian milk as already happens in some cases. Now and again there is a Jew who tells the truth about the Jews, for example, in the Stanisławów’s *Wolny Głos* [Free Voice]. He writes that the Christians first love their fellow man, while the Jews first love themselves, then come fellow men, but only when these are also Jews. For this reason, *Pravda* writes so harsh against the Jews.”²² Despite the explanation of *Pravda*’s new antisemitic course as a reaction to Jewish behaviour, in reality the reason was the forthcoming election which led to a clear increase in Judeophobia, also in the peasants’ press.²³ To express prejudices toward Jews presented no problem for Catholic parties, but the declaration of a decidedly anti-Jewish politics came into conflict with the Christian self-image. Being antisemitic meant for many people to be not unchristian since hatred was regarded a sin. To have reservations against Jews, on the other hand, was part of the Catholic identity since ages. It was not by chance that on the Cracovian Catholic assembly Bishop Tarnowski felt forced to warn people about antisemitism.²⁴ In 1896 the theologian and journalist Marian Morawski in his work “Asemitism” tried to establish that term to express virulent anti-Jewish hostility among Catholics while avoiding “Antisemitism”, which was blamed for disregarding the Christian commandment to love one’s neighbour as one’s self.²⁵ Hence, it was important to wildly exaggerate the imagined threat from the Jews. Defending oneself against such a danger required dismissing concerns about “Christian” behaviour. The years 1896/1897 were also a turning point in the self-perception as politically deliberate Catholics in the sense that the avowal to political Jew-opposition - whether it was called Antisemitism or Asemitism - had become respectable. In some letters to the editor of *Głos Narodu*

²² *Pravda*, January 28, 1897.

²³ See Frank Golczewski, “Rural Anti-Semitism in Galicia before World War I”, *The Jews in Poland*, ed. Chimen Abramsky, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 97-105; Claudia Kraft, “Die jüdische Frage im Spiegel der Presseorgane und Parteiprogramme der galizischen Bauernbewegung im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts”, *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 45 (1996): 381-409; Kai Struve, “Gentry, Jews and Peasants: Jews as the ‘Others’ in the Formation of the Modern Polish Nation in rural Galicia during the second half of the 19th Century,” *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 103-126.

²⁴ See Porter, “Catholic Identity.” Porter does not mention that the warning of antisemitism as such might well include anti-Jewish concerns - see ‘Asemitism’ next footnote.

²⁵ Marian Morawski, *Asemitizm. Kwestia żydowska wobec chrześcijańskiej etyki*, Kraków 1896.

antisemitism seemed a natural component of being Christian, because both were defined in contradiction to the Jews.²⁶ Decisively for the “antisemitic turn” within the newspapers and in the self-perception of the Catholics were the Reichsrat elections. These had a generally politicising and polarizing effect which the catholic camp interpreted in the dichotomy Christian/Jewish. The admiration for the antisemitic movement in Vienna was so strong because Vienna was deemed to be a stronghold of the Jews.²⁷ Hence it was even more impressive that “the Viennese” had begun to resist “Jewish domination”. The rise of the Catholics in the very place of the stock-market swindle and the “political coups” was told from the beginning of 1896 in several Catholic papers in alleged correspondent’s reports and “original letters” from Vienna. Thus on the 15th January 1896 there appeared in *Grzymot* a letter from Vienna which praised the imposing unity of the Viennese Christian-social workers who had assembled in December in an impressive number. Ten days later it was reported that the popular approval for “Jewish social democrats” was continuously declining while more and more workers were going to church. Lueger himself was presented in *Pravda* on the 2nd of January 1896 as a coarse German nationalist who had become abusive in the parliament. On the 1st of June, however, *Pravda* reported favorably that “the Vice-mayor of Vienna Dr. Karl Lueger” has spent Pentecost in Cracow and has visited its “national monuments” and the salt works in Wieliczka. *Głos Narodu* reported in January, 1897 that Lueger had given up his legal office completely in order to dedicate himself entirely to politics and the “catholic people”. In the run-up to the elections of March 1897 the readers of these Cracovian gazettes were already familiar enough with the Viennese Christian-socials that

²⁶ I found an interesting hint on the impact of propaganda in *Grzymot* from 1898. In that year the brochure “Jewish secrets” from Father Mateusz Jeż was widespread among the population: Mateusz Jeż, *Tajemnice Żydowskie*, (Kraków: Nakładem Autora, 1898). It contained August Rohlings accusation, that Jews call Christians animals, mainly apes. With this “knowledge” in mind a confrontation between a reader and a Jew described in a letter to the editors shows that antisemitism was regarded as a natural part of Catholic identity: Jewish Infamy: On page 17 in “Jewish secrets” is written that Jews call Christians beasts and animals. I mentioned this towards a Jew [*Żydziak*] with whom I talked about antisemitism and recent politics. He started to shout and said that antisemites are apes, real animals. Of course he received a strong answer so that next time he will think twice before speaking out his swinish words [*świńska mowa*]. That’s how the Jews refer to us.

²⁷ It was a well-known fact that many Galician Jews moved to Vienna. The famous Joseph Samuel Bloch was the first one who made “Jewish politics” in the Reichsrat with a mandate from Eastern Galicia. Furthermore was the leading liberal press like *Neue Freie Presse* called a “Judenblatt.” In the book “Asemitism” Vienna was called a “stronghold of semitism.” Interestingly enough Vienna was on the other hand in Poland associated with a great triumph thanks to the participation of Jan Sobieski in the battle at Kahlenberg in 1683. In 1883 the 200 annual of this event was commemorated in Cracow on large scale. Probably had the metaphor of a catholic city, obliged by unbelievers but then freed with the united forces of the faith an impact on the idea of Vienna as a hope bearer for the catholic political movement. See Patrice Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

the papers could just cite their tirades against the Austrian liberal press. Regarding an imagined Jewish International the editors dreamt of a concerted fight side by side with the exemplary Viennese allies. On the 13th of March one could read in *Głos Narodu*: “The revolting capitalistic exploitation which pours out of the articles of the Neue Freie Presse stands in no contradiction to the political actions of the social democrats which the Jewish Troika Marx-Lassalle-Engels have brought to life for the purpose of the indirect defence of Jewish exploitation against the self-defence of the Aryan nations. Since the Jews exploit the Aryans internationally, hence, their defensive army - social democracy - is also international. [...] Let’s follow the Jewish example and let us be glad internationally about the victory of the Viennese people and the Lower Austrian people in general. Let us finally learn to shake off the shameful Jewish yoke. Furthermore it is high time to do so, otherwise the other nations will look at us as lackeys of the Jews who let themselves be exploited in silence and do not possess the slightest instinct for self-defensive and self-preservation. These words are directed above all to the Galician voters who plan to vote for a Jew. Since the Austrians have voted so clearly along antisemitic lines it should be obvious that there is no sense in electing a Jew. It is completely pointless to vote for a Jew because in Vienna nobody would believe him and he would achieve nothing.”²⁸

This citation contains all elements of the strategy to use the ideal of the Viennese Christian-socials as a political example. The unanimity and determination of the Viennese against the Jews seemed to be a model for the undifferentiated Cracovians who were not able to oppose the immense menace posed by the Jewish conspiracy. Furthermore the author tried to awaken national pride which would be injured if Poles did not “ward off” off the Jews. Finally, the creation of a community of Aryan nations revealed a common destiny and likewise a community of interests between the Viennese and the Cracovians. The concept ‘Aryan’ appeared by analogy with the concept ‘semitic’ and illustrated the vast dimensions of the imagined struggle. Individuals were never mentioned as Aryans always as Catholics. However, the frequent “scientific”, especially linguistic and biological metaphors, show that religious circles, too spoke the language of the time. Even though they regarded themselves politically as catholic in the first hand, the authors of *Głos Narodu* described themselves not in religious but in linguistic categories. The distinction between traditional religious and modern secular hatred toward Jews in this case is impossible to draw. As the Christian Socials decided to make the declaration of being in opposition to the Jews as a distinct and major part of their political identity and furthermore rejected to use religious definitions only to define who is “us”, and “them” respectively, political Catholicism crucified the distinction between Judeophobia and anti-Semitism for political reasons. The fear for electoral victory of the Social-Democrats in

²⁸ GN, March 13, 1897.

5th curia mentioned in the article did, by the way, come to pass both in Cracow and in Lemberg.

The editors reflected their bitterness about the defeat in dark colours. The situation in Galicia appeared all the more gloomy vis-à-vis the luminous image of the Austrians. Since neither the good example nor the appeal to national pride had brought any positive results, now only a direct alliance with Lueger could light the way out of the dark. On the 17th of March *Głos Narodu* wrote in an “original letter from Vienna” with the heading: “Let us wake up!”

“Today the municipalities choose in Lower Austria. One need not be a political prophet to forecast the vote. The peasants will give the same determined message against Jewish exploitation and Jewish dominance as did the Viennese in the general electoral class. The local people are conscious of their honour, represent their interests and act rationally. This is not Galicia where, mocked by the whole civilised world, Christians are toyed with by the Jews, where Christian voters lick the feet of the Jewish candidates.”²⁹

In its post-electoral covers, *Grzymot*, on the other hand did not criticize Christians but just blamed the Jewish plot. Looking forward optimistically to the next elections, *Grzymot* also referred to Lueger: “In the current elections in Cracow and in Lemberg all Jews stuck together like a single man with the enemies of our faith and our native land. This is a provocation, a slap in the face. Let us accept this provocation. The voice of *Grzymot* is only the echo of what our whole society feels. Vienna and Lueger will become the pattern for us to win just as they have won.”³⁰

In fact the Cracovian Catholic camp did subsequently take over “the pattern” of the Viennese Christian-socials even more clearly. Around the activist and editor in chief of *Głos Narodu*, Kazimierz Ehrenberg, the Christian-social community [*Stowarzyszenie Chrzesciansko-Spoleczne*] was founded, a clear reminiscent of Lueger’s *Christlicher Sozialverein*. Two months later, the community united with the Association of Antisemites [*Związek Antysemitów*] which had also been founded in Cracow after the elections. The name of the common organ “The Antisemite” underpinned the open declaration of antisemitism. Moreover, the Cracovians tried to win over the popular Stojałowski whose party had gained an impressive six mandates. However, the peoples’ tribune was not willing to forfeit the influence he enjoyed in the SChL. Because of his despotic reign, however, two of his followers, Andrzej Szponder and Michał Danielak (both just elected to Reichsrat) broke with him in 1898 and founded the newspaper *Obrona ludu* [Defence of the People], apparently planning with Ehrenberg to found a new antisemitic party.³¹ Such a formation appeared shortly before the elections in 1900 and was called the Catholic-Antisemitic Party (SNA). Nevertheless, once again this party found a

²⁹ GN, March 17, 1897.

³⁰ *Prawda*, March 25, 1897.

³¹ *Obrona ludu* propagated antisemitism and tried to establish it as a “must” for a good Pole and Catholic.

close competitor in Cracow in the new Catholic-National Party (SKN) which had originated from the Catholic labour movement as well. These attempts did not bring success. A purely antisemitic newspaper like *The Antisemite* had to be closed after two months because of financial difficulties and failed to get entrance to a social milieu in Cracow. Still, the political camp lacked an integrating figure. Furthermore, the needs and fears of the Cracovians could not be represented plausibly by a Catholic antisemitic offer.

Only in 1906 it came to a longer lasting formation, the *Stronnictwo Chreściansko-Socjalne* [Christian social party] that by using the German foreign word “*sozialne*” [social] instead of Polish term “*społeczne*” with the same meaning (referred even closer to the Viennese).³² It never led, however, to the expected international antisemitic alliance under the guidance of Lueger. Admittedly, such a plan seemed inappropriate to the pragmatic Mayor. Furthermore, none of the European international antisemitic organizations “inspired” by the observation of *Alliance Israelite Universelle* lasted long. Antisemitism was not capable of winning a majority as a political program in the city of Cracow.

In the countryside the situation looked quite different. A year after the elections to the Viennese parliament advice by-elections took place in the district of Jasło, where Stanisław Stojałowski finally won. The election campaign was accompanied by massive antisemitic propaganda which limited itself not only to demands of “agrarian-antisemitism” but was also used to slander opponents. The pogrom wave in Galicia in the following summer which began in the agitated districts is only understandable in connection with this agitation.³³

It has become clear that the politicization changed the dealing with the Jewish issue in the Catholic press for the masses. The thin line between a supposed “natural” Catholic aversion to Jews and declared political antisemitism³⁴ doesn’t mean to leave the catholic ground. There was no need of a “scientific” world view to become an antisemite. It was rather the consequence of the opening for political discourse and the struggle for approval in a media scenery remaining at the same time in the logic of the Catholic church. The polarization and division into a world of the church as opposed to the world of its enemies led to a radicalization of speech, the harsher the more ground the “enemy” gained. The important role antisemitism played in this dichotomic imagination is illustrated in a statement by Karl Lueger: “Well, we will see

³² See Śliwa, “Obcy czy swój.”

³³ See Daniel Unowsky, “Peasant Political Mobilization and the 1898 anti-Jewish Riots in Western Galicia,” *European History Quarterly* 40/3 (2010): 412-435. The second chapter of my dissertation is on violence and involves a thick description of the riots. See also Marcin Soborń, *Polacy wobec Żydów w Galicyi doby autonomicznej*, (Kraków: 2011).

³⁴ I understand antisemitism here as a declaration to be anti-Jewish and to understand this as an important part of an identity/ political program and/ or to combine the “Jewish issue” with nearly every topic as described above in the “antisemitic turn” of the three newspapers.

which movement will be stronger, the democratic one or the anti-Semitic.”³⁵ While their idol strengthened the antisemitic movement with democratic means, the Cracovians only strengthened the anti-Jewish hatred in their own language use owing to their lack of success in mass politics. But the growing hatred did not bring votes from the “Cracovian street.” In the end, the Viennese context could not be transferred to the Vistula and the alliance imagined in the opening quotation was a one-sided dream. Looking to Vienna brought no triumph at home. The lesson was not how to win but how to unleash hatred.

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³⁵ Carl E. Schorske, *Wien. Geist und Gesellschaft im Fin de Siècle*, (Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer, 1982), 131.

Antisemitic Agitation and the Emergence of Political Catholicism in Mantua around 1900

by Ulrich Wyrwa

Abstract:

Whereas the Italian state constituted in 1861 was long considered to be a nation without antisemitism, recent studies have shown that the Catholic Church had in fact vigorously advocated antisemitic positions in liberal Italy and actively spread new accusations against Jews. In no other Italian city however did a more vehemently antisemitic political Catholicism develop than in Mantua. Following a brief recapitulation on how the Catholic Church in Italy had responded to the political, cultural and socio-economic challenges, the second section of this essay presents the news coverage of the Catholic paper "Il Cittadino di Mantova." Founded in 1896, the first year's issues will examine how the Catholic journalists in the city picked up and propagated the language of antisemitism. The third section moves the attention from language to politics analysing the antisemitic election campaign of the political catholicism in Mantua for the local elections of 1903. Attention is focused on identifying to what extent antisemitism had 'arrived' as a political movement in Italy.

Whereas the Italian state constituted in 1861 was long considered to be a nation without antisemitism, recent studies have shown that the Catholic Church had in fact vigorously advocated antisemitic positions in liberal Italy and actively spread new accusations against Jews.¹ In no other Italian city however did a more vehemently antisemitic political Catholicism develop than

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¹ Giovanni Miccoli, "Santa Sede, questione ebraica e antisemitismo fra Otto e Novecento," *Storia d'Italia. Annali 11, Gli Ebrei in Italia., Vol. 2, Dall'emancipazione a oggi*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, (Torino, Einaudi, 1997), 1371-1574; "Antisemitismo e chiesa cattolica in Italia (XIX-XX sec.). Ricerche in corso e riflessioni storiografiche," ed. Cristiana Facchini, *Storicamente. Laboratorio di Storia 7* (2011); Simon Levis Sullam, "Per una storia dell'antisemitismo cattolico in Italia," *Cristiani d'Italia. Chiese, società, Stato (1861-2011)*, ed. Alberto Melloni, (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 2011), vol. I, 461-470; Annalisa Di Fant, "Stampa cattolica italiana e antisemitismo alla fine dell'Ottocento," *Les racines chrétiennes de l'antisémitisme politique*, ed. Catherine Brice, (Roma: École Française de Rome 2003), 121-136; Andrew M. Canepa, "Cattolici ed ebrei nell'Italia liberale (1870-1915)," in *Comunità. Rivista di informazione culturale* 32 (1978), 43-109; Andrew M. Canepa, "Pius X and the Jews: A Reappraisal," in *Church History*, 61(1992): 362-372.

in Mantua.² In January 1903 accounts of the formation of an antisemitic league in Mantua appeared in a variety of Catholic newspapers across Italy. For instance the Catholic organs in Bologna, *L'avvenire d'Italia*, and *La Difesa* in Venice reported in almost identical fashion: "Mantua. Today an antisemitic league was formed in our city where people from all parties have come together to build a dam against the Jewish invasion."³

The antisemitism of the Church was directly tied to the development of political Catholicism, which itself in turn needs to be seen as the response given by the Catholic Church to the three fundamental challenges facing the Christian churches in Europe during the long 19th century.⁴ Firstly, since the French Revolution the Christian churches confronted political challenges arising from the demands for constitutions as well as the limitation and legitimacy of political power, demands threatening the old privileged status enjoyed by the churches in the pre-constitutional dynasties. Secondly, the churches in all European countries faced profound cultural challenges emerging out of new scientific discoveries. The churches were in danger of losing their intellectual supremacy and cultural hegemony, for the Christian faith was no longer the ultimate authority of truth. Thirdly, grave social challenges assailed the churches, triggered by socio-economic upheavals and the burgeoning dominance of a market system and rapid industrialization, challenges which could no longer be met by appeals to the old notion of Christian compassion.

The various Christian dominations in all European countries were forced to face up to these challenges, albeit to varying degrees and in different forms. Large sections of the Protestant and Catholic Churches shared the conviction that Jews were to blame for these upheavals and social changes.⁵ On the foundations of the century-old Christian religious animosity towards Jews and searching for a guilty party for the challenges of the 19th century yet to be overcome, large sections of the Christian churches were active in the crystallization of a new of form of hostility towards Jews, antisemitism.⁶

² For the social history of Mantua in the Nineteenth Century see Maurizio Bertolotti, "La società. Ceti, conflitti, identità," *Storia di Mantova. Uomini - ambiente - economia - società - istituzioni*, Vol. 2. *Le radici del presente*, ed. Marzio A. Romani, (Mantova: Tre Lune Ed., 2008), 339-429.

³ *La Difesa*, January 16-17, 1903.

⁴ Martin Friedrich, *Kirche im gesellschaftlichen Umbruch. Das 19. Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

⁵ For the German case see, Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997); Wolfgang E. Heinrichs, *Das Judenbild im Protestantismus des deutschen Kaiserreichs. Ein Beitrag zur Mentalitätsgeschichte des deutschen Bürgertums in der Krise der Moderne*, (Köln: Rheinland Verlag, 2000).

⁶ For the Catholic Church see, Olaf Blaschke, "Antikapitalismus und Antisemitismus. Die Wirtschaftsmentalität der Katholiken im Wilhelminischen Deutschland," *Shylock? Zinsverbot und Geldverleih in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition*, eds. Johannes Heil, Bernd Wacker, (München: Fink Verlag, 1997), 113-146; for the Protestant Church see, Michael Imhof, 'Einen besseren als Stoecker finden wir nicht'. *Diskursanalytische Studien zur christlich-sozialen Agitation im deutschen Kaiserreich*, (Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem, 1996).

Following a brief recapitulation on how the Catholic Church in Italy had responded to these challenges, in the second section of this essay we will turn our attention to the news coverage of the Catholic paper *Il Cittadino di Mantova*.⁷ Founded in 1896, we examine the first year's issues as to how the Catholic journalists in the city picked up and propagated the language of antisemitism. In the third section we will move from language to politics and analyze the local election campaign of 1903 in Mantua. Here our interest is focused on identifying to what extent antisemitism had 'arrived' as a political movement in Italy.

The Catholic Church in Italy and the emergence of antisemitism

Although the new form of church animosity towards Jews in the various countries of Europe took on specific characteristics depending on the respective social and political context, and not all church circles took part in shaping and spreading antisemitism, in all European countries clergy were active who decidedly informed the language of antisemitism and put the new anti-Jewish attitude into practice.⁸

Common to the various shades of anti-Jewish attitudes amongst the Christian churches in Europe was the fact that the traditional religious motifs were no longer at the forefront in this new animosity; instead, focus was placed on the alleged responsibility of the Jews for the socio-economic and cultural upheavals of the time.⁹

In Italy the situation was exacerbated by how the newly founded nation state, which provided its citizens with a constitution as well as political rights and civic freedoms, had been asserted against the clergy's secular claim to power and the real-existing state that was the Church. Although the government of the new Italian nation state had left the Pope the Vatican, guaranteeing its sovereignty, and assured him the exercise of his spiritual office, Pius IX dismissed these overtures, seeing himself as a "prisoner in the Vatican."¹⁰ This dramatically intensified an already unyielding stance against all political developments.¹¹

Immediately after the revolution of 1848/9 Pius IX had adopted a strident anti-liberal, anti-nationalist and anti-Jewish course.¹² Founded in 1850, the journal *Civiltà Cattolica* became the mouthpiece of Catholic antisemitism,

⁷ *Un secolo di stampa periodica Mantovana 1797-1897*, eds. Clara Castagnoli, Giancarlo Ciaramelli (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002) 55-60.

⁸ For Croatia see the article of Marija Vulesica and for Galicia of Tim Buchen in this issue.

⁹ O. Blaschke, "Antikapitalismus"; Imhof, 'Einen besseren als Stöcker'.

¹⁰ David I. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Popes' Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State*, (Boston-New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

¹¹ David I. Kertzer, *The Unholy War: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism*, (London - Oxford: Macmillan, 2002).

¹² Giacomo Martina, *Pio IX*, 3 Vol., (Roma: Ed. Pontificia Univ. Gregoriana, 1974-1991); Ulrich Wyrwa, "Pius IX," *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. 2/2, ed. Wolfgang Benz, (Berlin-München: DeGruyter-Saur, 2009), 641-643.

circulating a host of anti-Jewish prejudices.¹³ In 1858 the Catholic Church set off a wave of public indignation across Europe by kidnapping the Jewish child Edgardo Mortara in Bologna.¹⁴ Following the founding of the Italian nation state, Pius IX's political stance was not only against liberal Italy, but also, and with particular vehemence, against Jews. In 1872 he held a sermon in front of the Curia attacking the influence of Jews in the press, and in the following year he vilified Jews in a public sermon, claiming that they are solely dedicated to their love of money.¹⁵ With this Pius IX anticipated some of the key motifs of the new antisemitic language as was then formulated directly afterwards in Germany by Wilhelm Marr, Adolph Stoecker or Heinrich von Treitschke, and which henceforth determined the semantics of antisemitism. Catholic journals, in particular the *Civiltà Cattolica*, expressly spread this new rhetoric. Above all the priest Giuseppe Oreglia di Santo Stefano made a mark with his attacks on Jews, defaming them as "eternally insolent children, obstinate and impure" and alleging that they are striving to seize the country's wealth and gain sole control over money flows.¹⁶

With its vehement rejection of contemporary political culture, which even led in 1874 to the passing of a *Non expedit*, a prohibition declared for all Catholics on taking part in political elections, let alone stand for election, the Catholic Church isolated itself from politics and thus diminished its influence on public opinion in liberal Italy.

Pius IX died in 1878 and his successor, Leo XIII, avoided any public appearances that could be construed as anti-Jewish. In an interview published in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1892 he evaded answering a question that explicitly sought his position on antisemitism; at the same time though, he addressed the rule of money, a key element in antisemitic rhetoric. During his pontificate Vatican newspapers and journals attacked Jews on numerous occasions in connection with the Dreyfus Affair.¹⁷

Despite various social and political initiatives the Catholic Church remained outside the mainstream national political culture. The consequence of this self-isolation was that antisemitism in Italy initially failed to develop into a political force. While in all other countries of Europe antisemitic attitudes increasingly came to the fore in the various political cultures, repeatedly enjoying the express support of the Christian churches, and to varying degrees antisemitism emerged as a political movement, at this point in time antisemitic views in Italy

¹³ Ruggero Taradel, Barbara Raggi, *La segregazione amichevole. 'La civiltà cattolica' e la questione ebraica (1850-1943)*, (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2000); Josè David Lebovitch Dahl, "The Role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Formation of Modern Anti-Semitism: La Civiltà Cattolica 1850-1879," *Modern Judaism* 23/2 (2003), 180-197.

¹⁴ David I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*, (New York: Knopf, 1997).

¹⁵ Pasquale de Franciscis, *Discorsi del Sommo Pontefice Pio IX pronunziati in Vaticano*, Vol. 1, (Roma: Tip. Paravia, 1872), 124; 294.

¹⁶ David Kertzer, *Die Päpste gegen die Juden. Der Vatikan und die Entstehung des modernen Antisemitismus*, (München: Propyläen Verlag, 2001), 183.

¹⁷ Annalisa di Fant, *L'affaire Dreyfus nella stampa cattolica italiana*, (Trieste, Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2002).

had no influence on the country's political culture and public life. Thus, Italian Jews were able to advance socially and politically in a way that was unique in Europe, largely undisturbed by public hostility, practices of exclusion by state institutions or violent assaults.¹⁸

The news of the formation of an antisemitic league in Mantua in 1903 we quoted at the outset is thus all the more remarkable. The socialist movement in the city promptly questioned the announcement. The newspaper *La Provincia di Mantova. Giornale della democrazia sociale* stated firmly: "We have trouble believing that the news reported in *L'avvenire d'Italia* is true, because Mantua is not an area suitable for a struggle against civilization."¹⁹

This statement was made against the backdrop of local elections to be held in July 1903, and for which the editor of Mantua's Catholic paper, *Il Cittadino di Mantova*, Don Venanzio Bini, campaigned for election on the basis of a markedly antisemitism program.²⁰

Don Venanzio Bini and the Catholic newspaper *Il Cittadino di Mantova*

Before examining the reporting of the Catholic newspaper *Il Cittadino di Mantova*, a couple of brief biographical details about Don Venanzio Bini, a decisive figure in shaping the outlook of this paper, are necessary.

Born into a petit bourgeois family of Mantua with many children in 1875, Bini began attending the city's seminary in 1888 before being ordained to the priesthood in September 1897.²¹ At first he taught at the seminary, but soon became involved in the Catholic social movement, *Azione cattolica*, and joined the staff of local Catholic paper *Il Cittadino di Mantova* at an early stage, whose editorship he then took over in 1902. The focal point of his interest was the struggle against the materialistic Zeitgeist, which he saw as not only being advanced by the capitalist economic order but also liberalism. Responsible for both, so Don Bini and *Il Cittadino*, were the Jews.²²

The antisemitic campaign conducted by Don Venanzio Bini at the local Mantua elections in 1903 was by no means the first time that antisemitic propaganda had featured in the newspaper of Mantua Catholics. One of the very first editions in January 1896 declared its admiration for the antisemitic politics of the Austrian Christian Social Party and paid tribute to Karl Lueger

¹⁸ Attilio Milano, *Storia degli Ebrei in Italia* (1963), (Torino, Einaudi, 1992), 382-391; Gadi Luzzatto Voghera, "Per uno studio sulla presenza e attività di parlamentari ebrei in Italia e in Europa," *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 69/1(2003): 73-92.

¹⁹ *La Provincia di Mantova*, January 18, 1903; for this newspaper see *Un secolo di stampa periodica Mantovana 1797-1897*, 218-225.

²⁰ *Cittadino di Mantova*, June 17, 1903.

²¹ Dante Bettoni, Ida Bozzini, *Venanzio Bini. Sacerdote mantovano accanto a San Giovanni Calabria*, (Roma: Editrice AVE, 2000).

²² Irene Paganini, *Chiesa e Antisemitismo a Mantova 1896-1945*. Tesi di Laurea in Storia del Cristianesimo, Università di Bologna, a/a 2005-2006.

for his anti-Jewish politics,²³ just a few days later it accused the Jews of Turin to have been involved in anti-clerical riots.²⁴

The extent to which Mantua's Catholic journalists adopted the new motifs of antisemitic rhetoric was revealed a little later in a remark made in passing, namely that the press agencies were completely in the hands of Jews. The topic of the article in which this defamatory remark was made was once again a report on Karl Lueger's antisemitic election campaign in Vienna.²⁵

The newspaper again took up the secular motif of the power Jews had over the press in the article "The Jewish Danger", claiming: "Whoever has the money owns the press as well, and whoever owns the press possesses the power."²⁶

The slogan coined by the Berlin historian Heinrich von Treitschke during the Berlin Antisemitism Controversy of 1879 – "Die Juden sind unser Unglück"²⁷ – was repeatedly picked up and used in antisemitic propaganda, advancing to one of the key catchphrases of antisemitic rhetoric. It thus comes as no surprise that the newspaper of the Mantua Catholics ran with the slogan in the first year of its publication, emphatically announcing: "Gli ebrei sono la nostra rovina."²⁸ The topic of this article was the assertion that antisemitism is by no means a religious issue. The core concern is rather – and this is the central aspect of the new form of animosity towards Jews formulated by the language of antisemitism – the dangerous influence Jews are exerting on social life. As the *Cittadino di Mantova* puts it, when antisemitism is concerned with "freeing us from the jaws of the Jews", then Mantua's Catholics fully back the rallying cry of the antisemites. The thought expressed following this remark shows just how much the Catholic journalists had appropriated the antisemites' main message: "We know very well that Jews rule over Mantua."²⁹

Besides the motifs of Jewish political dominance or the purported power over the press, the Mantua Catholics employed another element of antisemitic rhetoric, the semantic linkage between Jewry and Freemasonry. Italy's Catholics should follow an example north of the Alps. In this case *Il Cittadino di Mantova* was referring to Hungary and reported enthusiastically that Hungarian Catholics had founded forty newspapers in their struggle against Jewish Freemasonry in the last two years. "We, too," emphasized Mantua's Catholics, "moan under the Jewish-Freemasonry yoke."³⁰ A further article

²³ *Cittadino di Mantova*, January 11-12, 1896.

²⁴ *Cittadino di Mantova*, January 25-26, 1896.

²⁵ *Cittadino di Mantova*, March 4-5, 1896.

²⁶ *Cittadino di Mantova*, October 7-8, 1896.

²⁷ Jacob Katz, "Die Juden sind unser Unglück". Reflexionen über ein antisemitisches Schlagwort," *Messianismus und Zionismus. Zur jüdischen Sozialgeschichte* by Jacob Katz, (Frankfurt/M.: Jüdischer Verlag, 1993), 108-118. For the development of Treitschke's Antisemitism see Ulrich Wyrwa, "Genese und Entfaltung antisemitischer Motiven in Heinrich von Treitschkes 'Deutscher Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert', *Antisemitische Geschichtsbilder*, eds. Werner Bergmann, Ulrich Sieg, (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2009), 83-101.

²⁸ *Cittadino di Mantova*, July 22-23, 1896.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *Cittadino di Mantova*, July 11-12, 1896.

characterizes the ghetto, so the headline, as a hearth of Freemasonry,³¹ and only a little later they claim: “The Freemasonic Jews are the cancer plaguing our civil Christian society.”³²

Italy’s Catholics focused their agitation on the ‘struggle against the Italian nation state, continually exploiting antisemitic insinuations. Mantua’s Catholic newspaper is no exception, defaming the Kingdom of Italy as Jewish, and in this vein they concluded an article on Jews and festive holidays: “Our legislators are less concerned with the needs and rights of the Christian population, but are rather calculated according to the Jewish minority. So the abbreviation R.d.I on the crest of the state no longer stands for Regno di Italia, Kingdom of Italy, but Regno di Israele, Kingdom of the Israele!”³³

In this vein *Il Cittadino di Mantova* did not pass up on the opportunity to respond to a speech given by the Jewish finance minister Luigi Luzzatti with a harsh article full of antisemitic insinuations.³⁴

This employment of the new language of antisemitism by the Catholic journalists of Mantua went so far that they even occasionally resorted to the concept of race, defaming the Jews with racist expressions.³⁵ An article entitled “Jewish Arrogance”, a tag significant in antisemitic rhetoric, spoke of the Jewish race and how its arrogance had bloated to an enormous degree.³⁶

A detailed leading article – “Israelite Heroics” – compiled a list of traditional insinuations and accusations against Jews, covering the whole spectrum from the Middle Ages onwards.³⁷ At the same time, the paper insisted that it is “not the earlier crimes of the Jews but the current repression by the Jews, not the old hate against Christian names but their devilish work today which is decisive in the Jews trying to destroy the foundations of Christian civilization.” For this reason the Mantua Catholics demand in this article what numerous antisemites across Europe were campaigning for, the expulsion of Jews: “Out with the adversaries of Christian civilization, out with the Jews.”³⁸

As the numerous references to the Habsburg Monarchy already showed, Mantua’s Catholics looked beyond their city and indeed Italy as a whole. The threat represented by “the Jewish hordes” – so the title of another article in *Il Cittadino di Mantova* – is looming across the whole of Europe.³⁹ “Unfortunate Europe”, begins the article, “as if the Huns were not enough, or the Goths, the Visigoths [...] and the other barbaric hordes, [...] as if the shattering invasion by the Turks was not enough, in this century you have fallen victim to a new

³¹ *Cittadino di Mantova*, July 25-26, 1896.

³² *Cittadino di Mantova*, August 8-9, 1896.

³³ *Cittadino di Mantova*, August 1-2, 1896.

³⁴ *Cittadino di Mantova*, September 9-10, 1896.

³⁵ *Cittadino di Mantova*, March 7-8, 1896.

³⁶ *Cittadino di Mantova*, August 19-20, 1896.

³⁷ *Cittadino di Mantova*, August 22-23, 1896.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Cittadino di Mantova*, August 26-27, 1896.

invasion, new barbaric hordes have befallen you as leeches: the Jewish hordes!”⁴⁰

In December 1896 the Mantua Catholics even printed a lengthy interview with Karl Lueger that opened with the pronouncedly direct question: “Why are you an antisemite?” Lueger was given ample opportunity to then elaborate his antisemitic positions.⁴¹

The reporting and commentaries in this first year of the Church publication *Il Cittadino di Mantova* shows that the Catholic journalists of the city had made the vocabulary of antisemitism their own, in all its shadings and across its full range. What is most remarkable is how much the Catholic clergy had detached themselves from traditional and religiously-justified animosity towards Jews and swung towards the secular motifs of antisemitism, concentrating on the alleged role of Jews in the state as well as society and the economy.

By no means were Mantua’s Catholics alone in taking this position, with these features of secular antisemitism evident in other newspapers and journals published by the Catholic Church in Europe. Besides the aforementioned organ of the Vatican, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, other publications were prominent in spreading and propagating the language of antisemitism in Italy, such as the intransigent journal of the Milanese priest Don Davide Albertario, *L’Osservatore cattolico*,⁴² or, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, the paper serving Venetian Catholics, *La Difesa*.⁴³

What made the situation in Mantua and Italy different from the rest of Europe was the fact that the Church in Italy was unable to exert any real influence on the political culture due to its self-imposed isolation. Whereas the Churches in other European countries were able to strongly influence public life with their antisemitism, thus aiding the new form of animosity towards Jews to find a broad echo in society, in Italy the Catholic Church’s antisemitic agitation initially came to nothing.

The political culture of unified Italy was characterized more by liberalism and accepting Jews as citizens with equal rights, and this tolerance led in turn to a political advancement of Jews that was unparalleled in Europe.⁴⁴ Nowhere else could Jews point to such far-reaching political success as in Italy, in no other European country were Jews active in the state administration in so large numbers, and this was not confined to merely the level of officials and state

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *Cittadino di Mantova*, December 2-3, 1896.

⁴² Annalisa Di Fant, “Stampa cattolica italiana e antisemitismo alla fine dell’Ottocento,” *Les racines chrétiennes de l’antisémitisme politique*, ed. Catherine Brice, (Rome: École française de Rome, 2003), 121-136.

⁴³ U. Wyrwa, “Der Antisemitismus und die Gesellschaft des Liberalen Italien 1861-1915,” “... denn in Italien haben sich die Dinge anders abgespielt”. *Judentum und Antisemitismus im modernen Italien*, eds. Gudrun Jäger, Liana Novelli-Glaab, (Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 2007), 87-106; see also Ilaria Pavan, “L’impossibile rigenerazione. Ostilità antiebraiche nell’Italia liberale (1873-1913),” *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 50 (2009): 34-67.

⁴⁴ Susan Zuccotti, “Italian Jews in Public Life, 1848-1922: Between Liberalism and Anti-Semitism,” *Studia Judaica* XV (2007): 82-90.

secretaries, but included ministers. Some of the most prominent names were the finance ministers Luigi Luzzatti and Leone Wollemborg, and the minister without portfolio, Salvatore Barzilai. In the person of Ernesto Nathan a Jew was mayor of the capital Rome, the former capital of the Papal State. A further factor distinctive to the Italian situation was that Jews could to be promoted to the highest military ranks in the Italian Army, and in the years France was still being shaken by the Dreyfus Affair, Italy even had a Jewish war minister, Giuseppe Ottolenghi.⁴⁵ Finally, and just as unique in Europe, Luigi Luzzatti became prime minister of Italy in 1910.⁴⁶

In this political climate it was impossible for antisemitic movements to form; anti-Jewish positions like the ones propagated in *Il Cittadino di Mantova* evoked no public response. Due to its own refusal to become involved in politics, the Catholic Church was unable to influence public opinion and the political climate with its antisemitic agitation, neither in Mantua or any other Italian city.⁴⁷

The weakness of antisemitism in the society of liberal Italy is not so much due to how Jews and non-Jews were 'nationalized' at the same time as the nation state was formed,⁴⁸ the high degree of assimilation of Italian Jews, the actual low proportion of Jews in the population, or Italy's economic backwardness, to name but just some of the arguments frequently brought forward in the secondary literature.⁴⁹ The decisive point is that the Church was not a determining factor in Italy's political culture. In republican and anticlerical tradition the academic milieu proved just as resistant to Church propaganda as the world of small business and tradesmen.⁵⁰ In turn, Italian nationalism was

⁴⁵ Attilio Milano, *Storia degli Ebrei in Italia*, 382-387.

⁴⁶ Francesco Piazza, *Luigi Luzzatti: riformatore sociale e statista*, (Treviso: Canova, 1987); *Luigi Luzzatti e il suo tempo*, ed. Pier Luigi Ballini, (Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1994).

⁴⁷ For the catholic Antisemitism in Turin see Michele Nani, *Ai confini della nazione. Stampa e razzismo nell'Italia di fine Ottocento*, (Roma: Carocci editore, 2006) 157-230; see also Simon Levis Sullam, "Per una storia dell'antisemitismo cattolico in Italia," *Cristiani d'Italia. Chiese, società, Stato (1861-2011)*, ed. Alberto Melloni (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 2011), vol. I, 461-470.

⁴⁸ This was the interpretation given by Arnaldo Momigliano in 1933 in the journal *La nuova Italia*. *Rassegna critica mensile della cultura italiana e straniera*, 20/4 (1933):142-143, as part of a review *History of the Jews in Venice* by Cecil Roth. This thesis proved particularly popular in Italian historiography as a result of Antonio Gramsci including it in his Prison Notebooks; see, Mario Toscano, "Risorgimento ed ebrei. Alcune riflessioni sulla 'nazionalizzazione parallela'," Mario Toscano, *Ebraismo e antisemitismo in Italia. Dal 1848 alla Guerra dei sei giorni*, (Milano: Angeli 2003), 13-23; Simon Levis Sullam, "Arnaldo Momigliano e la nazionalizzazione parallela. Autobiografia, religione, storia," *Passato e Presente*, 25/70(2007): 59-82.

⁴⁹ Ulrich Wyrwa, *Der Antisemitismus und die Gesellschaft des Liberalen Italien*, 104-106.

⁵⁰ For the shopkeeper in Milan see Jonathan Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan (1886-1922)*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); for France and Germany in contrast see, Philip G. Nord, *Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Robert Gellately, *The Politics of Economic Despair. Shopkeepers and German Politics 1890-1914*, (London: SAGE Publ., 1974).

immune to antisemitic rhetoric for as long as the Church *milieu* kept out of national politics and stood aloof of everyday political culture.⁵¹

Revealingly, the situation changed the moment the Church eased the strict *Non Expedit*, the prohibition to take part actively or passively in elections to the Italian parliament, and a young generation of Catholics entered the political fray in the first decade of the 20th century.⁵²

This is precisely the historical moment when news of the founding of an antisemitic league in Mantua began circulating in the Italian public, and antisemitism had thus arrived as a political movement in Italy, with Don Venanzio Bini campaigning with antisemitic slogans for election in Mantua.

Antisemitism and political Catholicism in Mantua

Don Venanzio Bini, who had taken over editorship of the *Cittadino di Mantova* in 1902, expressly supported the program of Christian democracy and the participation of Catholics in politics. As early as the end of 1902 his newspaper claimed, following weak results for Jewish candidates at provincial elections, that Mantua was “at heart” antisemitic, that antisemitism was “in the blood.”⁵³

Once the Papal prohibition on taking part in elections was eased, Don Venanzio Bini stood for local elections to be held in July 1903, campaigning with a markedly antisemitic program; the aforementioned announcement of the founding of an antisemitic league in Mantua is directly connected to preparations for this election campaign.

A few days after the announcement published in Catholic newspapers, for instance in Bologna and Venice, the *Cittadino di Mantova* spoke in passing of the “Lega antisemita”, without indicating whether the founding of such an organization had in fact gone ahead.⁵⁴ The non-Catholic newspapers in the city wasted no time in questioning the announcement. The democratic, pro-republic *La Provincia di Mantova. Giornale della democrazia sociale* stated in no uncertain terms: “Mantua will not tolerate such crusades anathema to civilization.”⁵⁵

After Bini had published the small work *Il libero pensiero* at the end of January, praised in his newspapers as being written completely in “antisemitic colors” and triggering not inconsiderable agitation in the city,⁵⁶ in the following month *Il Cittadino di Mantova* declared, as the programmatic title heralded, “Why we are Antisemites” in a three-part article series: “We are not antisemites just to gain approval, nor is this just a passing whim, we are antisemites because of facts which legitimate the forming of antisemitic parties in all European

⁵¹ Ulrich Wyrwa, *Der Antisemitismus und die Gesellschaft des Liberalen Italien*, 92.

⁵² Cesare Marongiu Buonaiuti, *Non expedit. Storia di una politica 1866-1919*, (Milano: Giuffrè, 1971).

⁵³ *Cittadino di Mantova*, December 10-11, 1902.

⁵⁴ *Cittadino di Mantova*, January 21, 1903.

⁵⁵ *La Provincia di Mantova*, January 18, 1903.

⁵⁶ *Cittadino di Mantova*, January 31, 1903.

nations.” The articles go on to explain that “our antisemitism addresses both a religious-moral question as well as a social question.”⁵⁷ In the following months *Il Cittadino di Mantova* reported time and again on alleged usury by Jews and Jewish Freemasonry, or took up rumors of ritual murders, before announcing in mid-June that Catholics will stand for election with an antisemitic program. “Mantua is deeply antisemitic,” begins the article, and for this reason Mantua’s Catholics have decided to run at the local elections on an antisemitic program.⁵⁸ Once again employing the title “Why we are Antisemites”, the *Cittadino* wrote that we do not hate the Jews because they had killed Jesus Christ, but because they control “business and speculation.”⁵⁹ “They want to rule over us through hunger, and we are forced to humiliate ourselves just to get a crust of bread.” The Jewish question is therefore, so the conclusion drawn by Mantua’s Catholics, a social question.⁶⁰ Over the course of the election campaign the *Cittadino* ranted continually about perceived Jewish intolerance and portrayed in great detail the antisemitic politics of Karl Lueger’s Christ Social Party as a role model.⁶¹

The *Gazzetta di Mantova*,⁶² a newspaper steeped in tradition that took part in the campaigns against Freemasonry, now saw itself forced into distancing itself from the antisemitic struggle of the Catholics against the Freemasons. In one of the numerous articles published on the issue they state that “our campaign against Freemasonry has nothing to do with the antisemitic campaign.”⁶³ The newspaper of social democracy, *La Provincia di Mantova*, had already responded to the first rumors of a founding of a “Lega antisemita” in Mantua, calling it into question, and had drawn attention to the publication of the antisemitic *Il libero pensiero*. Antisemitism, emphasizes *La Provincia*, can only be seen as uncivilized, and such an organization can only lead to resurrecting the old and sinister or criminal forms of caste hate under the command of priests.⁶⁴ Just a few days before the elections the democrats from *Provincia* again warned its readers of the antisemitic campaign conducted by the *Cittadino*: “What the priests and the clerical powers are undertaking here is disgraceful. They are profiting from the elections and whipping up the basest and most morbid passions, and they are trying to stir a vicious storm between peoples, between one religion and another. Their newspapers, their brochures and their lectures lead to nothing other than a real preying on citizens who grew up in one religion instead of another.”⁶⁵

The newspaper of Mantua’s Socialists, *La nuova terra giornale socialista mantovano*, had already emphasized its rejection of antisemitism in January as the rumor

⁵⁷ *Cittadino di Mantova*, February 7, 1903; February 21, 1903; February 25, 1903.

⁵⁸ *Cittadino di Mantova*, June 17, 1903.

⁵⁹ *Cittadino di Mantova*, June 20, 1903.

⁶⁰ *Cittadino di Mantova*, February 25, 1903.

⁶¹ *Cittadino di Mantova*, June 24, 1903.

⁶² *Un secolo di stampa periodica Mantovana 1797-1897*, 112-137.

⁶³ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, January 26-27, 1903.

⁶⁴ *La Provincia di Mantova*, January 25, 1903.

⁶⁵ *La Provincia di Mantova*, July 9, 1903.

spread that a 'Lega antisemita' had been founded in Mantua, declaring that the antisemites formed a *camorra* based on racial hatred.⁶⁶ During the election campaign Mantua's Socialists criticized the antisemitic line taken by the Catholics in no uncertain terms: Mantua's priests have tried to rally fifty votes. "They peddle the program: wage war against the Jews! Mantua for Mantuans!" In its rebuttal *La nuova terra* adopted the slogan German Social Democrats had coined to combat antisemitism: "Antisemitism is the socialism of fools."⁶⁷ In this context *La nuova terra* reminds readers of two fundamental articles by Giovanni Zibordi published three years before in which he expressly dismissed antisemitism: "Pillory", concluded Zibordi, "for the foolish antisemites who only hate the Jews because they cope better in this capitalist system."⁶⁸

The elections ended in a clear victory for the Democrats. With 16 deputies they made up more than half of the delegates. But Don Bini was also able to enter the chamber with his "lista antisemita", for, as the results published in *La Gazzetta di Mantova* stated, they sent four deputies, the same number as the moderate Liberals and the Socialists.⁶⁹

The Catholics had mainly waved the flag of antisemitism according to a commentary published a few days later in the *La Gazzetta*, and the brain of *Il Cittadino* is still a bit hazy from the frenzy of victory.⁷⁰

La nuova terra commented the politics of the antisemites shortly after the election with the remark: "Only the ignorant, the obsessed or imbeciles hang firmly onto their thoughts when these not only contradict logic but also the laws of history, and so those of economics."⁷¹

After the election which had seen their political direction score a clear victory, *La Provincia di Mantova* published an open letter to the Catholic newspaper. Entitled "For Historical Truth", it drew attention to various instances of intolerance shown by the Catholic Church and closed with the remark: "These incidents, esteemed *Cittadino*, are not incidents which took place in antiquity, nor are they incidents from recent history, they are incidents from our present day."⁷²

Despite this criticism, the protagonists of political Catholicism in Mantua felt vindicated by the elections and shortly after the *Cittadino* reported that Catholics in Ferrara were now campaigning for local elections with an

⁶⁶ *La nuova terra. Giornale socialista mantovano*, January 24-25, 1903; for other positions within the socialist camp of Mantua see Maurizio Bertolotti, "I contesti dell'ambiguità. Manifestazioni antisemitiche nel mondo socialista italiano dell'Ottocento," *Antisemitismi a confronto: Francia e Italia. Ideologie, retoriche, politiche*, eds. Michele Battini, Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2010), 57-78.

⁶⁷ *La nuova terra. Giornale socialista mantovano*, July 12, 1903.

⁶⁸ *La nuova terra. Giornale settimanale Socialista Mantovana*, June 24, 1900.

⁶⁹ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, July 13-14, 1903.

⁷⁰ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, July 18-19, 1903.

⁷¹ *La nuova terra. Giornale socialista mantovano*, June 5, 1904.

⁷² *La Provincia di Mantova*, July 16, 1903; for *La Provincia di Mantova* see yy, 218-225.

antisemitic program. “We wish the Catholics of Ferrara,” the article concluded, “the favor of fate in their battle against the ghetto.”⁷³

Jewish contemporaries were well aware of the antisemitic campaigns of Don Venanzio Bini. In the fall of 1903 *Il Vessillo Israelitico* – the most important Jewish periodical in Liberal Italy edited by the Rabbi Flaminio Servi –⁷⁴ reported: “Mantua. Yesterday the local antisemitic party distributed an untitled pamphlet that was full of savage hate against Jews. From now on, it announced, we are boycotting the businesses of the circumcised.” According to *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, there followed an avalanche of the most insulting abuse against the Jews of Mantua.⁷⁵

The entrance of Antisemitism into the Italian Political Culture

As these episodes from Mantua in 1903 show, Italy’s self-perception as a land without antisemitism needs to be revised. While it is obvious that the situation of Jews in Italy was much more favorable than in other European countries, that Italian Jews were faced with far fewer hurdles and met far less resistance in terms of their employment and professional opportunities, their involvement in society and political activities, and that antisemitism entered political culture and public life much later than in other European countries – the society of liberal Italy was by no means free of antisemitism. As the example of Mantua shows, this antisemitism was particularly prevalent in the Catholic camp. While in the 1890s Catholics remained within their own *milieu* with their antisemitic agitation and had no real influence on public life, in the election campaign of 1903 they took to the political stage of the city, bringing the political antisemitism of the Catholic Church to the local level.

With the deal between Giovanni Giolitti and the Christian Social politician Vincenzo Ottorino Gentiloni for the elections from 1913, a new Catholic constituent tied to the Church entered national politics, and in the respective election campaigns antisemitic rhetoric found its way into Italy’s political culture.⁷⁶ The Catholic journalist and editor of the newspaper *L’Avvenire* Filippo Crispolti, who ran for the Italian parliament in this year, reproached his democratic rival during the election campaign that he was not in a position to represent the electorate in parliament because he was a Jew.⁷⁷

Tellingly, it were the former priest, Giovanni Preziosi together with the cleric Umberto Benigni, who only a few years later translated *The Protocols of the Elders*

⁷³ *Cittadino di Mantova*, September 26, 1903.

⁷⁴ Bruno Di Porto, “‘Il Vessillo Israelitico’. Un vessillo ai venti di un’epoca tra Otto e Novecento,” *Materia giudaica. Rivista dell’Associazione Italiana per lo Studio del Giudaismo*, VII (2002), n. 2, 349-383.

⁷⁵ ‘Notizie diverse’, *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, 51/11 (1903), 371-372.

⁷⁶ For the Gentiloni Pact see, Alexander De Grand, *The Hunchback’s Taylor. Giovanni Giolitti and Liberal Italy from the Challenge of Mass Politics to the Rise of Fascism*, (Westport, Conn., Praeger, 2000) 180-184; Frank J. Coppa, “Giolitti and the Gentiloni Pact between myth and reality,” *Catholic Historical Review*, 53 (1967), 217-228.

⁷⁷ Enzo Lolli, ‘La questione dell’Ebreo’, *Il Vessillo Israelitico* 61 (1913), 668-671.

of Zion, a “work” that was to play a key role in antisemitic agitation in the 20th century.⁷⁸

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⁷⁸ Sergej Nilus, *L'internazionale ebraica. Protocolli dei 'Savi anziani' di Sion*, (Rome: La Vita Italiana, 1921); Michele Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy. From Equality to Persecution*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 13-14, 291-292; Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode 1967); Wolfgang Benz, *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion. Die Legende von der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, (München: C. H. Beck, 2007); Maria Teresa Pichetto, *Alle radici dell'odio. Preziosi e Benigni antisemiti*, (Milano: Franco Angeli 1985).

**Jewish Self-Defense and Black Hundreds in Zhitomir.
A case study on the Pogroms of 1905 in Tsarist Russia**

by *Stefan Wiese*

Abstract

In a case study, this article re-examines three key aspects of the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1905-1906 in Tsarist Russia: the concept of “Black Hundreds” as the major perpetrators, the question of whether state authorities approved pogrom violence, and finally, the significance of Jewish self-defence. Contemporary observers and subsequently modern scholars as well, interpreted the pogrom in the city of Zhitomir in April 1905 as a classic example of those three characteristics of the entire pogrom wave. However, a close examination suggests that the relevance of “Black hundred” instigators has been grossly overestimated and the ambivalent behaviour of the police and military forces can largely be attributed to structural conditions of their service, such as a lack of personnel, of resources and of competence. Zhitomir’s self defence unit is portrayed as a contentious generational, emotional, and political project which by its very nature as an instrument of socialist activists pursued more objectives than the mere prevention of anti-Jewish violence. Finally, misperceptions regarding the pogroms are explained by the predominance of the pogrom of Kishinev in 1903 as an interpretive template for the ensuing anti-Jewish riots. The article thus provides interpretations that may lead to a more complex picture of pogrom-style violence in the late Russian Empire.

“We will show you that Zhitomir is not Kishinev,” some Jews in the city of Zhitomir put forward self-confidently in April 1905.¹ They anticipated a pogrom and organized for self-defense, striving to avoid the “shame of passivity” that Kishinev’s Jews were thought to bear since the infamous pogrom of 1903; and their concern proved well-founded before the end of the month. From 24 to 25 April pogromists beat Zhitomir’s Jews, destroyed and looted their property – but not without facing resistance. The city’s *self-defense* did its best to limit pogrom violence, and it soon became renowned for its courage and “overwhelming success.” Among Bund members it was no less than a “legend.”² “The Times of Kishinev,” one Bundist paper concluded

¹ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda ministru iustitsii [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Minister of Justice], 14 July 1907, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii

² Shlomo Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement in Tsarist Russia, 1903-1906*, doct. dissertation, (Rutgers University 1981), 244; Rainer Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine, 1860-1914. Industrialisierung und soziale Kommunikation im südlichen Zarenreich*, (Konstanz: UVK, 2006), 305.

enthusiastically, “have gone forever.”³ Yet, the Zhitomir pogrom is considered a turning point not only with regard to pogrom defenders, but to pogrom perpetrators as well. “It was during Zhitomir that the Black Hundreds, the terrorist arm of the Russian right, first began to gain prominence as the instigators of pogroms.”⁴ This aspect was further emphasized by Simon Dubnow, who once again linked the pogrom to its Bessarabian predecessor: “In Zhitomir there was a massacre, staged by the *Black Hundreds* with the assistance of the police. It was a ‘second Kishinev’.”⁵ This article seeks to re-examine the events surrounding the pogrom of Zhitomir, the role of self-defense and *Black Hundreds* in its course and the meaning of references to Kishinev for contemporary and recent interpretations of anti-Jewish violence throughout the period of the first Russian revolution.

The setting

Among the wave of anti-Jewish pogroms in 1905, the case of Zhitomir is representative due to its rather limited scope and by the ordinariness of its setting. Prior case studies focused on the major pogroms in Odessa and Kiev – cities remarkable as centers of the revolutionary movement, of the emerging political Right in Russia and as the scene of large-scale mutinies ahead of the pogrom. On the contrary, Zhitomir was, though being the center of Volhynia province with almost 90,000 inhabitants, one third of them Jews, distinctly provincial in character. Even the railroad constructors decided to circumvent it and rather connected the nearby district town of Berdichev in 1870.⁶ Lacking any significant industry, Zhitomir was a city of craftsmen and public servants, or, as a former Social-Democrat agitator recalled in 1926, of “retired Sergeants and clerks.”⁷ With this statement, the author obviously intended to anticipate criticism from his Soviet readers about the poor situation of the revolutionary movement in the city. In fact, the impact of revolutionary agitation had been limited until 1905. The General Jewish Labor Bund (Bund) had been seriously

³ Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics. Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982), 147.

⁴ Shlomo Lambroza, “The Pogroms of 1903-1906,” *Pogrom Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John D. Klier, Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1992), 223-224.

⁵ Simon Dubnow, *Buch des Lebens*, Bd. 2 (1903-1922), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005), 39.

⁶ J. M. Shul'man, *Goroda i liudi evreiskoi diaspori v vostochnoi evrope do nachala XX veka: Ukraina: Berdichev, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir, Kamenets-Podol'sk, Tulchin*, [Towns and People of the Jewish Diaspora in Eastern Europe before 1900, Ukraine: Berdichev, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir, Kamenets-Podol'sk], (second, corrected and supplemented edition), (Moscow: 2007), 82. In 1896, a light railway was built from Berdichev to Zhitomir.

⁷ Kh. Zafran, ‘1905 god v Zhitomire’, *Letopis' revoliutsii. Zhurnal po istorii KP(b)U i Oktjabr'skoi revoliutsii na Ukraine* [Chronicle of the Revolution. Journal on the history of the CP(b)U and the October Revolution in Ukraine] (1926): 149-73, 152.

weakened by a Secret police roundup in December, 1903.⁸ Other socialist parties such as the Social Democrats (RSDRP) and Social Revolutionary Party (PSR) had failed to capitalize on the Bund's crackdown. The RSDRP did not even begin to agitate the city's masses before 1905.⁹ Obviously, revolution was not the major concern of the inhabitants of Zhitomir. In fact, there were other things to worry about. Since 1904, Russia was in war with Japan, and what had been designed as a "small, successful war," turned out to be the biggest military disaster since Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. As news about lost battles and incompetent military leadership spread, the populace was increasingly aroused by rumors about corruption of military officials, military mobilizations and alleged peace negotiations.¹⁰ Reportedly, villagers in the nearby province of Podolia were even afraid of "the impending coming of the Japanese."¹¹

Another reason for the agitation of minds at the beginning of 1905 was a series of Jewish pogroms in a number of towns and villages at the southeastern periphery of the Empire. Its starting point was the well-known pogrom of Kishinev in April 1903. In the capital of Bessarabia the blood libel had spread, or, to be more precise, had been actively promoted by Pavel Krushevan, editor of a local newspaper and notorious anti-Semite. During two days of rioting, 51 people were killed, 49 of them Jews, some 450 persons were injured and property damage was estimated at some 2 Mill. Rubles.¹² Official statements depicted the pogrom as a spontaneous outburst of interethnic tensions, which ultimately were the result of "Jewish exploitation," whilst unofficial interpretations highlighted anti-Semite agitation in the press, the seemingly coordinated actions of the rioters and inadequate intervention of the authorities. This implied that the pogrom had been organized or at least tolerated by the state. From that point of view, it seemed highly questionable, whether Kishinev would remain an isolated incident. After all, Russia had already experienced a wave of pogroms in the early 1880s that provided a reference point for all those who feared that violence might spread once again. In fact, what followed were initially isolated incidents, such as the pogrom in Gomel' in August 1903. In 1904, after the declaration of war on Japan, a total of 49 smaller scale pogroms occurred, many of them during the period of wartime mobilization.¹³ All in all, there was a background of continuous low-level-rioting when tensions mounted in the city of Zhitomir in early 1905.

The citizens of Zhitomir had no doubts about the imminence of large scale violence. Corresponding rumors flooded the streets, naming alleged dates and

⁸ Nachal'nik Volynskogo Okhrannogo Otdeleniia, [Chief of the Volhynian Department of Protection], 3 February 1904, Gosudarstvennyj arkhiv rossiiskoi federatsii [State Archive of the Russian Federation] (GARF), f. 102, op. 232 (OO), d. 5, ch. 38, l. 11.

⁹ E. Gatskevich, "Iz deiatel'nosti RSDRP na Volyni (1905-1906g.)" [On some activities of RSDWP in Volhynia (1905-1906)], *Letopis' revoliutsii. Zhurnal po istorii KP(b)U i Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii na Ukraine*, (1926): 169-77, 170.

¹⁰ *Volyn'* [Volhynia], 6 March 1905, 3 and 9 March 1905, 3.

¹¹ *Iuzhnye zapiski*, [Southern Notes], 13 March 1905, 74.

¹² Edward H. Judge, *Ostern in Kischinow. Anatomie eines Pogroms* (Mainz: Decaton, 1995), 71-72.

¹³ Lambroza, *Pogrom*, 94-97.

targets of the expected outbursts – “everybody is talking about a [future] pogrom,” Zhitomir’s local newspaper observed.¹⁴ A leaflet, issued by the local Social Revolutionaries, even announced that the local administration would be held responsible for the prospective pogrom.¹⁵ At first, outbreaks were predicted for 7 April, the beginning of Passover, and then for the Easter holidays (from 17 April), that were known to be especially prone to anti-Jewish outbursts since the Odessa Pogroms of the 19th century.¹⁶ The Governor ordered military forces to patrol the streets, Jews prepared to leave the city, the RSDRP cancelled that year’s May Day demonstration (18 April) to avoid a pogrom and yet again, no violence occurred.¹⁷ When later observers emphasized that the pogrom that did eventually occur afterwards had been announced previously, and even the date had been known beforehand, they usually failed to note that predictions of this kind had proven highly unreliable in the past.

***Black Hundreds* and pogrom agitation**

Why did the rumors about imminent violence seem so plausible to the inhabitants of Zhitomir? A probable answer is that there were actors present in the city who were interested in fuelling the tensions. Previous scholarship, implicitly using the events in Kishinev as an interpretative template for all pogroms to come in the following years, focused on the impact of anti-Semitic press reporting and the *Black Hundreds* as instigators. Yet, in Zhitomir the only private local newspaper was leftist displaying far from anti-Semite colors. All utterances of pogrom perpetrators (*pogromshchiki*) about their motives, as far as they have been preserved, referred to local incidents and rumors. In contrast, accusations spread in the central press about the Jewish financial support of Japan or about their avoidance of military service were not present. This indicates that the influence of the national press was extremely limited, especially with regard to those social groups from which the bulk of pogromists were recruited. If the central rightist press had any impact on the mounting tensions in Zhitomir, this could only have been through intermediaries, which leads us to the concept of the *Black Hundreds*, so commonly referred to in writings on the pogrom wave of 1903-1906. Unfortunately, there is an eminent lack of clearness in what exactly the *Black*

¹⁴ *Volyn*, 13 April 1905, 3.

¹⁵ Ministr vnutrennykh del, projekt tsirkuliara gubernatoram, [Outline of a circular letter of the Minister of the Interior to the governors], GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350. ch. 271A, l. 18ob-19).

¹⁶ *Volyn*, 7 April 1905, 3; John D. Klier, “The pogrom paradigm in Russian History,” *Pogroms. Anti-Jewish Violence*, 13-38.

¹⁷ *Volyn*, 22 April 1905, 3; Nachal’nik Volynskogo Gubernskogo zhandarmskogo upravleniia (GZhU) v Departament Politsii (DP), [Chief of the Volhynian Provincial Administration of the Gendarmes to the Department of the Police], 13 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 4.

Hundreds were supposed to be.¹⁸ For example, they were called the “terrorist arm” of the “Union of the Russian People.”¹⁹ But *Black Hundreds* could also refer to conservative intelligentsia circles preaching the use of anti-Jewish violence, to rightist grassroots movements or to complex organizational structures that encompassed different levels of the authorities and the popular masses.

Principal objections against the use of these different concepts of *Black Hundreds* to explain pogrom violence might be that most formal structures of the rightist movement in the Russian Empire appeared only after much of the pogrom wave was over and long after the Pogrom in Zhitomir.²⁰ The implication of governmental structures into the pogroms has been disputed by Western “revisionist” historiography. For example, the rightist movement most suspicious of complicity in the pogroms, the “Union of the Russian People,” did receive some degree of support from the Ministry of the Interior, but no earlier than in summer 1906, when the pogrom wave was already abating.²¹ Moreover, it should not be forgotten, that the concept of “Black Hundreds” responsibility was primarily an idea of the liberal and leftist *intelligentsia*. It was motivated by the then widely held conviction, that the common people, the *narod*, were intrinsically unable to engage in collective action when stripped of outside leadership.²² When members of the intelligentsia elaborated on the identity of these instigators, they introduced two further convictions: that from the state’s perspective the pogroms were instrumental as a means to temper the revolutionary movement and that the state wielded preponderant power over the populace. The military and police apparatuses, including the Gendarmerie and Okhrana sections of the Secret police, were considered so mighty that the idea of rightist mass unrest happening throughout the country against their will seemed improbable.²³ Yet, both convictions: the instrumentality of the pogroms for the state as well as its power to organize them at will must be called into question in the light of current research. This can be demonstrated using the example of Zhitomir.

In Zhitomir, the emergence of politically organized Rightist forces dates back to no earlier than to the revolutionary events of fall, 1905. It was the patriotic

¹⁸ Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau’s Tears. Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1997), 284, 300.

¹⁹ Shlomo Lambroza, “Jewish Responses to Pogroms in Late Imperial Russia,” *Living with Antisemitism: Modern Jewish Responses*, ed. Jehuda Reinharts (Hannover- London: Univ. Press of New England 1987), 253-274 at 268.

²⁰ Hans Rogger, “The Formation of the Russian Right: 1900-1906,” *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr. 1986), 188–211.

²¹ Hans Rogger, “Was there a Russian Fascism? The Union of Russian People,” *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press 1986) 212-232 at 216.

²² Cathy A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth Century Russia* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press 1993)

²³ For a treatment of the “okhrana myth,” see, Iain Lauchlan, *Russian Hide-and-Seek. The Tsarist Secret Police in St. Petersburg, 1906-1914*, (Helsinki: SKS FLS, 2002), 15-56.

manifestation of 21 October that “provided the first impulse to organize *Black Hundreds*.”²⁴ One might hint at the orthodox Bishop Antonii, a prominent spokesman of the emerging radical Right in Russia living in Zhitomir, as a possible pogrom organizer, evidence from November 1905 indicates that he did not refrain from approving violence against socialists in private correspondence.²⁵ However, there are no sources indicating his involvement in any pogrom preparations, and his words after the pogrom in Kishinev and prior to that in Zhitomir cast serious doubt over his willingness to accept pogrom-style violence in general.²⁶ Yet, the events prior to the Zhitomir pogrom do provide an example of *Black Hundreds* agency: the notorious leaflets signed by a putative “Iarema” that had been circulating in the city since the end of March 1905.²⁷ Written in Ukrainian, it called on the populace not to believe in proclamations of the revolutionary parties because they were designed to disrupt popular trust in the Tsar and were authored by Jews. The latter, it said, allegedly conspired with Polish landlords unwilling to accept that peasants had been freed from serfdom. “The Poles promised them, that when serfdom was reenacted and Poland reconstituted, the kikes would lease churches and taverns.” With a view to Jewish grievances and discrimination, “Iarema” reminded the reader, that Jews had already lost a kingdom of their own; if they were discontent with the state of affairs in Russia, they should emigrate to “China or Japan or Palestine” instead of avoiding military service and marching with Red Flags, “revolvers and daggers.” Yet, the only plea the leaflet made, was to “beat the Jews at their wallets,” i.e. to sabotage Jewish trading activities.²⁸

Unsurprisingly, the “Iarema”-leaflets caused serious alarm among the Jews of Zhitomir and beyond.²⁹ The distinguished nation-wide daily “Russian News” [*Russkiiia vedomosti*] reported on the pamphlet, and soon an abridged version was reprinted in the major intellectual journal “Russian Wealth” [*Russkoe Bogatstvo*].³⁰ In Zhitomir and beyond, observers described the leaflet in terms of pre-pogrom-agitation, a well-established narrative since the massacre of

²⁴ Zafran, “1905”, 168.

²⁵ Materialy dlia kharakteristiki kontr-revoliutsii, 1905 g. [Material concerning the Characteristics of the Counter-Revolution in 1905], *Byloe* [The Past], 21 (1923), 156-186, 168.

²⁶ *Volyn*, 17 April 1905, 4; *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii*, ed. S. M. Dubnow, G. Ja. Krasnyj-Admoni (Petrograd: Gosudarstvennoe Izdat, 1919), Vol. 1, (Material for a History of the anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia, Vol. 1: The Dubossary and Kishinev Files of 1903), 348-349.

²⁷ *Volynskaia zhizn'*, [Life of Volhynia], 21 June 1907, 3.

²⁸ This seemingly was an allusion to the proverb: “Don’t beat a peasant with cudgels, beat him with rubles.” Stephen Frank, *Crime, cultural conflict, and justice in rural Russia, 1856 – 1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1999), 209. Excerpts from the leaflet were printed in contemporary newspapers and in I. Malinovskii, *Krovavaia mest' i smertnye kazni* [Vendetta and Capital Punishment] (Tomsk: Sib. tov. pechatn. dela 1908), 19. A Copy of the leaflet can be found in: Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnii istorichnii arkhiv Ukraini [Central State Historical Archive of the Ukraine] (TsDIAU), f. 442, op. 855, d. 6, l. 34-34ob.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁰ *Russkoe bogatstvo* [Russian Wealth], 4 (1905), 138-139.

Kishinev.³¹ However, there is ample evidence that the leaflet did not gain significant circulation, because only a very small number, less than ten copies, actually existed. This was claimed not only by the Chief of the local Secret Police Pototskii, who was a notorious anti-Semite and therefore an unreliable source, but also by the much more neutral district attorney of the Zhitomir district court [*prokuror zhitomirskogo okružnogo suda*] Kunakhovich.³² Later, a subaltern clerk of the province administration, Sausevich, forthrightly admitted that he had produced six copies of the leaflet as a “derision of the Jews” on his typewriter.³³ There is some evidence to substantiate the claim that the leaflet was initially aimed at the Jews, not at potential pogrom perpetrators. According to the findings of the prosecution, the leaflet “appeared in considerable numbers exclusively among the Jews and its content is unknown to the Christian populace.”³⁴ Furthermore, Sausevich admitted handing one of the leaflets to the daughter of his Jewish tenant, who then distributed it among her co-religionists. Thus, there is reason to dispute the interpretation of the Iarema leaflet as an instance of “open pogrom agitation” and as the true cause of the pogrom.³⁵ Nevertheless, this interpretation was included in a survey of the pogrom, which still belongs to the most credited sources for historians.³⁶ Sausevich’s action was surely a most cynical way of playing on the fears of Zhitomir’s Jews. However, interpreting the leaflet as pogrom agitation, contemporary observers missed the point. Neither was it a call to violence, nor was it spread among potential pogromists in any significant way. Its message was much too ambivalent and its hints at ancient Jewish kingdoms and emigration too diffusing to be instrumental as a call to arms. Furthermore, contemporaries stressed Sausevich’s position as a clerk at the Ministry of the Interior, implying state involvement in the pogrom agitation. Yet, “Iarema’s” message was aimed as much at the Jews as it was at Polish landlords. Hints at the imminent re-enactment of serfdom might have been understood as a plea for agrarian revolt, which was far beyond the interest of the Russian state. Despite indications that Sausevich was not the sole author of the leaflet, these are no grounds to suggest that he was carrying out a government or police plot against the Jews.³⁷

³¹ Document of unknown provenance, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 6, l. 37.

³² Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU Volynskomu gubernatoru [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the Volhynian governor], copy, 21 March 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 38-38ob.

³³ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okružnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev] copy, 8 July 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 51-51ob].

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Rech’ po pogromnym delam. S predislaviem Prof. I. V. Luchitskogo* [Speeches on Pogrom Cases. With an introduction by Prof. I. V. Luchitskii], vol. 1, Kiev: Tipografia Sliusarevskogo 1908, 98; *Volynskaia zhizn’*, 20 June 1907, 2.

³⁶ A. Linden [*alias* Leo Motzkin], *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, vol. 2 (Köln and Leipzig: Jüdischer Verl. 1910), 45.

³⁷ In court, Sausevich admitted that he was not the sole author of the leaflet but refused to name his companion. Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okružnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi

There was one more hint at “Black hundred” activity in Zhitomir. It concerned the actions of police superintendent Kuiarov, head of the first police district of the city. As a later observer put it: “Zhitomir was saturated with rumors about the pre-pogrom agitation of superintendent Kuiarov.”³⁸ In fact, most of the accusations against him were based upon hearsay.³⁹ It must ultimately remain an open question whether or not Kuiarov really did agitate the “Christian population” against the Jews. Yet, if he did, the scope of his actions was obviously limited, otherwise more conclusive evidence might be expected, as tsarist central authorities took the allegations against Kuiarov quite seriously. After the pogrom, the Department of Police ordered an investigation into his role in the pogrom that ultimately found the accusations erroneous.⁴⁰ This may be an overstatement, but the investigation itself indicates that Kuiarov neither acted on behalf of St. Petersburg, nor was the Police Department inclined to approve of pogrom agitation.

Kuiarov may have been an anti-Semite; he was certainly intolerant of the revolutionary movement, which was predominantly Jewish in Zhitomir. Furthermore, he bore responsibility for excessive police violence against demonstrators protesting the “Bloody Sunday” shooting in St. Petersburg on 26 January 1905. This earned him the despise of Zhitomir’s liberal circles, and eventually led to his assassination on 24 April. Furthermore, Kuiarov’s relationship with the leading officials of the city was far from good. In early 1905, he was charged with three lawsuits: one of them for the excessive violence of 26 January, and two for neglect of duty.⁴¹ Zhitomir’s police chief stated that he was more than willing to have Kuiarov removed from office, the Governor confirming the necessity of this measure; his dismissal was imminent at the time of his assassination.⁴² Thus, even if we assume that Kuiarov moved the populace to violent action, there is nothing to indicate his involvement in a high-level network of pogrom instigators, as was claimed by one of the Jewish spokesmen in the ensuing lawsuit against the pogromists.⁴³ All in all, pogrom agitation was far less prevalent and effective than many contemporary accounts suggested.

Sudebnoi Palaty [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], copy, 8 July 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 51-51ob:

³⁸ *Rechi po pogromnym delam*, 98.

³⁹ See, for example, the Letter from A. Epshtein to M. Rabinovich, copy, 8 May 1905, GARF f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 27, l. 4; Kievskii Podol’skii i Volynskii general-gubernator, [Notes of the Governor-general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 21 April 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 117, l. 4); *Rechi po pogromnym delam*, 98

⁴⁰ Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP, [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 7 July 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233, d. 1350, ch. 27, l. 10.

⁴¹ Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 7 July 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233, d. 1350, ch. 27IA, l. 36ob; Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Volynskomu gubernatoru [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Governor of Volhynia], 20 July 1904, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 9776, l. 20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, l. 19.

⁴³ *Rechi po pogromnym delam*, 100.

The beginnings of the *self-defense* in Zhitomir

Which measures did the Jews of Zhitomir take to prevent a pogrom? Some employed the traditional tactics of intercession with the authorities.⁴⁴ This was not altogether naïve. After all, during Easter, at the height of pogrom expectations in the city, the Governor ordered the military and police forces to massively increase patrols. After the danger of an outburst had seemingly passed, some observers even tended to mock the measures taken as excessive and gratuitous: “It was even somewhat funny [*smeshno*] how the reinforced formations of soldiers and policemen safeguarded the empty streets.”⁴⁵

Yet, a large fraction of the local Jewish population was not inclined to rely on the authorities for pogrom prevention. The lesson to be drawn from Kishinev was, in their view, to organize self-defense. This idea had already been advanced during the pogroms of the 1880s, although with limited effect.⁴⁶ During the pogrom of Kishinev, there had been some instances of Jews resisting the violent mob. However, the overriding perception was that local Jewry bore the “shame of passivity.”⁴⁷ Consequently, Labor Zionist groups as well as the Bund appealed to Russia’s Jews to no longer “stretch out their necks to be slaughtered,” and armed battle squads sprang up in the Pale of Settlement.⁴⁸ The next large-scale pogrom after Kishinev in Gomel (28 August – 1 September, 1903) was the first to witness a well-organized Jewish self-defense. Although it ultimately failed to prevent the pogrom, the *self-defense* was still lauded as an appropriate means of “demonstrating to the blind masses that one may not beat and kill Jews with impunity.”⁴⁹

Large swathes of the local Jewry supported the foundation of a *self-defense* unit in Zhitomir. But organizing the illegal battle-squads, obtaining firearms and establishing conspiratorial commando-structures was impossible without the resources of local socialist networks. In Zhitomir, the main players were the SR

⁴⁴ Vladimir Levin, “Preventing Pogroms: Patterns in Jewish Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Russia,” *Anti-Jewish Violence. Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, eds. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Nathan M. Mair and Israel Bartal, (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2011), 95-110.

⁴⁵ *Volyn*, 22 April 1905, 3.

⁴⁶ John D. Klier, “Christians and Jews in the ‘Dialogue of Violence’ in Late Imperial Russia,” *Religious Violence between Christians and Jew: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives*, ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia, (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2002), 157-172, 165.

⁴⁷ Dubnow, *Buch*, 21.

⁴⁸ Quote from an appeal of the “Hebrew Writers League,” April 1903. Jewish Virtual Library - by Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0018_0_17990.html (28 June 2011). In fact, the Bund’s appeal to form *self-defense* units slightly predated the Pogrom of Kishinev, but only after that event major responses followed. Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus und reaktionäre Utopie. Russischer Konservatismus im Kampf gegen den Wandel von Staat und Gesellschaft, 1890 – 1917* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe 1978), 71.

⁴⁹ *Pravda o Gomel'skom pogrome*, [The Truth about the Pogrom in Gomel] (London: 1903), 9.

and the Bund.⁵⁰ For the activists of the revolutionary movement, the Jews' fear of a pogrom was a precious resource for generating mass support. Thus, they did not fail to emphasize the imminent danger of an outbreak, for example in the form of leaflets. It must also be acknowledged that a conflict of interest existed between the majority of the Jewish population, that strove to prevent or minimize violence, and the agenda of revolutionary parties which, by their very nature, thrived through the destabilization and discrediting of state order.⁵¹

This conflict inspired the battle-squad units of Zhitomir from the point of their first public action, which occurred during demonstrations against "Bloody Sunday" in January 1905. On 15 January, they participated in a rally, accompanying their revolutionary songs and slogans with revolver shots.⁵² Then, from 25 to 26 January, local socialists planned to impose a general strike on the city. Groups armed with knives and revolvers threatened those employers who were unwilling to close their shops down; some additionally had their windows smashed.⁵³ By then it became evident that the *self-defense* did not act in the interest of the entire Jewry of Zhitomir. Not only was it "hardly distinguishable" from "the underground activities of the revolutionary movements."⁵⁴ It was a contentious political project, and a generational one at that, because its active supporters were mainly socialist youths, and its Jewish adversaries the conservative elderly: "generational conflict was played out in terms of worldviews and identities."⁵⁵ Some of the more conservative Jews may have rejected the very idea of self-defense as fundamentally "un-Jewish," and several local Jewish businessmen refused to pay their dues in support of the battle squads, resulting in their extortion.⁵⁶ However, despite its particular

⁵⁰ Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 13 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 4.

⁵¹ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Anti-Semitism at the Close of the Czarist Era," *Hostages of Modernization. Studies in Modern Antisemitism 1870-1933/39*, ed. Herbert A. Strauss, Vol. 3/2: Austria – Hungary – Poland – Russia, (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 1993), 1188-1207, 1194; John D. Klier, "Pogroms," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert, vol. 2, (New Haven, London: Yale Univ. Press 2008), 1375–1381.

⁵² Zafran, "1905", 149-150; Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP, [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 13 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 5, ch. 38, l. 118.

⁵³ Zapiska o manifestatsiakh v g. Zhitomire; [Notes on Manifestations in the city of Zhitomir in 1905, GARF f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 103]; Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi sudebnoi Palaty, [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber], Notes on the journey to Zhitomir, copy, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 19.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Frankel, *Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 60.

⁵⁵ Inna Shtakser, *Structure of feeling and radical identity among working-class Jewish youth during the 1905 revolution*, Ph. D. Dissertation, (Austin 2007), 203; Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 36); Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber], Notes on the journey to Zhitomir, copy, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 19.

⁵⁶ Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People. The Culture of the Shtetl*. Foreword by Margret Mead, (New York: Int. Univ. Press 1952), 223–224. Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v

character, the gentile populace largely equated the battle squads' actions with those of "the Jews."⁵⁷ The message of the revolutionary *self-defense* was thus construed by large parts of the non-Jewish population as ethnic, not social or political opposition. But there was yet another, distinctly emotional message conveyed in the actions of the *self-defense*: Jewish pride and self-assertion.⁵⁸ Besides the events depicted, there were a whole number of incidents prior to the pogrom that were interpreted as indicators of a lack of servility on side of the Jews. Perhaps the most prevalent incidence of such conflicts were repeated gentile complaints about Jews jamming the sidewalks and unwilling to give way to passers-by.⁵⁹ Some of them were, allegedly, even insulted and attacked by young men out of a Jewish crowd.⁶⁰ Consequently, "people in the city began to say: The Jew is revolting, the Jews must be curbed [*uniat*]."⁶¹ Apparently, a small part of the "Christian population" of Zhitomir was willing to tolerate only those Jews that readily demonstrated their purported inferiority in every day encounters. This, taken together with contemporary debates on the postponement of city council elections to the effect that restrictions on Jewish suffrage might be lifted,⁶² may remind the reader of Heinz Löwe's proposal to interpret the Jewish pogroms of late Tsarist Russia as having stemmed from conflicts regarding the societal inclusion or exclusion of Jews. Also reminiscent is John Klier's emphasis on the eminence of contested space.⁶³ However, in Zhitomir the tensions described so far were not enough to spur a pogrom, despite the danger of an outburst seeming imminent.⁶⁴

First clashes

It was the *self-defense* itself that added one more disquieting ingredient to the already delicate situation in the city, as its leadership began to convene secret meetings for the purpose of military practice and political agitation. For conspiratorial reasons, they usually took place in the forests outside the city; but here they could not pass unnoticed by local peasants. In the villages, news spread about hundreds of Jews, who practiced shooting at a portrait of the Tsar. While contemporary press accounts depicted the latter as a mere myth,

DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 13 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 4; for resistance against the establishment of *self-defense* units by segments of the Jewish communities elsewhere see, Shtakser, *Structure*, 201.

⁵⁷ On the misperception of Jews as a homogenous group, see Löwe, "Anti-Semitism," 1192.

⁵⁸ Shtakser, *Structure*, 90.

⁵⁹ Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 13 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid.; Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 4 May 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 58; *Rech'i po pogromnym delam*, 96.

⁶¹ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Ministru Iustitsii, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Minister of Justice], RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 70-70ob.

⁶² *Volyn'*, 19 March 1905, 3.

⁶³ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Pogroms in Russia. Explanations, Comparisons, Suggestions," *Jewish Social Studies* 11/1 (2004): 16-24, 20; Klier, "Christians," 164.

⁶⁴ Zafran, "1905", 155.

an investigation by the deputy Director of the Police Department produced considerable if not definite evidence to suggest that the gunshots at the Emperor's portrait had in fact occurred.⁶⁵ For instance, on 13 April 1905, a *self-defense* meeting close to the village of Psyshche with speeches and shooting practice dispersed into small groups. One of them headed for the village crossing a sown field and was attacked by local peasants. Despite having defended themselves with firearms, one Jew was seriously wounded, while the peasants were left unharmed.⁶⁶

News about the shooting of the Tsar's portrait spread rapidly in Zhitomir and its surroundings, and so did the idea that Jews might seek vengeance for their defeat near Psyshche. Peasants began to guard their houses at night fearing Jewish attacks or arson.⁶⁷ In more general terms, the very emergence of the *self-defense* was interpreted as a threat, because rumor had it that "the Jews intend to retaliate against the Christians for the pogroms of Kishinev and Gomel." As Easter approached, it was even said that the Jews planned to blow up the (orthodox or catholic, by different versions) cathedral and to "massacre the Christians."⁶⁸ In the mind of the populace, thus was the message of active self-defense mingled with current fears of terrorist attacks and prevalent understandings of reciprocal violence. Hence, large parts of the gentile population expected a major outbreak of violence as much as did the Jews, but with the inverted role of prospective victim and perpetrator.

As mentioned, Easter passed without any disturbances. What followed, was a prime example of Clark McPhail's thesis about the relevance of the "structural availability" of potential rioters for an outbreak.⁶⁹ The next holiday to come was Saint George's day on 23 April - a Saturday. A number of young people from Zhitomir, many of them Jews, made a boat trip along the Teterev, where they encountered a group of inhabitants of the suburb of Pavlikovka and from Psyshche who celebrated the holiday with vodka and snacks on the banks.⁷⁰ After exchanging insults, the peasants threw stones and the Jews fired their revolvers. The conflict shifted to Pavlikovka where a mob tried to rob the

⁶⁵ Protokol osmotra gos. lesa bliz s. Psyshche [Protocol of the inspection of the state forest near the village Psyshche], 15 May 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 85-85ob.

⁶⁶ Volynskii gubernator v DP [Governor of Volhynia to the DP], 16 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 6ob.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Ministru Iustitsii, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Minister of Justice], RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 70-70ob; Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, predstavlenie, [Report of the Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], copy, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 24ob.

In 1905, Easter Sunday was 17 April both according to the orthodox and catholic calendar.

⁶⁹ Clark McPhail, "Presidential Address: The Dark Side of Purpose: Individual and Collective Violence in Riots," *Sociological Quarterly* 35/1 (1994), 1-32.

⁷⁰ *Norosti i Birzhevaia gazeta* [News and Stock Exchange Paper], 5 May 1905, 3-4; Volynskii gubernator Ministru Vnutrennykh Del [Governor of Volhynia to the Minister of the Interior], 30 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 24.

houses of the few local Jews. After a short while, alarmed by rumors about the events, a crowd of “several thousand” Jews approached the suburb from Zhitomir.⁷¹ Soon, a small military detachment arrived as well and lined up between the Jews and the much smaller group of some hundred “Christian” rioters. The latter were unarmed but benefited from their position on the upper side of a hill, which allowed them to throw rocks at the Jews. The Jews on their part made use of their revolvers, but any shot threatened to hit the soldiers standing between the parties. After a while, the vice Governor appeared on the scene. However, due to revolutionary slogans and shooting from the Jewish crowd, he immediately left, finding his presence “useless and even dangerous.”⁷² The Chief of Police Ianovitskii was more inclined to take responsibility, but his appeals to the pogromists proved to be futile. It was obviously beyond his capacities to reestablish public order. Furthermore, the military almost escalated the situation when a detachment of mounted artillery galloped right into the Jewish crowd, leaving a boy dead. Finally, emissaries of the *self-defense* took the initiative and negotiated a truce with the Chief of Police: they promised that the immense Jewish crowd would leave Pavlikovka peacefully if Ianovitskii would imprison the pogromists in return. Ianovitskii agreed; the Jews moved off and 25 rioters were arrested.⁷³ That day passed without any further violence. However, the Chief of Police could not have been unaware of the unfavorable impression his actions had made on the non-Jewish population. Unable to solve the situation with his own forces, he had been forced to collaborate with the leadership of the illegal and politically hostile *self-defense*. In a suspicious step, Ianovitskii released the 25 arrested rioters that same evening after they had “promised to take part in unrest no more,” justifying this step with the fatal impression of an “exclusively Russian” arrest might make on the populace.⁷⁴ We do not know whether the release was in fact motivated by anti-Semite policemen interested in fanning ethnic unrest, but it must be kept in mind, that it was not unusual to release persons, against whom no concrete charges could be made. The procedure had been the same with the 80 persons arrested after the strikes and demonstrations in January. Eleven persons were kept in arrest for carrying firearms or leaflets, while the remaining 69 were released.⁷⁵ It is true that the Police did not protect public order convincingly, but it did so with regard to socialists and pogromists alike.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev] copy, 25 April 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 10ob.

⁷³ *Novosti i Birzhevaia gazeta* [News and Stock Exchange Paper], 5 May 1905, 3-4; GARF f 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 94a].

⁷⁴ Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber], copy, 30 April 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 20ob.

⁷⁵ Zafran, “1905”, 155; Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], copy, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 4-4ob.

The standoff at Cathedral Square

The next day began with what Donald Horowitz has termed the “lull,” as tense calm prevailed in the city.⁷⁶ Around noon, Ianovitskii demanded troops to be sent to Cathedral Square, where a “crowd of Christian workers”⁷⁷ was threatening to disturb public order. A company of soldiers was detached there under the command of captain Pinchuk, whose largely unbiased testimony is one of the most valuable sources on subsequent events.⁷⁸ When he entered the square, he ordered the soldiers to array between a group of some 70 “tidily dressed Christian workers” that occupied the one side, and a number of Jews on the other. Pinchuk at first prompted the “Christian workers” to leave the square, but they replied that he had better take care of the armed Jews.⁷⁹ In the other crowd, Pinchuk recognized some local students, some gentiles, mostly 17 to 20 years old, with gun barrels poking out of their pockets. They seemingly heeded his advice to leave the square but returned as soon as Pinchuk was at some distance. Afterwards, Ianovitskii came to the square as well, but his appeals to both crowds were no more successful than those of Pinchuk. As more Jews gathered, the *self-defense* lined up in front of them, still showing no inclination to hide their revolvers, apparently with the intention of deterring possible attacks.⁸⁰ As the afternoon wore on, tensions seemed to ease at first, but eventually a limited clash of both crowds ensued, and Pinchuk noticed with surprise, that no single policeman was left on the square. He spent some time searching for a constable and shouted “where is the Chief of Police,” while stones were thrown and shots echoed in the streets. Only twenty minutes afterwards two policemen approached with a message from Ianovitskii saying that “he refused to suppress the unrest” and assigned power to Pinchuk. The latter on his part recalled Ianovitskii having opposed the use of force when the military was originally called in, and therefore sent one of his men to get a written firing order.

Around 6 p.m. Ianovitskii, escorted by eight Cossacks, approached Cathedral Square, where in the meantime military reinforcements had arrived to ensure that the crowds could still be separated.⁸¹ At the same time, news spread that

⁷⁶ Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU v DP [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 34); Donald Horowitz: *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press 2001), 72.

⁷⁷ The identification of the different parties by religion is clearly inadequate, as the conflict was not of a religious nature. Furthermore, in the “Jewish” crowd, there were gentiles present as well. In the absence of a better alternative, the author nonetheless adheres to the characterization of the crowds as “Christian” and “Jewish,” as it was common in the sources.

⁷⁸ Testimony of Aleksandr Stepanovich Pinchuk, 10 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 31.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], 30 April 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 12ob.

⁸¹ *Volyn’*, 29 April 1905, 3.

superintendent Kuiarov had been assassinated. For the “Christians,” it was beyond question, that the police officer had been killed by a Jew, and the crowd shouted: “the kikes killed the police superintendent – beat the kikes.”⁸² It did not matter, that Kuiarov had in fact been murdered by a “Christian,” the Russian or Ukrainian Social Revolutionary Sidorchuk, who in turn was prevented from fleeing by a Jew.⁸³ The attack on Kuiarov had apparently unsettled Ianovitskii profoundly. Pinchuk reported him to have muttered, tense and absent-mindedly “they killed Kuiarov, what will we do now?” On Pinchuk’s remark, that he would probably be compelled to give the firing order, Ianovitskii replied “no, no shooting.”⁸⁴

Further military reinforcements nourished hopes of preventing an escalation, but the standoff continued. Then, around 8 p.m. rumors about an ongoing pogrom in the Jewish district of Podol agitated the Jewish crowd. At least four times Jews approached Pinchuk asking him to send military forces there. Finally, the *self-defense* chose to employ the same tactics that had proven successful in Pavlikovka a day ago. It was around 9 p.m. when its emissaries, Dr. Isser Binshtok and Nikolai Blinov, passed the military cordon to approach the Chief of Police for negotiations. They promised a *self-defense* retreat in exchange for the arrest of the “Christian” crowd. Ianovitskii agreed, and the emissaries went back to the “Jews,” where Blinov held a short speech. However, when both returned to the other side of the cordon, Ianovitskii had disappeared. Instead, they confronted a number of men who had just been arrested by the military, but broke free and eventually beat both Blinov and Binshtok with force. The latter was protected by an officer, who threw himself on the man and thus saved his life, while Blinov was left dead in the fray.⁸⁵

Soon afterwards, the standoff between the “Jewish” and “Christian” parties on the Cathedral Square was resolved. Maybe, to many Jews it became clear by then (as it did to Pinchuk), that the real pogrom was not going to take place in the city center, but in Podol.⁸⁶ Within the “Christian” crowd, one more Jew was beaten to death before the military encircled some 50 members of the mob and took them in the police station. Yet, even as they were escorted, two pogromists managed to stab another Jew, an accidental bystander, while the convoy was interrupted by a trolley car.⁸⁷

⁸² Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber] copy, 30 April 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 20ob-21; Testimony of Aleksandr Stepanovich Pinchuk, 10 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 32.

⁸³ *Volyn'*, 29 April 1905, 3.

⁸⁴ Testimony of Aleksandr Stepanovich Pinchuk, 10 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 33.

⁸⁵ Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber], copy, 30 April 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 21.

⁸⁶ Testimony of Aleksandr Stepanovich Pinchuk, 10 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 33.

⁸⁷ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, predstavlenie, [Report of the Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], 30 April 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 13.

The failing defense of Podol

Podol was the poor Jewish district of Zhitomir, situated along gulleys running down to the Kamenka river. A bridge connected it to the even poorer outskirts of Malevanka, inhabited predominantly by Russian old-believers, who were notorious for their unruly and criminal behavior and who had been prominent among the pogromist crowd in Pavlikovka the previous day.⁸⁸ As some of the local Jews apparently anticipated an attack from the morning of 24 April, they incessantly kept watch at the bridge and the riverbank.⁸⁹ Yet, it was not until 8 p.m., that three townspeople from Malevanka, among them the notorious troublemaker Emets, went down to the bridge with clubs in their hands, yelling “come here, brothers, come here” Some 40 people followed the appeal, most of them “hooligans” notorious for their unruly behavior, as one observer noticed. They tried to further increase their numbers by “appealing and threatening others,” but were still easily outnumbered by the Jewish crowd waiting on the other side of the bridge.⁹⁰ The hooligans from Malevanka almost managed to cross the bridge, but immediately turned back when they were shot at. They retreated to Malevanka and made another attempt to mobilize supporters yelling: “The Jews are killing” and “come here, come here, our people are being beaten [*nashikh b'ui*].”⁹¹ This time, more men followed the call. Those unarmed supplied themselves with fencing posts from the street, and another attack on the bridge ensued, that was once again repelled by the shots of the self-defense.⁹² At the same time, among at least some of the inhabitants of Malevanka panic spread, because they were afraid of an imminent Jewish attack; women and children fled to supposed safe-places.⁹³ The standoff at the Malevanka-bridge was then resolved in a way unexpected by the Jews, as some dozens of the hooligans bypassed the bridge and crossed the river at a nearby ford to enter into the Podolian “rear.” Taken by surprise, the Jews at the bridge panicked, and the *self-defense* was crushed. In the course of a few minutes at least six persons were killed and 30 wounded.⁹⁴ The

⁸⁸ Tovarishch Prokurora Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Deputy Attorney of the Kiev Court Chamber], copy, 30 April 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108 ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 21; Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, predstavlenie, [Report of the Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], 30 April 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 10; Testimony of Pavel Petrovich Svenitskii, 6 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 30.

⁸⁹ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, predstavlenie, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 16.

⁹⁰ All quotes from *ibid.*, l. 16-16ob.

⁹¹ Testimony of Pavel Petrovich Svenitskii, 6 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 28ob.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 29; Volynskaia zhizn', 23 July 1907, 3.

⁹⁴ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo okruzhnogo suda, Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev], RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 16ob.

pogromists began to sack shops and houses and to smash whatever valuables but could not be carried away, such as stoves and window panes. Only around 11 p.m. the state showed up in Poldol in the shape of some soldiers, who by their mere presence brought the pogrom to a preliminary end.⁹⁵

However, the next morning groups of peasants from several nearby villages entered Malevanka armed with pitchforks, scythes and axes. Again, they were accompanied and maybe led by Emets.⁹⁶ Together with some locals, they approached the bridge to Podol. Yet, the soldiers posted on the other side, would not let the mob pass. Most peasants settled down on the river bank opposite and waited for things to come, while an element of the crowd once again used the forth to enter Podol to continue the previous day activities; women took a leading role in looting, with youths and children in the destructive vanguard.⁹⁷ Most Jews had already left Podol, to the effect that few of them were harmed physically that day. While the police were totally absent, the military did fend off successive attacks on the bridge. However, they did not prevent looting even if it occurred in the vicinity.⁹⁸ That day and the following smaller incidents of looting and physical violence occurred in different parts of the city, but serious physical violence was confined to a number of villages in the district. On 26 April, the Governor finally issued a conclusive firing order, military reinforcements arrived and the pogrom came to an end.

Black hundreds

Contemporary commentators were quick to interpret the pogrom of Zhitomir as the latest link in a chain of events leading from Kishinev and Gomel' to the massacre of Armenians in Baku in February 1905 and other contemporary violent outbursts.⁹⁹ *Black Hundreds* activity and government instigation were the basic building blocks of their view of pogrom violence. Yet, the events of Zhitomir bear little evidence of the *Black Hundreds* as a powerful organization with government resources. Rather, it demonstrates small scale actors like the clerk who hid behind the pseudonym of "Iarema" and individuals adeptly assembling ad-hoc militant groups, such as the troublemaker Emets. Admittedly, the actions of the authorities raised suspicions about their

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Later, Glukhovskii was seen among the peasants, as well. Testimony of Pavel Petrovich Svenitskii, 6 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 29-29ob.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁹ *Volyn'*, 6 March 1905, 3; P. A. Akhanchi, "Этно-религиозные группы нефтепромышленных рабочих г. Баку и их взаимоотношения в конце XIX- начале XX в.", *Rabochie i intelligentsiia Rossii v poču reform i revoliutsii, 1861- fevral' 1917* ["Ethno-religious Groups among the Oil Industry Workers in Baku and their Interrelations from the Late 19th to Early 20th Century", *Workers and Intelligentsia in the Epoch of Reform and Revolution, 1861 - February 1917*], ed. I. Potolov, (Sankt-Peterburg) 1997, 131.

involvement in the pogrom, and thus it becomes necessary to single out their role for examination.

The civil authorities

To begin at the top of bureaucratic hierarchy, the Ministry of the Interior seriously urged the Governor of Volyn', Petr Ivanovich Katalei, to "take the most resolute measures to prevent a major pogrom," as soon as it got to know about the outbreak of violence.¹⁰⁰ The same was true of Katalei's immediate superior, the Governor General in Kiev, who not only advised his Governors subordinates to prevent pogroms, but also to "prevent the authorities from accusations of patronizing the dark forces commonly known as 'Black Hundreds.'" ¹⁰¹ But did Governor Katalei fulfill the duty imposed on him? Certainly, his absence from the scene of events requires explanation. According to his own subsequent account, Katalei was in his office at the time of the pogrom, requesting additional troops from the Governor General and issuing two appeals in which the inhabitants of Zhitomir were called to order.¹⁰² He received numerous phone calls from police officers and inhabitants of Zhitomir, which called for troops to be sent into various quarters. Yet, from his office, Katalei was unable to distinguish between justified and unsubstantiated pleas. As it turned out later, huge parts of the garrison had actually been ordered to safe parts of the city on the basis of mere rumors.¹⁰³ However, it should be taken into account that in some places the presence of troops may actually have sustained order where it would otherwise have collapsed. After all, the scope of the pogrom was limited. In a city of 33,000 Jews, no more than 100 houses and shops were affected and 18 persons were killed.¹⁰⁴ Still, the eminent lack of troops in Podol was the result of severe mismanagement by Katalei, but his ineffective action does not mean, that he

¹⁰⁰ Ministr vnutrennykh del, telegramma Volynskomu gubernatoru, [Telegram of the Minister of the Interior to the Governor of Volhynia], 25 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 14.

¹⁰¹ Kievskii Podol'skii i Volynskii general-gubernator, telegramma to Podol'skomu gubernatoru, [Telegram of the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia to the Governor of Podolia], 26 April 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 117, l. 17; Kievskii Podol'skii i Volynskii general-gubernator Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu gubernatoram, [Letter by the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia to the Governors of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia], secret draft, May 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 635, d. 228, l. 16 ob.

¹⁰² Volynskii gubernator Ministru Vnutrennykh Del, [Governor of Volhynia to the Minister of the Interior], 30 April 1905, GARF f. 102 op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 25; Volynskii gubernator, telegramma Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Telegram of the Governor of Volhynia to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 25 April 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 117, l. 11.

¹⁰³ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev] 30 April 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 13ob.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 14.; Volynskii gubernator Ministru Vnutrennykh Del, [Governor of Volhynia to the Minister of the Interior], 30 April 1905, GARF f. 102 op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 25ob.

approved of the pogrom. Rather, evidence suggests that he was frightened by the threat of a terrorist attack that had been announced in Socialist leaflets.¹⁰⁵ The seemingly well-armed *self-defense* added credibility to that threat, and so did the assassination of Kuiaiov. It may be recalled, that Katalei's deputy had fled from Pavlikovka on 23 April for similar reasons. As far as we know, Katalei never used the terrorist threat to justify his actions during the pogrom. However, the Chief of the local Secret Police reported that Katalei was horrified after the pogrom, and even ceased to leave his heavily guarded home, until he was removed from office soon after the pogrom.¹⁰⁶

The military

In contrast, the actions of the military forces during the pogrom were largely adequate. Wherever they were present, they did prevent violence against the person, if not looting and destruction. The three murders that did occur on Cathedral Square may be attributed to the confused situation. Generally, the major obstacle to resolute action on part of the military was not its own indecisiveness, but a lack of guidance by the civil authorities. To understand this, it is necessary to take into account the rules of engagement for military forces within the Russian Empire. According to these rules, any use of force had to be ordered by a representative of the civil authorities, except for situations of mortal danger. The responsibility for suppressing popular unrest was a permanent point of contention between civil and military officials, but after the scandalous shooting of civilians on Bloody Sunday, it had become an even more delicate issue than before.¹⁰⁷ This avoidance of responsibility best explains both why Katalei did not issue a firing order until 26 April and the opaque behavior of Ianovitskii on Cathedral Square, where, captain Pinchuk claimed, the number of military forces present had been "more than necessary, but there was no leadership."¹⁰⁸ This was no mere strategy of exculpation, as Pinchuk did indeed search for police guidance and, in light of the limitations placed on his office, demonstrated considerable initiative in preserving public order on Cathedral Square. The same can be said of the military detachment that prevented the pogromists from entering Podol the following day. The fact that they did not intervene against looting was not in disaccord with their duties, as mortal danger did not prevail and no police officer gave the order to intervene.

¹⁰⁵ Volynskii Komitet Partii SR [Volhynian Committee of the Party of Social Revolutionaries], printed leaflet, 12 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 149a.

¹⁰⁶ Nachal'nik Volynskogo GZhU Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Chief of Volhynian GZhU to the General governor of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 26 May 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 117, l. 125; Zafran "1905", 161.

¹⁰⁷ William C. Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict in Imperial Russia, 1881-1914*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁸ Testimony of Aleksandr Stepanovich Pinchuk, 10 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 34.

Police

It was the police that failed to fulfill the key role assigned to them by the rules of engagement and thus bore a considerable share of responsibility for the ineffectiveness of the state forces in ending the pogrom. Contemporaries were quick to attribute police behavior to anti-Semitism, and in fact, police superintendent Kuiarov was not the only police officer in Zhitomir who was notorious for his contempt of the Jews. This is confirmed by an investigation of the district attorney, who nonetheless dismissed the interpretation of the pogrom then popular among the local Jews, being that the pogrom was staged by the police.¹⁰⁹

However, if one highlights the structural framework of police service on the periphery of the Russian Empire in 1905, other explanations for police passivity emerge. Firstly, it should be noted that despite Imperial Russia's reputation as a repressive police state, the forces of order were chronically underfinanced and underequipped.¹¹⁰ In Zhitomir with its almost 90,000 inhabitants, some 130 policemen were supposed to be on duty, but their actual number was even smaller due to a large portion (about one third) of vacancies.¹¹¹ For example, the absence of policemen in Malevanka during the pogrom was not a case of bias towards pogromists, but the usual state of affairs.¹¹² Low wages for policemen produced high fluctuation, and as hardly anyone applied for vacant positions in the lower ranks, the Chief of Police had to be content with officers "of highly questionable moral qualities [and] characterized by total ignorance of police duties."¹¹³ Terrorist attacks targeting primarily policemen and other officials further added to the demoralization.

¹⁰⁹ Prokuror Zhitomirskogo Okruzhnogo Suda Prokuroru Kievskoi Sudebnoi Palaty, [Attorney of the Zhitomir Regional Court to the Attorney of the Court Chamber in Kiev] copy, 23 May 1905, RGIA f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 25.

¹¹⁰ Fuller, *Conflict*, 102. For problems concerning the equipment of policemen with firearms, see Volynskii gubernator Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Governor of Volhynia to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia], 30 December 1904, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 426, l. 6ob.

¹¹¹ Nachal'nik Volynskogo okhrannogo otdeleniia Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Chief of the Volhynian Department of Protection to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 30 March 1904, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 854, d. 426, l. 1-1ob.

¹¹² Testimony of Pavel Petrovich Svenitskii, 6 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 30.

¹¹³ Volynskii gubernator Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Governor of Volhynia to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia], 30 December 1904, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 426, l. 6ob; Nachal'nik Volynskogo okhrannogo otdeleniia Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Chief of the Volhynian Department of Protection to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 30 March 1904, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 854, d. 426, l. 1-2. Additional funds were provided by the Ministry of the Interior only after the policemen resorted to strikes themselves in October 1905. Ministr vnutrennykh del, telegramma Kievskomu, Podol'skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Telegram of the Minister of the Interior to the Governor general of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia], 17 October 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 854, d. 426, l. 22.

The newspapers in early 1905, including those in Zhitomir, were full of accounts of assassinations of policemen; well before the pogrom revolutionaries issued a leaflet announcing the “death sentence” for police superintendent Kuiaiov.¹¹⁴ Similar threats were issued against the Chief of Police as well, which might at least partly explain the uneasiness that befell him in view of the battle squads on Cathedral Square. We certainly know that after the pogrom Ianovitskii was no less afraid of an assassination than the Governor.¹¹⁵ Yet, the crucial point was probably the equation of Jews and revolutionaries that established in Zhitomir before the pogrom. As the pogrom began, the already demoralized police forces of Zhitomir were no longer willing to defend the supposedly same Jews that threatened them with terrorist attacks, and that had killed one of their superiors.

After all, it should be kept in mind, that the police was ineffective not only against the pogromists, but against the revolutionary movement as well. Many of the socialist demonstrations before the pogrom passed without any arrests, and even the police violence of 25 January had been preceded by one and a half days of almost unhindered revolutionary activity in the city. In March 1905, the police, led by Kuiaiov, succeeded in tracking down a meeting of a large number of local revolutionary activists, but, possibly due to a bribe, nobody was arrested.¹¹⁶ Even the Head of the local Secret Police frankly complained, that the police acted “extremely slackly [*krainie vialo*]” against the illegal movement.¹¹⁷ Benevolence towards the perpetrators was by no means a necessary condition of police passivity vis-à-vis popular unrest.

Self defense

In historiography, the pogrom of Zhitomir is not famous for the behavior of the authorities, but as a paradigmatic example of an effective *self-defense*. In view of the leading authors in the field, Zhitomir’s battle squads effectively prevented a “second Kishinev.”¹¹⁸ Only recently, tentative doubts about the efficacy of Jewish *self-defense* organizations have emerged.¹¹⁹ In fact, it is not difficult to support this view with contemporary evidence – and not only evidence from possibly anti-Semitic Tsarist officials. Instead, the possibility

¹¹⁴ Zafran, “1905”, 155.

¹¹⁵ Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU Kievskomu, Podol’skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the General governor of Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia], 26 May 1905, TsDIAU, f. 442, op. 855, d. 117, l. 125.

¹¹⁶ Zafran, “1905”, 149-150, 157.

¹¹⁷ Nachal’nik Volynskogo GZhU Kievskomu, Podol’skomu i Volynskomu general-gubernatoru, [Chief of the Volhynian GZhU to the DP], 2 May 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 36.

¹¹⁸ Henry J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia. From its Origins to 1905*, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1972), 315; Shlomo Lambroza: “Jewish Self-defense during the Russian Pogroms of 1903-1906,” Strauss, *Hostages*, 1250.

¹¹⁹ Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol. 2: 1881 to 1914, (Oxford: Littman, 2010), 49.

that *self-defense* actions might exacerbate local tensions was discussed quite openly in contemporary Jewish circles.¹²⁰ It is impossible to consider the entire phenomenon of *self-defense* groups in this article, but since the *self-defense* of Zhitomir is praised for its “overwhelming success” and as a “legend among Bund members” in historiography, it may be worthwhile examining it as an example.¹²¹

The battle squads in Zhitomir were certainly successful at preventing violence in some instances, most notably during the standoff in Pavlikovka on 23 April. The same can be said for the first hours of the events at the bridge to Podol on 24 April, but further events there have already been shown to demonstrate a lack of effectiveness. The forces of *self-defense* collapsed as soon as beatings began – and not only in Podol, but also during the escalation near Psychche on 13 April. One may recall the fact that none of the shots fired then hit a human target, even at close range. Of the 18 persons killed during the pogrom, 16 were Jews. If one adds Nikolai Blinov, there remains one person killed under unclear circumstances. Nine Christians were wounded so gravely that they required treatment in one of the city’s hospitals – compared to 82 Jews.¹²² Therefore, it must be dismissed as a myth, that “in Zhitomir there was no pogrom but a war” in which “more Christians than Jews lost their lives.”¹²³

The ineffective use of arms was a typical feature of the battle squads beyond Zhitomir as well: “In reality, the heroic story of the *self-defense* often turned into bitter disappointment, due to ineffective weapons and disunity among the different political parties.”¹²⁴ But in Zhitomir, there are no accounts of discord among different units of the *self-defense*, and at least one witness, a retired officer, testified that some of the revolvers employed at the bridge must have been of good quality.¹²⁵ According to the same source, “if the Jews had been capable of shooting, there is no doubt they would have killed all the 50 people of Malevanka [who attacked the bridge].”¹²⁶ Although insufficient firearm skills and nerves may have played a role, it seems that in Zhitomir the “battle squads” largely confined themselves to warning shots above the heads of the attackers. This tactic was rather wide spread and was crowned with success in a number of cases. Yet, in Zhitomir it ultimately failed to discourage the attackers, who after some time may have understood the central weakness of the *self-defense*: that it was good at putting up a threatening front, but much worse at the execution of violence.

¹²⁰ Shtakser, *Structure*, 206–207.

¹²¹ Lambroza, *Pogrom*, 244.

¹²² Volynskii gubernator Ministru Vnutrennykh Del [Governor of Volhynia to the Minister of the Interior], 30 April 1905, GARF, f. 102, op. 233 (OO), d. 1350, ch. 271A, l. 25ob.

¹²³ Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*. vol. 1, Russia in Disarray, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 130.

¹²⁴ Shtakser, *Structure*, 210.

¹²⁵ Testimony of Pavel Petrovich Svenitskii, 6 May 1905, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, ch. 2, d. 6817, l. 28ob.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

In fact, the *self-defense* proved effective only in those situations, where it had the opportunity to capitalize on the weakness of the state forces and their willingness to prevent unrest regardless. In Pavlikovka and on Cathedral Square, leading officials agreed to negotiate with leaders of the *self-defense* on a par, although they knew that their opposites were leading figures of the local revolutionary movement. The *self-defense's* discipline proved to provide sufficient leverage, convincing officials to fulfill the requirements of their political adversaries, at least in Pavlikovka. Discrediting the state was among the chief objectives of the Bund and its battle squads – and to prove that the authorities depended on the *self-defense* to implement what was supposed to be the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, certainly served this goal. In fact, the contradiction of state authorities allegedly organizing pogroms, but at the same time willing to cooperate with the *self-defense* against a pogromist crowd does not seem to have exercised an influence on the minds of contemporary leftist and liberal observers.

Furthermore, one should consider the effect the *self-defense's* tactic of deterrence produced on the gentile population of the city. It is not implausible that many did in fact fear an impending Jewish attack. This can be proven for the surrounding villages, where families left their houses to hide in the woods; rumors from the city suggest the same.¹²⁷ Even the ideas of Jews seeking “revenge” for Kishinev and Gomel’ did not come from thin air. Although there is no evidence for Zhitomir, elsewhere *self-defense* activists openly expressed their desire to exercise retaliation for the pogroms.¹²⁸ Yet perhaps the most significant impediment to effective pogrom prevention on side of the *self-defense* was the same fact that other authors have identified as its “most important achievement”: its striving for a “new sense of dignity.”¹²⁹ Ostentatious self-assertion on the side of the Jewish activists may have been an understandable objective, but it was not always instrumental in relaxing interethnic tensions. Therefore, the oft mentioned “provocative behavior” on the part of the Jews was not a mere anti-Semite fantasy. For instance, it can be assumed that the shooting of the Tsar’s portrait genuinely filled one part of Zhitomir’s inhabitants with indignation and for another provided a welcome pretext for highlighting the “dangerousness” of the Jews. Furthermore, the revolutionary fervor of the *self-defense* activists was not devoid of generational conflict against the older and more conservative segment of Jewish society, and undermined their more traditional efforts of avoiding pogrom violence, i.e. bribing officials and avoiding confrontation.¹³⁰ This type of behavior was dismissed by the revolutionaries as “humiliating,” although it is not certain which approach was more effective in preventing violence.

¹²⁷ Stefan Wiese, “Die Große Angst in Zhitomir. Zur Geschichte eines Judenpogroms und einer Selbstwehrgruppe im Zarenreich,” *Transversal – Zeitschrift für jüdische Studien* 11/1 (2010): 79-86.

¹²⁸ Shtakser, *Structure*, 210.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 190; Lambroza, “Jewish Self-defense,” 1256.

¹³⁰ Shtakser, *Structure*, 203-204.

All in all, the *self-defense* of Zhitomir can by no means be called successful in terms of pogrom prevention. As soon as violence escalated, it was not the battle squads, but the regular military forces that suppressed violence, though not in the most resolute manner. Lambroza rightly asserts that the *self-defense* became a “legend amongst Bund members.” However, he misses the point that it was in fact a legend by definition, deliberately produced by what might be called a Bundist PR campaign. Local revolutionaries clearly had an interest in glorifying the events, but the same was true of the higher echelons of the Bund, who were eager to depict the Zhitomir *self-defense* as an example for others to follow. Consequently, the Bundist Press spread appropriate accounts.¹³¹ One of the most celebrated aspects was the remarkable role of a Christian, Nikolai Blinov, in defending the Jews. Not long after the pogrom there were attempts in St. Petersburg to donate scholarships in his name and to publish a Blinov biography.¹³² One author called him an “emblem of higher humanity,” and the famous writer and folklorist Shlomo Rappoport authored an obituary for him titled “The Evening Sacrifice” with reference to Psalm 141, 2.¹³³ Even postcards were printed with the portraits of the “victims of the pogrom of Zhitomir.”¹³⁴ All in all, the campaign to depict the efforts of the *self-defense* as heroic and effective was so successful, that the emergent myth was adopted even by distinguished historians. It is beyond doubt that the attempts of Zhitomir’s Jews (and of Russian Jewry in general) to defend themselves were justified and even admirable. However, it seems that their actions may have contributed to a dynamic of mutual threat and violence that contradicted their own objectives.

The local Jews, it seems, did learn a lesson from the events. When a wave of over 600 exceptionally cruel pogroms swept across the Pale of Settlement in October and November 1905, Zhitomir was spared. No commentator attributed this to a success of the local *self-defense*. Instead, a crucial role was played by the conservative parts of local Jewry that had formed a “Union for the pacification” in the wake of the April pogrom. They understood the prevalent pattern of pogroms arising from patriotic manifestations and organized an ostentatious Jewish demonstration of devotion and loyalty to the Tsar with several thousands of participants at the very day a pogrom was expected to break out.¹³⁵ Even the progressive Jewish journal “Voskhod” assumed that this step was the single decisive measure to prevent a new

¹³¹ Lambroza, “Responses,” 1250; see, Comité zur Unterstützung der von den Krawallen in Shitomir betroffenen Juden 19 May 1905, Archive of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, URSS I C 1.

¹³² *Volyn'*, 19 May 1905, 3.

¹³³ Linden, *Judenpogrome*, 58; A. An-skii [Rappoport, Z.], “Zhertva vecherniaia. Pamiati Nikolaia Ivanovicha Blinova”, *Sobranie sochinenii An-skogo*, [“The Evening Sacrifice. In Memory of Nikolai Ivanovich Blinov”, Collected Works of An-skii], vol. 4, (Sankt-Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1913), 213-218.

¹³⁴ For one of them, see TsDIAU, f. 336, op. 1, d. 3321.

¹³⁵ Zafran, “1905”, 167-168.

pogrom.¹³⁶ Efforts to avert pogroms were not the exclusive domain of young radicals, and self-defense was not always the most promising way to prevent anti-Jewish violence.

Conclusion

The Pogrom of Zhitomir differed significantly from the interpretations that eventually found their way into historiography. With regard to the case study, the concept of “Black Hundreds” can be sustained only in a most downscaled way as a general term for single pogrom instigators with limited resources and without substantial backing from the authorities. The second insight is that the state was much weaker in the province than most authors assume. The Police Chief of Zhitomir was forced not only to negotiate with the *self-defense*, but even to accept the conditions set by it if he wanted to prevent a violent outbreak in Pavlikovka, for example. Furthermore, while the military substantially contributed to the containment and suppression of the pogrom, the passivity of the civil authorities can be explained without assuming anti-Semitism as a motive, though its presence is not to be ruled out either. Lack of competence, personnel, general demoralization and the fear of terrorist attacks are sufficient factors in contributing to a refined picture of mismanagement on the part of the police and Governor.

Moreover, the Jewish *self-defense* played a role significantly different to that of prior findings. The battle squads were designed to prevent and to limit pogroms, but at the same time, they were part of a political, generational and emotional project. The *self-defense* promoted, at least indirectly, a socialist revolution; it was an instrument of the young and unattached to claim power over the elderly, conservative and well established. Additionally, it emphasized Jewish self-assertion and pride. The conflict of objectives that prevailed between these goals has not yet been fully recognized by historiography, although it significantly contributes to the explanation of the *self-defense*'s failure, at least in Zhitomir.

A possible explanation is that most studies on the pogroms in 1903-1906 were influenced by a certain set of convictions and assumptions that informed the interpretation of events in a way resembling the “pogrom paradigm” described by John Klier for the 1880s.¹³⁷ This time, it was the events at Kishinev (and not of Odessa, 1871) that served as an interpretive template for the ensuing incidents of anti-Jewish violence.¹³⁸ *Black Hundreds*, anti-Semitic press agitation, and state complicity were its major ingredients, and from the bulk of leftist, liberal and Jewish sources the paradigm was absorbed into scholarship. Of course, the findings of one case study are not sufficient to prove the falsity of

¹³⁶ *Voskhod* [Sunrise], 24 March 1906, 33-36.

¹³⁷ Klier, “Pogrom paradigm.”

¹³⁸ David Vital, *A People Apart. The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1999), 510-514.

these assumptions in general, but it might be worthwhile taking it as the starting point for a broader reassessment of the pogroms of that time.

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Antisemitic Rumours and Violence in Corfu at the End of 19th Century

by Maria Margaroni

Abstract

At the beginning of April 1891 a Jewish girl was found murdered on the ground floor of a Jewish residence in Corfu. Rumours raged on the island: Was this about a love story or, with a stretch of imagination, a story about sex and crime? Or was this murder evidence of the culmination of a family drama which unfolded at the girl's house, committed by her-supposedly-adoptive parents? Perhaps she was not Jewish, but Christian, and was murdered by the Jews in order for them to fulfil their religious needs? Upon discovery of the body the local police began spreading the rumour of ritual murder, while the first coronary report confirmed it. Local and Athenian newspapers spread it beyond the island's community, while local politicians maintained it for their own political agenda. On the other hand, judicial authorities upheld the innocence of the Jews accused. Military forces sent by the government desired to protect the secluded Jewish district. As such, not only did the antisemitic sentiment go beyond the borders of the island, but also led to the migration of a large portion of the most important Jewish community of the Ionian islands and to its final downfall wrought by the unheard of local violence, bringing death, injuries and material destruction.

The subject of the present paper is inspired by the blood libel that took place in Corfu at 1891, which constitutes one of the most significant antisemitic events in Greek history.¹ To begin with, this paper briefly discusses the long term representation and the social position of the Jews on the island of Corfu, taking into account the various persons in power. Continuing, after a brief outline of this specific blood libel, using primarily the long and analytical report of the prosecutor Theagenis Kefalas, this paper examines the factors that contributed to corroborate the rumour of ritual murder (amid numerous other rumours) of a young girl by the Jews of the island and to its development into antisemitic violence of such proportions. This rumour – aside from causing deaths, injuries, moral and material degradation – led to a complete breakdown of the Jewish community.

Therefore, this paper examines the reasons for which the “good Corfu, the sweet island, which is admired by all those who visit for its nature's beauty, for the serenity of its customs, for its civilization and its humanitarianism which

¹ Georgios Margaritis, “Ellinikos antisemitismos: mia periigisi, 1821, 1891, 1931”, [Greek Anti-Semitism. An Overview, 1821, 1891, 1931], *Praktika Epistimonikou Symposiou* (3-4 Apriliou) O Ellinikos Evraismos [Conference Proceedings of the Scientific Symposium [Conference Proceedings (3-4 April). *Greek Jewish Population*], (Athens: Association of Modern Greek Civilisation and General Education Studies, 1999), 15-31.

render the island an exceptional place to live” is transformed into a “theatre of a real civil war.”²

The Jewish presence in Corfu: a long history in a short version

The oldest testimony about the Jewish presence on the island comes from Benjamin of Tudela, who in 1147 visited the island and met a Jewish inhabitant, when the island was under the rule of King Roger of Sicily.³ During the 13th century, when Corfu was under the rule of Charles I of Anjou, many Jews already resided in Corfu.⁴ During the rule of the Angevin (1267-1386) the Jews’ position was “pitiful and tear-provoking” according to the historiographer of the island Ioannis Romanos, although less so than that of the rest of the Jews in Europe.⁵ The Angevin rulers made public numerous statutes (1317, 1324, 1328, 1332, 1365, 1373, 1380) to defend the Jews and partly relieve them from their hardships.⁶

To continue, for more than four centuries (1386-1797) Corfu was under the rule of the Venetians, who were characterized by an equivocal and erratic behavior towards the Jews, depending on financial circumstances.⁷ In cases of serious financial difficulties, they would lax the often severe and frequently inhuman measures, to achieve financial assistance by the Jews in numerous occasions, but also their support during the siege of the island by the Ottomans in 1716.⁸

During the Venetian rule, a large group of Jews was added to the ‘Greek Jews’ of the island. This group had been persecuted in 1492 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. Another, even larger group of Jewish refugees who had been expelled from Apulia in 1540 by Don Pedro of Toledo, viceroy of Naples, was also added. The newly arrived Spanish and Italian Jews built their own synagogue, in which the Italian element was predominant. The two synagogues, the old Greek one and the newly founded one, were in permanent conflict.⁹

² “Ο antisemitismos en Elladi” [Anti-Semitism in Greece], *Ephimeris*, April 10, 1891. *Ephimeris* was an antigovernmental newspaper and represented the liberal party. See Kostas Mayer, *Istoria tou Ellinikou typon* [History of the Greek Press], vol. 1, (1790-1900), (Athens, 1957), 129-140.

³ Pearl Preschel, *The Jews of Corfu* (unpublished Ph.D, New York University, 1984), 12.

⁴ Ibid., 14; Ioannis Romanos, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras,” [The Jewish Community of Corfu], *Ioannou Romanou Istorika Erga* [Historical Works by Ioannis Romanos], ed. Kostas Dafnis (Corfu, 1957).

⁵ Romanos, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras”, 388-389.

⁶ Ibid., 389-391; Preschel, “*Jews of Corfu*”, 16-17; Andreas Mustoxidis, *Delle cose corciresi*, (Corfu, 1848), 445-450.

⁷ Elli Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, “Oi Evraioi tis Kerkyras epi Venetokratias” [The Jews of Corfu during the Venetian Rule], *Chronika*, (November – December, 2010) 3-8, [Republished excerpt of her book, *Embassies of Venetian ruled Corfu (16th-18th centuries) General State Archives – Archives of the Prefecture of Corfu*, (Athens, 2002)].

⁸ Romanos, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras”, 391-394.

⁹ Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *Greece. A Jewish History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), (here the Greek translated version by Nikos Gasparis, *Athens: Odysseas*, 2009), 68-69.

The ‘privileged’ attitude of the Venetians towards the Jews, though totally circumstantial, displeased the Christians. The latter demanded and succeeded in making the Venetians establish tough statutes for the Jews of the island; these included making them wear a discernable sign abreast and forbidding them to own or purchase land.¹⁰ Indeed, they tried to ghettoize the Jews, without much success, since the Jews of Corfu never lived in a ghetto in the strict sense of the term.¹¹

The community of Corfu continuously and persistently made petitions to the Venetian authorities to spatially restrict the Jews, because “the establishment of the Jews among the Christians and indeed close to churches causes great discomfort to God and loyal subjects.”¹² In the end, the Christians’ petition was accepted. Indeed, in 1622 a statute was made public according to which the Jews could abandon their district only with a written permission.¹³ From the above, the adverse attitude that the Venetian authorities had towards the Jews is apparent. The tension that characterized the communal and inter-religious relationships with the Orthodox population of the island also becomes evident. Even so, the Jews of Corfu, as those of the rest of the Jews of the Ionian Islands during Venetian rule managed not only to survive but some of them also managed to thrive in financial activities as businessmen, particularly as usurers.¹⁴ In that way they contributed, to a degree, to the development of the financial life of the island.¹⁵

Only under the rule of the French (1797-1799 and 1806-1814)¹⁶ did the Jews acquire equal political rights, along the lines of the French Revolution. However, they lost these privileges once again during the British rule (1815-1864). The Jews were excluded from holding public offices and the right to vote and speak in court, while in 1852 it was decided to exclude the Jews from politics.¹⁷ Living at the social margins they frequently were on the receiving end of disdain and hatred from the Christian majority.¹⁸

¹⁰ Romanos, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras”, 395-397.

¹¹ Ibid., 397; Preschel, “*Jews of Corfu*”, 23.

¹² Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, “Oi Evraioi tis Kerkyras epi Venetokratias”, 5.

¹³ Romanos, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras”, 399-400.

¹⁴ Christos Dessylas, “I symvoli tis evraikis koinotitas Kerkyras stin anaptiksi domon egxrimatis pistis” [The Contribution of Corfu’s Jewish Community in the Development of Structures of Monetary Faith], *Chronika* (July-August 2008), 3-8. About usurers in the Ionian Islands during Venetian rule, see, Spyros Garsparinatos, *I Venetokratia sta nisia tou Ioniou Pelagous* [The Venetian Rule in the Islands of the Ionian Sea], (Athens: Private Publish, 2009), 322-324.

¹⁵ William Miller, *Istoria tis Frangkokratias stin Ellada, 1204-1566* [The Latins in the Levante. A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)], (Athens: Ellinika Grammata 1990), 609-610.

¹⁶ During the intermediate period (1800-1806) Corfu and the other Ionian islands were under the Russo-Ottoman administration, known as “Septinsular Republic”.

¹⁷ Bernard Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne. Histoire des relations intercommunautaires de 1821 à 1945* (Histoire et Perspectives Méditerranéennes), (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), 28. For a more general overview of the history of the Ionian State during the English rule, see Panayotis Chiotis, *I istoria tou Ioniou Kratous apo tis systaseos autou mechri enoseos (eti 1815-1864)*

A short report from the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*¹⁹ in November 1845 on the Jews of Corfu, described this specific situation very clearly: “The Greeks hate them, and seize every opportunity for injuring and ill-treating them; so that their situation would be very pitiable, if the English did not take them under their protection. Twenty years ago no Jew dared show himself in the streets during the holy week; but things have changed since that time.”²⁰

George Fitzmaurice’s, Earl of Orkney, impressions about the hostile attitude of the Orthodox Christians of Corfu towards the Jews are similar. Some were considered descendants of Judas Iscariot, whose house and country villa was still thought to exist in Corfu. Thus, it was customary that Christians throw great quantities of crockery onto the roads from the window and the top of all the houses in Corfu. This practice was considered similar to stoning Judas.²¹

This hate was also partly based on the stereotype of the Jew usurer, because the privilege of money lending was granted to some rich Jews with a high concentration of money in their hands.²² In addition there were also rich Jew merchants,²³ involved in the wealthy commercial activities of the Ionian Islands.²⁴ They contributed to the stereotype of the “rich Jew”, which would have serious repercussions until the end of the century but also until 1944.

[History of the Ionian State for its Establishment till the Union (1815-1864)], 2 vol., (Zakynthos: I Eptanisos).

¹⁸ In relation to the hegemonic presence of the Orthodox element in Corfu, it is noteworthy that in 1827 the Corfiot bishop Makarios indicated in his official report to the Senate 819 Greek churches on the island. Spyridon Papageorgiou, *Istoria tis Ekklesias tis Kerkyras apo tis systaseos autis mechri tou nyn* [History of the Church of Corfu since its Establishment till today], (Corfu, Aspioti: 1920), 195.

¹⁹ <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident>

²⁰ <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume3/nov1845/news.html#Corfu>

²¹ George William Hamilton Fitzmaurice (the 6th Earl of Orkney), *Four Years in the Ionian Islands. Their Political and Social Condition. With a History of the British Protectorate*, ed. Viscount Kirkwall, vol. 2, (London: Chapman, Hall, 1864), 47-48. Similar are the memories of the officer François Victor Lamare-Picquot at the beginning of the 19th century. See Hubert Octave Pernot (ed.) *Nos anciens à Corfou: souvenirs de l'aide-major Lamare-Picquot (1807-1814)*, (Paris: F. Alcan, 1918), 81.

²² Sakis Gekas, “Credit, Bankruptcy and Power in the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815”, *History of Insolvency and Bankruptcy from an International Perspective*, eds. Karl Gratzner, Dieter Stiefel, (Huddinge: Södertörn Academic Studies, 2008), 83-118 (93-94); Sakis Gekas, “Business Culture and Entrepreneurship in the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815-1864”, *London School of Economics (LSE) Working Papers in Economic History*, 89/5 (Available: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/22332/1/WP89.pdf>).

²³ Sakis Gekas, “Thesmoi kai eksousia stin poli tis Kerkyras sta mesa tou 19ou aiona” [Institutions and Authority in the Town of Corfu in the mid-19th Century], *Istor* 15 (2009): 149-186 (160). See also Albert Mousson’s comment on the wealthiest houses of Corfu, which belonged to the Greeks, Albanians and Jews who through their diligence and cleverness managed to climb up the progress financially. Albert Mousson, *Ein Besuch Auf Korfu und Cefalonien im September 1858, Vortrag gehalten den 18. Februar* (Zürich: Schulthess, 1859), 12-13.

²⁴ Sakis Gekas, “The Merchants of the Ionian Islands between East and West. Forming local and international Networks”, *Spinning the Commercial Web. International Trade, Merchants, and Commercial Cities, c. 1640-1939*, eds. Margrit Schulte Beerbuhl, Jörg Vögele, (Frankfurt/M., Berlin, al.: Peter Lang, 2004), 43-63; Gekas, Sakis, “Business Culture and Entrepreneurship in

In 1864, after the great efforts especially of the young educated Ionians,²⁵ the Ionian Islands were added to the mainland of Greece. Already since the period of the Ottoman ruling, tensions and animosity were evident in the relations of the Greek Orthodox population with Jews.²⁶ Nevertheless, according to the Greek Constitution, the Jews had equal rights with the rest of the citizens of the state, a fact applauded by the Jewish population of the island.²⁷ King George of Greece was characterized by tolerant attitude towards the Jewish population of Corfu and had a particularly warm relationship with the archi-rabbi Moise Levy.²⁸

However, three decades after the unification of the Ionian Islands to Greece, the political equality that was given to them did not seem to have materialized. The newspaper *Estia* dedicated a coversheet article in which the situation of the Jews in Corfu was analysed. According to that article, “their social position as citizens did not improve at all.” Specifically, it was upheld that while we frequently and boastfully declare political equality the Israelites in our country, as things are today, are truly Greek citizens only in burdens that are enforced by the state. Regarding the issue of rights that title is for them completely useless, or to be honest, sometimes brings forth danger”.²⁹ According to the writer, in the past thirty years there was no Israelite in the Greek Parliament, nor were there Israelites that had even low public positions. For the Jews of Corfu even the right to vote was totally useless, since they became victims of threats made by political clans.³⁰ In particular the fact that the Jews of Corfu has voting rights caused threats and outbursts of rage from the Orthodox who refused to come to the electoral centers.³¹

the Ionian Islands under British Rule, 1815-1864”, *London School of Economics (LSE) Working Papers in Economic History*, 89/5 (Available: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/22332/1/WP89.pdf>).

²⁵ Athanasios Gekas, “Class and National Identities in the Ionian Islands under British Rule”, *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)* (Publications King’s College London. Centre for Hellenic Studies), eds. Roderick Beaton, David Ricks (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2009) 161-174. Georgios Leontsinis, “Koinoniki kai politiki allagi sta Eptanisa (1780-1817 peripou)” [Social and political Change in the Ionian Islands” (1780-1817 approximately)], *Zitimata Eptanisiakis Koinonikis Istorias* [Matters of Eptanesian Social History], ed. Georgios Leontsinis (Athen: Tolidi, 1991), 281-335, 497-533.

²⁶ Maria Efthymiou, *Evranoi kai Christianoi sta tourkokokratoumena nisia tou notianatolikou Aigaion. Oi dyskoles pleures mias gonimis synyparksis* [Jews and Christians in the Turkish-occupied Islands in the Southeastern Aegean. The difficult Aspects of a fruitful Coexistence], (Athen: Trochalia, 1992).

²⁷ “Les Iles Ioniennes”, *Univers Israélite*, October 2, 1863.

²⁸ Pierron, “*Juifs et Chrétiens*”, 30.

²⁹ G. Mavrogiannis, “I dithen isotis” [The Supposed Equality], *Estia*, February 26, 1895. *Estia* promoted the ideas of the conservative party of Deliyannis, which was favorably disposed towards Greek Jews, for political and financial reasons, while Charilaos Trikoupi’s opposition party endeavored in every way to turn the Jewish vote to their side. See Eftychia Liata, “The Anti-Semitic Disturbances on Corfu and Zakynthos in 1891 and their Socio-political Consequences”, *The Historical Review*, 4 (2007): 157-169 (160).

³⁰ Mavrogiannis, “I dithen isotis”.

³¹ Gunnar Hering, *Ta politika kommata stin Ellada 1821-1936* [The political parties in Greece, 1821-1936], vol. 1, (Athens: Cultural Foundation of the National Bank, 2004).

Taking into account the political, social and historical context of the Jewish community in Corfu as described so far let us now move on to the events of 1891, which shocked the whole of Corfu, which, according to the *Government Gazette* (n. 313, 1889), had 82.853 inhabitants at the time.³² The Corfu town itself had around 17.000 souls in 1865.³³ Concerning the Jewish population of the town and the surrounding districts, the demographic and non-demographic sources vary between 2384 and 6000 inhabitants, including foreign Jews.³⁴

“A Jewish Maiden massacred in Corfu”³⁵

Vita Sarda, Solomon’s son, was born around 1840 on the island of Corfu. He was a tailor and lived with his wife, Loukia Eliezer, on the third floor of a building in an alley in the Jewish quarter.³⁶

On the 1st of April 1891 his 8 year old daughter, Rubina, left the house to play and she didn’t return. After an absence of numerous hours, the worried parents went to the police station to report her disappearance. Kangas, the public teller of the island, disseminated the news of the day; namely the disappearance of Rubina, Sarda’s daughter. Most town residents initially believed that the news was an April fool’s day joke, but it was soon proved that the disappearance of the girl was a true fact.³⁷

According to the prosecutor Kefalas’ report entitled ‘Regarding the behaviour and actions of the Police and its affiliated institutions and persons in Corfu during the Jewish incidences’,

once the news of the maiden’s disappearance was disseminated the whole Jewish (district) was mobilized in and outside their district in order to find the youngster (...), an immense crowd of Christians was coming into the Jewish

³² See Andreas Idromenos, *Synoptiki Istoria tis Kerkyras* [Short History of Corfu], (Corfu: S. Lantzas, 1930²), 132.

³³ Michail Chouliarakis, *Geographiki, dioikitiki kai plythismiaki ekseliksi tis Ellados 1821-1971* [Geographical, Administrative, and Population Development of Greece], vol. 1, (Athens: National Centre for Social Research, 1973), 163.

³⁴ Sakis Gekas, “The Port Jews of Corfu and the ‘Blood Libel’ of 1891. A Tale of Many Centuries and of One Event”, *Jew and Port Cities, 1590-1990. Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism*, eds. David Cesarani, Gemma Rommain (special issue, *Jewish Culture and History*, 7/1-2, 2004), 171-196 (177).

³⁵ *Ephimeris*, April 3, 1891.

³⁶ Yorgos Chaniotis, “I evraiki koinotita tis Kerkyras (1860-1939) entos kai ekto tis ‘Ovriakis’” [The Jewish Community of Corfu (1860-1939) inside and outside the Ghetto], *Praktika tou A Symposiou Istorias tis Etaireias Meletis Evraikou Ellinismou. Oi Evraioi ston elliniko choro. Zitimata istorias sti makra diarkeia* [Historical Symposium’s Proceedings of Society for the Study of the Greek Jews. The Jews in Greek Territory. Questions of History in the Long Term. Thessaloniki 23-24 November 1991], eds. Efi Avdela, Odette Varon-Vassard (Athens: Gavrilidis, 1995), 63-73.

³⁷ Nikolaos Spandonis, “I Evraiki” [The Jewish], *Acropolis*, May 14, 1891. *Acropolis* was a liberal newspaper and represented progressive political ideas. See Kostas Mayer, *Istoria tou Ellinikou tyπου* [History of the Greek Press], vol. 1, 187-209.

district for the sake of curiosity, police officers were also looking for her, while relatives and friends of the Sardas' family were coming into their house awaiting news about the lost Rubina...³⁸

It is clear that the calm life of the town at this point started to get disrupted completely.

According to the same prosecutor's report, shortly after midnight on the 1st/2nd of April Vita Sarda together with some other Jews went to a café meeting point. On his way behind the partly ajar door of a Jewish house, he found a bloodstained sack with Rubina's dead body, which he moved to his house. Police constable Michael Kouvaras, seeing Sarda run, carrying the bloodstained sack with the girl's dead body, immediately disseminated that "they are the murderers". Kouvaras testified exactly that to the investigators (judicial magistrate) who, however, not having been convinced of the father's and the other accused Jews' guilt regarding the murder of Rubina did not proceed to incarcerate them. That was enough for the police officers to disseminate to the whole town that "the Jews had murdered the youngster, that they had caught the murderers red handed, that they had delivered them to the investigating (judicial) authorities but that these authorities turning a blind eye had set them free". The police officers in fact wrote Kouvaras' text before the interrogating authority, after he dictated it, and gave copies to Christians in order to "scandalize and irritate them towards the Israelites".³⁹

This specific blood libel,⁴⁰ as any blood libel within this complex symbolic context,⁴¹ had already obtained the metaphor of a sacred drama, where everyone had to play their predetermined roles: The innocent Christian martyr⁴² as a sacred offering, the Jewish assassin and the conscientious

³⁸ Friends of the People Association (hereafter F.P.A.), Deliyannis Archive (hereafter D.A.), File BVI/ 106, Document 1 (15.12.1891).

³⁹ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 1.

⁴⁰ The blood libel of Corfu was not an isolated incident of the 19th century. A series of blood libels had preceded it, beginning with that of Damascus (1840) and Rhodes (1840). The Tiszaeszlár blood libel (1882) became particularly widespread due to the death of a 14 year-old Christian girl which shocked Europe. See Jonathan Frankel, *Damascus Affair: Ritual Murder, Politics, and the Jews in 1840*, (Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1997); Jonathan Frankel, "Ritual Murder in the Modern Era. The Damascus Affair of 1840", *Jewish Social Studies, New Series*, 3/2 (Winter, 1997), 1-16; Yitzchak Kerem, "The 1840 Blood Libel In Rhodes", *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies Division B: History of the Jewish People*, (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2000), 137-146; Andrew Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlár* (Boulder and New York: Colo, 1980); Hillel Kieval, "Antisémitisme ou savoir social? Sur la genèse du procès moderne pour meurtre rituel", *Annales HSS*, 49/5 (1994), 1091-1105; Robert Nemes, "Hungary's Antisemitic Provinces: Violence and Ritual Murder in the 1880s", *Slavic Review*, 66/1 (Spring, 2007): 20-44.

⁴¹ David Biale, *Blood and Belief. The Circulation of a Symbol between Jews and Christians*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2007).

⁴² It is noteworthy that in the case of Corfu, in contrast to majority of the previous cases where the victim was of the male sex, the victim was a girl.

representative of authority, who took on the role of the avenger and who, in this case, was the whole body of police officers.⁴³

To continue, Vita Sarda and her son, Solomon, were arrested and interrogated. The whole Sarda family was kept under house arrest. Konstantinos Zavitsianos, at that time a lawyer and later the head of the Greek parliament, together with the prosecutor Theagenis Kefalas, asked for further in-depth investigations to be carried out. Despite the opposition of the police, they order their release.⁴⁴

These rumours, spread by the police all over the town, were backed by the medical report of doctors Elias Politis, the police doctor Demetrios Papanikolas and the municipal doctor Frankiskos Thermoyannis, in which it was certified that the fatal wound was “that on the neck” and that “in the body of Rubina there was not a drop of blood”.⁴⁵

According to the prosecutor Kefalas

from that moment on, those who had the most to gain by stirring the whole city against the Jewish element, shouted that the murdered girl was Christian, that her blood was drawn by the Jews, to be used for their Mazot, without which they could not celebrate Easter, that the judges and prosecutors and all military authorities were bribed to take care of the Jews, setting the murderers free for the sake of future elections.⁴⁶

All this turned the city’s Christian population against the Jews, even when the aforementioned medical report was revoked by a famous doctor and other scientists from Paris, who certified that

there was no doubt that Rubina did not die of bleeding, i.e. by the shedding of blood, but by wounds that she had suffered on the head by a blunt object (a stick or something), not a sharp one. They also certified that the wounds around her neck occurred after her death and that the blood could have flowed only minimally or not at all.⁴⁷

The now apparent clash of the city’s official authorities, i.e. the police, on the one hand, and the judicial authorities, on the other, led the latter to proceed to interrogations of the police officers... “in complete secrecy”, from which it was confirmed that “they were the main force behind the dissemination of the

⁴³ Eutychia Amilitou, “Erotas kai thanatos sto gketo. I alli Zakynthos tou Gr. Xenopoulou” [Love and Death in the Ghetto. The other Zakynthos by Gr. Xenopoulos], *Nea Estia*, 150/1738 (October 2001): 403-445.

⁴⁴ Chaim Sarda, “Ta gegonota tis Kerkyras to 1891” [The Events of Corfu in 1891], *Chronika*, 95 (May-June 1987), 25. The author is a nephew of the murdered Rubina.

⁴⁵ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Spyridon Papageorgiou, *Sfazousin oi Evraioi Christianopaidas kai pinousi to aima ton*; [Do the Jews murder Christian Youngsters and drink their Blood?], (Athens: M. Saliveros, 1902), 25-26.

above false rumours.”⁴⁸ For this reason, police constables Christos Lavranos and Dimitrios Agathos were convicted to incarceration by the court. While up to that time the interrogations were led by the interrogator in the Jewish district, in the presence of the prosecutor and the police officer Napoleontas Pierris, the deputy police officer Nikolaos Alavanas and the chief constable Antonios Pilos, from that moment on every interrogation occurred in ignorance of the aforementioned officers, which consequently gave an impetus for new defamations against the interrogatory and judiciary authorities that they were covering up for the guilty Jewish murderers.⁴⁹

Since the aforementioned hearsay was coming from an official source it had prestige and power. To continue, it was repeated by various individuals of any class, some in a gullible manner, some on purpose, from the upper to the lower class, doctors and lawyers, landowners, merchants, tranters particularly in politics re-circulated the above-mentioned rumours, which being considered useful in serving their personal aims, and used their aims to eradicate Jewish elements from Corfu from which they had much to gain.⁵⁰ Immediately, violence against the Israelites began, which was secretly encouraged by the political party of the opposition (the Liberal Party):

Groups of citizens came into the Jewish district injuring, beating, calling the Israelites names or shooting them. Others (Christian citizens), when coming across others (Jews) outside the Jewish district, would threaten them and hitting them with any object spreading fear and terror which caused despair to the Israelites and forced them to abandon their homeland.⁵¹

Other Christians threw the Jews boarding ships to depart for foreign lands into the sea, destroyed their monuments – in that sense also practising symbolic violence – others publicly advocated against the Jews in squares, coffee houses, taverns, and wherever there were groups of citizens, where those belonging to the opposition has a primary role. Such individuals, twisting every governmental effort to keep peace, and adopting every false rumour that could ignite the spirit of the people, regularly sent texts and short articles to Athenian opposition newspapers in order to create a general evil mood. All these anti-Jewish actions occurred “before the eyes of the police officers” who were inside the Jewish district (at least in theory) in order to defend the Jews and apprehend guilty individuals, but who covered for the actions of the latter, encouraging them with such an attitude. Despite powerful military forces patrolling the Jewish district, assaults against the Jews continued.⁵²

The local and Athenian press had frequent, if not daily, correspondence on the Jewish affairs of Corfu, which expanded to include neighbouring areas,

⁴⁸ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

particularly Zakynthos. The plethora of (usually) contradicting information about the Corfu blood libel contributed to the reinforcement of the rumours of R. Sardas' ritual killing by the Jews, as it will be shown later on in this paper. However, these rumours were not the only ones initially circulating around the island, and later on around the whole of Greece.⁵³

A few days after Rubina's death, the journalist Nikolaos Spandonis from Athens was sent to Corfu "to research the authenticity" of the story and to "fully report" to the whole Greek population, because of the measure that the government had taken to forbid news by telegrams from Corfu⁵⁴ in order to stop misinformation and panic.

A colourful collective imagination or the diversity of rumours

The rumour of the ritual murder was not the only one. There were many other rumours, especially because a murder is always a fascinating story, and the murder of a child even more so. Regarding the various rumours and "theories" circulating at the time, there is no way of assessing in which order they started, which fact is less important.

The first array of rumours was connected to "stories of love" or with even greater imagination to "sex and crime": that a young man was in love with Rubina but it was not reciprocated and that he murdered her in revenge. Another version was that Rubina would tease men sexually and that an egg-seller tried to have full sexual contact with her and, in rage at her refusal, he killed her. Or that she had been, unwillingly, taken to a brothel, had resisted and was subsequently killed.⁵⁵

A second array of rumours surrounded the family drama of Rubina. She was reported as having "bad morals"; being "locked in" to an order of Sisters of Mercy,⁵⁶ had been beaten by her father (or by her mother)⁵⁷ until she was unconscious; and finally killed in error.⁵⁸ Or, alternatively, she was rumoured to have been the family Sardas' unloved stepdaughter and that the father

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Paliggenesia*, April 8, 1891.

⁵⁵ The issue of rape was the first to become known in the broader readership, while, according to the physician Elias Politis, Rubina "*was hurt on her behind, but still maintained her virginity*". Nikolaos Spandonis, "Anakriseis 'Akropoleos' epi ton Kerkyraikon tarachon, Meros A. Synenteuksis meta tou iatrou k. Politou. Leptomereiai nekrotomis" ["Interrogations by *Acropolis* on the Incidences in Corfu. Part I. Interview by the Physician Mr. Politis. Details of the Autopsy"], *Acropolis*, May 12, 1891.

⁵⁶ Nikolaos Spandonis, "Synenteuksis para to archiepiskopo ton Latinon" ["Interview by the Archbishop of the Latin"], *Acropolis*, May 13, 1891.

⁵⁷ *Ephimeris*, April 9, 1891.

⁵⁸ For the widespread dissemination of this rumour in Corfu's society, cf. the brilliant study of Eutychia Liata, *I Kerkyra kai i Zakynthos ston kyklona tou antisemitismou. I 'sykofantia gia to aimá' tou 1891* [Corfu and Zakynthos in a Tornado of Anti-semitism. The ghezera of 1891], (Modern Greek Research Institute, 89), (Athens: National Research Foundation, 2006), 29.

murdered her out of pure hatred. Newspapers reported a wide variety of theories.⁵⁹

The third array of rumours was around the accusation of ritual murder: that the murdered girl's name was in fact Maria Desylla and she came from Ioannina; that Vita Sarda employed her as a maid (the Jewish master exploiting a defenseless Christian girl syndrome); that his plan from the beginning was to ritually sacrifice her at a later date;⁶⁰ or that Rubina, with the permission of the Sardas' family, was sacrificed by the Jewish community for ceremonial reasons; or, a daring and even more absurd version, that Rubina as a Jew was murdered by Christians with the aim of making it seem as if the Jewish community at Corfu had committed a ritual murder.⁶¹ The detailed description of the injuries in such a way as to evoke ritual murder intensified; indeed, it was this version which monopolized attention relatively quickly.

In one of the initial relevant articles that were published in an Athenian newspaper about Rubina's murder we read: The dead body

has many injuries incurred by a sharp object on the chest and the arteries, by a needle on the forehead, while some injuries on the face and the hands are covered with lime. It is indeed difficult for one to explain the reason why the despicable malefactors used such ways to kill the young innocent girl. The mystery becomes more obfuscated when it is taken into account that while the Jew, to whom it is said that the massacred maiden belongs, said that he had 5 children, while from the official announcement of the rabbi it results that he had 4. Consequently, the murdered maiden is Christian, going by the name Maria Dessyla, orphan of father, kidnapped in Ioannina in order to be mercilessly sacrificed; a tradition which is considered by many to be a custom of the Jews. But that rumour is falsified by the announcement of the mayor of Corfu, which certifies that the maiden is Jewish, as can be seen from the archives of the arch-rabbi.

The editor of the article continues by saying that he cannot believe that "a religion, even Judaism, allows such garish customs and that the race of Jews cultivates such customs in Greece" concluding that even that specific

⁵⁹ Spandonis, "I Evraiki". According to the letter, the interrogator, Elias Cagadis, sent to the Prime Minister Theodoros Deliyannis it seems that he also believed in this version. However, without sufficient evidence of the guilt of Rubina's relations, this view was only made known to the prime minister confidently. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 30, letter on 14.6.1891.

⁶⁰ *Ephimeris*, April 9, 1891.

⁶¹ Spandonis, "Anakriseis 'Akropoleos' epi ton Kerkyraikon tarachon, Meros B. Oi anakriseis tou kerkyraikou laou" [Interrogations by *Acropolis* on the Incidences in Corfu. Part II. Interrogations by Corfu's Population], *Acropolis*, May 15, 1891. *Acropolis* throughout the events in Corfu remained antisemitic continuing to publish articles, in which it challenged the Jewish identity of the murdered girl and, along the same lines, the government's ability to solve the murder case. Cf. indicatively, *Acropolis*, May 5, 1891.

superstition is that the Israelites partake of the Christian blood of a boy, never a girl.⁶²

Of these three different categories of rumours (sexual topics, family drama, and ritual murder accusations) it was the third that dominated. Apparently – at that time – there could not be any other rumour more interesting. Family drama as a motive was just too private and could not have interested the mass of the society a lot. In the late 19th century sexual affairs were a real taboo and did not matter as a topic for the large society of a Greek provincial place. On the contrary, the rumour about a possible ritual murder had the best characteristics for a rumour to be spread out quickly for several reasons, as detailed below.

The whole issue initially took on huge proportions against the Jews of the island. An initial attack on the Jewish district on the 3rd of April ended up in an uprising, resulting in the Jewish district being closed off by military forces after the order of L. Vlachos, mayor of the city. This exacerbated the already tenuous situation, since the Christians started to have the impression that the government was protecting the guilty Jews.⁶³

After a month of repeated disruptions and the renewed invasion of Christians into the Jewish district, military forces were sent from Patras, supervised by Notaras.⁶⁴ The Prime Minister himself, trying to appease the people, ordered Corfu's newly appointed prefect, G. Bouklakos,⁶⁵ to appeal to the people to maintain peace⁶⁶ and urged him to work towards preventing the emigration of the Jews.⁶⁷

However, the emphasis given to this issue outside Corfu's society was also noteworthy. Indeed, there had been reactions in other Greek places, mainly on Zakynthos, where there was also a strong Jewish community.⁶⁸ In Zakynthos, in spite of the Greek military assistance ordered from the Peloponnese – there was spreading agitation, on Good Friday (19.4.1891). During the traditional

⁶² *Paliggenesia*, April 8, 1891.

⁶³ Costas Dafnis, *Oi Israïlites tis Kerkyras. Croniko epta aionon* [The Israelites of Corfu. A seven Century Chronicle], (Corfu, 1978), 19.

⁶⁴ *Ephimeris*, May 2, 1891.

⁶⁵ Bouklakos replaced the previous prefect, L. Vlachos, who stated that health reasons had made him resign. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 21.

⁶⁶ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 3. Letter on 2.5.1891.

⁶⁷ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 7. Draft of the letter of 8.5.1891. In his response to the Prime Minister, Bouklakos mentions that the migration wave has not been stopped, and that lower class Jews have started evacuating the location because of the ardent circumstances. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 10, Letter on 10.5.1891. The meeting he had with archirabbi Da Fano, during which he received the latter's assurances that he would try to convince the Jewish population to remain on the island obviously did not help. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 10, Notification letter of Bouklakos to Diliyannis on 15.5.1891. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 7. Cf. also Liata, "Corfu and Zakynthos", 87.

⁶⁸ Spyridon De Viazis, "I evraiki koinotis tis Zakynthou epi Enetokratias" [The Jewish Community of Zakynthos during the Venetian Rule], *Parnassos*, 14/10 (June 1892) 624-637, 14/11 (July 1892) 662-670, 14/12 (August 1892) 723-735.

procession of the Epitaph, an event which assembled approximately 7000-8000 Christians (including politicians and military authorities) several different groups of “fanatic city dwellers” tried to break into the Jewish district. In panic, the responsible military guardsman ordered guns to be used. Due to this, five Christian citizens were killed, five were hurt and property damage,⁶⁹ vandalism and terror.⁷⁰ According to the letter found in the Deliyannis archive, which describes the incident in detail, three classes of the people were involved in the vandalisms of Good Friday. The first, and greatest, part was organised by the opposition, the second by thieves and robbers and the least part was organised by those who were religiously spurred by honesty and stupidity and helping the offenders without realising what they were doing.⁷¹

The Zakynthos events, and particularly those of Corfu, caused a general outcry against Greece from abroad. Governments of European States sent statements to the Greek government expressing their grave concern about the turbulent situation in Corfu and about the tragic living conditions of Corfu’s Jews, because of their confinement in the ghetto for more than 3 weeks.⁷² In those statements it was requested that the government intervene immediately and effectively to rescue the Jewish population.⁷³ The violence against the Jewish community caused ardent protestations evident in the European press, for which, Nikolaos Spandonis upholds that “it becomes an abhorrent force, a force that kills the truth and justice, carried out because of the power of Jewish gold.”⁷⁴ In that way, he directly states the purposefully skewed presentation of Corfu’s situation by the “Semitic leeches, which fattened up by feeding on the blood of Europe.”⁷⁵ To appease the negative opinion about Greece⁷⁶ the then

⁶⁹ For the destruction of their property the Jews of Zakynthos put forward the issue of compensation by the state, due to the lack of state protection. According to a report of the Legal Council, this petition is not invalid since - according to International Law – any civilized state has the obligation to protect the property of all its subjects, including those of foreign origin. F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106. Document of the Judiciary Advisor of Zakynthos to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 29.8.1891.

⁷⁰ For a detailed outline of the events on Zakynthos cf. Freiderikos Karrer, *Ioudaismos kai Christianismos kai ta en Zakyntho symvanta kata tin Megalin Paraskevin* [Judaism and Christianity and the incidences of Zakynthos during Good Friday], (Zakynthos: Phoskolos, 1892), 67-289; *Kyrioteri symvanta tis nison Zakynthou 1874-1907 ypo Dionysiou Kladi, tou iereos Panayoti* [The main incidences of Zakynthos 1874-1907 by Dionysios Cladis, of the Priest called Panayotis], ed. Ioannis Demetis, (Zakynthos: Trimorfo, 2004), 163-169; Liata, “*Kerkyra kai i Zakynthos*”, 48-58.

⁷¹ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 20, Letter by an unknown sender to the countess Aspasia Roma on 23.4.1891.

⁷² F.P.A., BVI/106, 8, Letter written by the ambassador of Austria-Hungary in Greece on 28.4/10.5. 1891.

⁷³ F.P.A., BVI/106, 9, Letter written by the ambassador of England in Greece on 28.4/10.5.1891.

⁷⁴ Nikolaos Spandonis, “Ta evraiofylla tis Eyropis” [Europe’s Jewish Tabloids], *Acropolis*, May 13, 1891.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

ambassador of Greece in London, Ioannis Gennadios, condemned the behaviour of Corfu's inhabitants in an article, entitled "The Greek Ambassador on the Jews in Greece", published in the Daily News on the 13/25 May 1891.⁷⁷ Gennadios spoke with disdain about the Ionians

who reminded us that the medieval Venetian tradition has not been eradicated on Ionian Islands. Even if the incidences, which sadden us all, could be seen as a burst of popular sentiment, we strongly believe that they could not be found in any other part of Greece.

Finally, he upheld that the greater part of the Greek people was innocent, while - along the same lines - they felt outraged and ashamed of the occurrences on the Ionian Islands.⁷⁸ Polyas demanded that the government retract the statements made by Gennadios, to restore the reputation of inhabitants of Ionian citizens,⁷⁹ which never happened.

Ritual murder accusation: religious, financial and political aspects of the issue

These kinds of rumours and accusations towards Jews were not unknown in the Greek-orthodox community, especially during the last quarter of the 19th Century and well into the 20th century. The soil was always fertile. The history of different European countries⁸⁰ and of the Greek population in Greece and

⁷⁶ On the part of the Jews, see indicatively the work of German rabbi and historian Markus Horovitz, *Korfu. Vortrag. 28. Mai 1891*, (Frankfurt/M.: Kauffmann, 1891), who publishes for the broader audience a series of documents that the Greek authorities and the archi-rabbi Da Fano, which certified the Jewish origins of the murdered girl, condemning in that way the incidences in Corfu.

⁷⁷ Part of Gennadios' text is republished, translated into Greek, in the local newspaper *Rigas o Feraios* (May 25, 1891), with comments by Polyas.

⁷⁸ *Ephimeris* (May 2, 1891) considers the behaviour of Corfu inhabitants worthy of criticism since the latter "managed to create an anti-Semitic issue in Greece". The article continues in a particularly ardent anti-Ionian style by stating that Corfu's and Zakynthos' inhabitants, after the Venetian and British occupation, are characterised by "sneaky and inhuman flaws and [...] urges" that are of European, not Greek, origins. So, "they filled the whole of the Hellenic population with bitterness and shame with their attitude and they placed the stigma of dishonesty on its forehead, which only barbaric antisemites of Europe carried till that moment". See also Liata, "Corfu and Zakynthos", 65-68.

⁷⁹ *Rigas o Feraios*, June 2, 1891.

⁸⁰ Rainer Erb, "Die Ritualmordlegende. Von den Anfängen bis ins 20. Jahrhundert", *Ritualmord. Legenden in der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Susanna Buttaroni, Stanislaw Musiat, (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2003), 11-20; *The Blood Libel Legend. A Casebook in Antisemitic Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes, (Madison/Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1988).

especially in the Ottoman Empire)⁸¹ always proved it. Taking the bloody events of Corfu as an impetus Petros Kassimatis published an antisemitic work⁸² in the same year which (mainly is based on the book of Henri Desportes⁸³), set out to prove the veracity of the ritual murder accusations against Jews. Among the numerous cases of presumed ritual murder in Greece and in other places he mentions two more almost unknown blood defamations on the island, aside from the blood defamation of Corfu in 1891. The first is dated from 1812 during French rule, when three Jews were condemned to death after being charged with performing human sacrifices of Christian children,⁸⁴ and the second is dated from 1815 “when a youngster becomes a victim in the temple of the Jewish Moloch.”⁸⁵

This specific book is dedicated not only to “the souls of the numerous victims of Jewish fanaticism and superstitions”, but also “to the strength of the truth of the fighter, Ioannis Martinos, archimandrite.” From the introduction of the work we see that Martinos was “the first from the clerics of the Free Greece that had the noble courage to fervently and publicly denounce the religious and bloodthirsty orgies of the Jews”, honouring the whole body of clerics.⁸⁶ Martinos was not only using the ordinary religious arguments (Jews as god-murderer), he was also fighting against them, against the “humanlike tigers” and “Antichrists”, as he characteristically called them as enemies of the Greek nation and the whole mankind: “If these monsters could rule the whole world, they would transform the planet into a massacre.”⁸⁷

In this antisemitic frenzy there was also the other side, not only in publishing circles but also in the Orthodox Church. The works of Georgios Zavitsianos⁸⁸ and Spyridon Papageorgiou,⁸⁹ as well as the pro Semitic stance and effort of Dionysios Latas, archbishop of Zakynthos during 1884-1894,⁹⁰ constitute

⁸¹ See the prestigious work of Abraham Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs de Turquie*, 9. vol., (Istanbul: 1985, re-edition) who dedicates a separate section entitled “calomnies du meurtre rituel” for every Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire.

⁸² Petros Kassimatis, *Aima, Evraioi, Talmud, itoi apodeikseis thriskeutikai, istorikai kai dikastikai peris yparkseos ton anthropothysion par' Evraiois, epi ti vasei ton ergon pleiston syggrafeon kai idia tou syggrammatos tou Henri Desportes 'Le mystère du sang'* [Blood, Jews, Talmut, religious, historical and juridical Evidence about the Existence of human Sacrifices among the Jews based on Works of numerous Authors, and particularly of Henri Desportes work 'Le mystère du sang'], (Athens: A. Kollarakis, N. Triantafyllou, 1891).

⁸³ Henri Desportes, *Le mystère du sang chez les Juifs de tout les temps* (préface d'Edouard Drumont), (Paris: Librairie Albert Savine, 1890).

⁸⁴ Kassimatis, *Aima, Evraioi, Talmud*, 155-156.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 156.

⁸⁶ Ibid., preface.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 94.

⁸⁸ Georgios Zavitsianos, *Aktis Photos. O katadiogmos ton Evraion en ti istoria* [Ray of Light. The persecution of Jews in History], (Corfu: N. Petsalis, 1891).

⁸⁹ Papageorgiou, *Sfazousin oi Evraioi Christianopaidas*.

⁹⁰ Dionysios Latas, *Drasis yper tou Israilitikon ethnous kai gnomai peri Ioudaismou diakekrimenou Ierarchou tis Neoteris Ellinikis Ekklesias aoidimou archiepiskopou Zakynthou diatypotheisai en to theio yp' autou kirigmati kai en tois syggrammasi autou* [Action for the Nation of Israelites and Views on

characteristic examples. Zavitsanos dedicates his work “to the souls of the martyrs of fanaticism and bigotry, with the belief that this work contributes to eradicating this wound from the world to allow brotherly affection to take over”. His work was written due to the examined blood defamation of Corfu. “Even though Corfu is characterized as the most civilized of the Greek provinces because of the mildness of its inhabitants’ character and their relevant tolerance towards religions,”⁹¹ Corfu was perturbed by the latent passions of Christians, which were misrepresented by “the foreign governments which governed the place for centuries.”⁹² As such, it is explicitly declared that antisemitism in Corfu’s society is foreign, and not a product of the Greeks, and particularly the Ionian, thought and tradition. In the pages that follow the author endeavors to collate arguments, documents and statutes that prove the false and unsubstantial nature of the accusations of human sacrifice against the Jews.

Almost a decade after the Jewish incidences in Corfu, Papageorgiou published (1902) the speech he had given at the Athenian literary association “Parnassos” in 1901, which also aimed at disproving the defamations regarding the Jewish human sacrifices. This aim seems to have been achieved to a large extent, since -as the speaker himself noted in the preface of his published text- many members of the audience discarded their mistaken perceptions about the Jewish human sacrifices, while the beliefs of others were – if not totally discarded – but significantly shaken.⁹³

Dionysios Latas is an example of a high ranked cleric who fought against the defamations that those of similar religion to his (Christianity) spread against the Jews, because of the Jewish affairs of Corfu. Convinced of the contribution of the Jewish people to global cultural heritage,⁹⁴ he often posed the rhetorical question to his co-religionists: “is it correct and just that the sons of this nation, which has offered so many services to humankind, to turn against others, hate and persecute?”⁹⁵ Along the same line, as the editor of the religious newspaper *Sion* (1881-1891), he published articles defending the Jews,⁹⁶ while he participated in the international religious conference in 1893 in Chicago, USA, as a representative of the Greek Orthodox Church where he publicly denounced the accusations of human sacrifice against the Jews; such accusations were prevalent in Europe and the East. He clearly declared that “spreading such defamations against followers of a monotheistic faith is

Judaism from the blessed Cleric of the Modern Greek Church, Archbishop of Zakynthos as stated in his divine Preaches and in his written Works], (Zakynthos, 1932). See the introductory chapter entitled “*The services of the Nation of Jews to humankind*”. The author is the archbishop’s nephew and carries the same name as him.

⁹¹ Zavitsianos, *Aktis Photos*, 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹³ Papageorgiou, Introduction.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, see the introductory chapter “*Biography of the blessed archbishop of Zakynthos D. Latas*”.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-74.

against Christian teachings.”⁹⁷ In addition, he explicitly condemned the custom of setting Judas on fire on Easter day; “setting an effigy of a human on fire, an effigy which is on purpose made disproportionately to ostensibly satisfy the passions of Christ”, a process which often came with foul words and brutal abuse of the Jews, characterising it as “cruel, barbaric and despicable custom” and an act of passion against the Jews.⁹⁸

Indeed, the personality of archbishop Latas and his persistent fight against antisemitic practices in Greece constituted a notable exception at that time. Despite the official published condemnation of the ritual murder accusation from the official Greek church,⁹⁹ after the beginning of the Corfu affair, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the low ranks of the clergy in particular were harboring an intense anti-Jewish mood and in essence left the path open for the manifestation of anti-Jewish popular traditions in the halls of the Church;¹⁰⁰ such as the widely spread (until recently in many areas of Greece) practice of burning an effigy of Judas that they used to

construct a day or two before, using a sack full of hay or old clothes to which they gave the form of a human body and on the top put a pumpkin most frequently filled with gun powder. They hung this effigy on a tree outside the temple or on a gallows which was raised in a way as to allow them to work off their hatred in various ways. Unfortunately, this hate was fed by church psalms against the “betrayers” of Christ. They threw stones at the effigy, they beat it with sticks, they spat curses and foul words at it, and the most restless would stab it, making sure to make it as despicable as they could.¹⁰¹

However, there were, aside from the religious aspects not of the murder per se, but of the emphasis given to it, also financial and political reasons that pushed antisemitic manifestations to the edge.

A telegram to the French newspaper “Liberal” mentioned that a large part of the lower class spurred on the uprising against the Jewish population in the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 78.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 67, 69.

⁹⁹ “Egkyklios peri tou ouk exesti tois pistois pyrpolein omoïoma tou Iouda en ti eorti tis lamproforou anastaseos tou Sotiros Iisou Christou” [“Circular concerning the prohibition of burning the effigy of Judas during the Celebration of the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ”], *Syllogi Egkyklion Ieras Synodon [Circulars’ Collection of the Holy Synod]*, ed. Stephanos Giannopoulos, (Athens: A. Kallarakis, 1901), 405-406.

¹⁰⁰ For the often difficult relationships between Orthodox Greeks and Jews, which often impeded on the integration of the latter into Greek society, see Yitzchak Kerem, “The multicultural Bankround of Greek Jewry. Factors in their Diversity and Integration in Modern Greece”, *Minorités religieuses de la Grèce contemporaine, Mésogeios*, 20-21, ed. Georges Drettas, (Paris: Herodotos, 2003) 57-79. For a Jewish perspective on the matter see Zvi Ankori, “Greek Orthodox-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective. The Jewish View”, *Greek Orthodox Review*, 22 (1977): 17-57.

¹⁰¹ Giorgos Thomas, “To Pascha ton Ellinon kai to... ‘martyrio’ tou Iouda” [The Easter of Greeks and the... ‘Torture’ of Judas], *Chronica*, 220 (March-April 2009), 26-27 [Published in *Thessalia*, April 26, 2008].

hope to drive them away and take back the jobs that had been given to them because they worked at lower rates.¹⁰² The content of this telegraph is particularly understandable if we take into account the poverty and the particularly difficult financial situation¹⁰³ in basically rural¹⁰⁴ Greece which led to bankruptcy in 1893.

However, Corfu's politician Georgios Theotokis holder of an important position in the "Neoteric Party"¹⁰⁵ who was known for his antisemitic attitude during the Corfu incidences, did not concede the importance of the financial aspect of these incidences for his co-religionists. In one of his interviews to Nikolaos Spandonis he declared that his "*co-citizens are noble and would never humble themselves to persecute the Jews for such unworthy reasons*". Furthermore, he upholds that the "*Jews are not so rich, neither are they noteworthy as land owners nor do they harass us as businessmen in the exporting trade*". He concluded by saying that "*the inhabitants of Corfu, in whom the sentiment of love for their country is deeply rooted, that it is only because the Jew is not Greek if a hatred towards him is present*".¹⁰⁶

Iakovos Polyas¹⁰⁷ also does not admit the existence of financial reasons for the antisemitic outburst in Corfu, as he upholds that the Jews of the island do not play a role in the industry, and that they only partly do control the trade of olive oil, since Christians are also involved in it. Conversely, like Theotokis, he upholds that the Jews "*were not real Greeks*".¹⁰⁸ The fact, so says Polyas, is that they did not speak Greek, that their children were not frequent in Greek

¹⁰² F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 45 (no date).

¹⁰³ Charilaos Trikoupis, *The Finances of Greece (On introducing to the Hellenic Chamber the Budget for 1888, on November 4th/November 16th 1890)*, (London: Harrison, Sons: 1887).

¹⁰⁴ Sokratis Petmezas, *I elliniki agrotiki oikonomia kata ton 19o aiona. I periphereiaki diastasi* [The Greek rural Economy during the 19th Century. The peripheral dimension], (Iraklio: University Press of Crete, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Theotokis' grandson, also a politician, Georgios Rallis, has written on his life and works. See Georgios Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis. O politikos tou metrou* [Georgios Theotokis. The measured Politician], (Athens: Foundation of the Hellenic Parliament, 2006).

¹⁰⁶ Nikolaos Spandonis, "Anakriseis 'Acropoleos' epi ton en Kerkyra tarachon. Meros A. Synenteuksis meta tou k. G. Theotoki: Ai kat' autou katigoriai. Aitios ton tarachon o k. Diliyannis. Prosorini isychia." [Interrogations by 'Acropolis' on the Disruptions in Corfu. Part I. Interview of Mr. G. Theotokis: The Allegations against him. The Perpetrator of these Disruptions is Mr. Deliyannis. Temporary Quiet], *Acropolis*, May 12, 1891.

¹⁰⁷ On the life and work of Polyas, see Yorgos Valetas, *Polyas. All the Literary Works and Critiques*. (Athens: Pigi, 1963³). In the beginning Polyas was part of the neoteric party of Charilaos Trikoupis; under this office he was elected as Member of Parliament four times. In 1884 he withdrew from the party of Trikoupis and turned to the conservative party of Theodoros Diliyannis, but in 1890 he approached the party of Trikoupis once more. In 1892 he abandoned politics. With Georgios Theotokis, he is considered the most antisemitic politician of the 19th century.

¹⁰⁸ Nikolaos Spandonis, "Synenteuksi meta tou k. Iakovou Polyla" [Interview with Mr. Iakovos Polyas], *Acropolis*, May 13, 1891. To conceptualise the term of country in relation to Orthodox religion see Kodon "Country for the inhabitants of Corfu is, and always has been, the highest sentiment which was enough to preserve its Greek and Orthodox soul also in those days during which its body was submissive to foreign forces and foreign political systems."

schools,¹⁰⁹ that they did not accept Greece as their homeland, put them in solitary confinement which attracted the orthodox populations' repulsion. In addition, Polyas accuses them to transfer “the money that they earned from Greeks to foreign banks”, which is considered anti-patriotic given the particularly difficult financial circumstances which were present in Greece during the last quarter of the 19th century. Furthermore he considered it a mistake that the Jews dared blame the Christians for the murder.¹¹⁰

On part of the Jews, the prestigious Dr. De Semo also does not believe in the existence of financial reasons for the bloodthirsty developments in Corfu. He upholds that – except for two cases – the Jews of Corfu do not have significant influence on the banking business, as it the case in other European countries, neither do they have their hand in industry, and, except for some tailors, are not artisans.¹¹¹ As for the common people, “women have the specialty of mopping the houses which does not cause financial hardship to Christian women, because none of them take on that arduous job.” Jewish men were mostly porters who were always hired by Christians, while the *homme d'équipe* was always a Christian. De Semo considers the superstitions about human sacrifice as the main reason for the antisemitic incidences.¹¹²

However, even though the most important political and social figures of the local Greek and Jewish society doubted the existence of financial reasons for the outburst of antisemitic incidences, those reasons were valid.

Specifically, during that time there was a feudal system in Corfu and the Christian landowners rented their mainly olive) fields to farmers (Christian citizens as well) in exchange for money. Frequently, the farmers could not pay the lease and had to take a mortgage, often from Jewish citizens of the island, which were described as usury and therefore Jews were hated by the Christian farmers. Very often, Christian farmers could not pay the high interest at the same time as the lease. Therefore the farmers had to go to court and quite often, were put into jail “*along with the real criminals*”, where the conditions were

¹⁰⁹ It is about a category which keeps returning the public speech of Greeks with intense regularity. See indicatively, *Documents on the history of the Greek Jews. Records from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, ed. Photini Constantopoulou, Thanos Veremis, (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1999), 113-114.

¹¹⁰ Nikolaos Spandonis, “Synenteuksi meta tou k. Iakovou Polyla” [Interview with Mr. Iakovos Polyas], *Acropolis*, May 13, 1891.

¹¹¹ However, the exceptional work of Gekas, demonstrate not only the existence of a significant number of Jews labourers, but also the existence of a significant number of craftsmen und merchant, who belonged to the middle class of the island. See Sakis Gekas “The Port Jews of Corfu and the ‘Blood Libel’ of 1891: A Tale of Many Centuries and of One Event”, *Jew and Port Cities, 1590-1990. Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism*, eds. David Cesarani, Gemma Rommain (special issue, *Jewish Culture and History* 7/1-2, 2004), 171-196 (177-183).

¹¹² Nikolaos Spandonis, “Ti legoun kai oi Ioudaioi: Ouchi to symferon. Ouchi i politiki alli prolipsis i kyria aformi. Synenteuksis meta tou iatrou B. De Semou ” [“What the Jews also say. It is not best Interest. It is not Politics but the Superstition is the main Reason. Interview with B. De Semou, Physician”], *Acropolis*, May 13, 1891.

miserable. According to a proverb of Corfu “*it is far better to be a criminal than a farmer*”. The landowners and the Jews were considered responsible for the miserable situation in which the farmers found themselves, as well as for their exploitation.¹¹³

A number of citizens benefited from the massive migration of the Jews; among those were police officers, friends and relatives of Corfu’s mayor, Michail Theotokis, the brother of Georgios Theotokis and also adherent of the liberal party, as well as priests and church followers. According to the report of Kefalas, who denounces the police force to participate in auctions. Policemen indeed took on “the role of official auctioneers in the central market, where they were selling the belongings they had bought from the departing Jews at heavily discounted prices.”¹¹⁴

Furthermore, did political reasons contribute to the outburst of antisemitic incidences in Corfu. The allegation was attributed to the Jews that “due to their powerful social organisation, they manage to push through their political views in the governments and to acquire privileges and significant political power.”¹¹⁵ For this reason, Iakovos Polylas was displeased with the audacity that the Jews began to show; for that reason, he demanded restrictions for the Jews, as he did not want them to have more privileges than the Christians.

We do not deny that we fight the Jews. In fact, we consider this an essential part of our mission. We fight them in order to restrict them... We should not permit the Jews to have more privileges and rights than the Christians anymore.¹¹⁶

In this case, it was known that the Jews almost in union voted against Georgios Theotokis’ party, and against his brother Michail Theotokis. On July 7th 1891 communal elections were. The electoral run was predicted to be difficult and therefore every vote were of particular importance. For the party in office (Deliyiannis’ conservative party) the candidate for the mayor’s office was Constantinos Vassilakis, who had a great part of Corfu’s people (including the Jews)¹¹⁷ on his side. The candidate for the opposition (the liberal party) was Michail Theotokis who with promises or threats tried to gain the people’s

¹¹³ Kaiti Aroni-Tsichli, “To agrotiko zitima Kerkyras meta tin enosi tis Eptanissou me tin Ellada mesa apo ta pafletia tis epochis” [The Agrarian Question of Corfu after the Union of Ionian Islands with Greece after the Pamphlets of the Time], *Epistimoniko Synedrio, I Enosi tis Eptanissou me tin Ellada, 1864-2004. Praktika* [The Union of Ionian Islands with Greece, 1864-2004. Conference Proceedings], vol. I (History), eds. Eleni Gardika-Katsiadaki, Eleni Belia, (Athens: Greek Parliament, Academy of Athens/Research Centre of the History of Center for Research of the History of Modern Greece, 2005), 593-607.

¹¹⁴ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 1.

¹¹⁵ Spandonis, “Ti legoun kai oi Ioudaioi.”

¹¹⁶ *Tolmiros*, July 15, 1885 (apprenticed in Gekas, “The Port Jews of Corfu”, 188).

¹¹⁷ The Jewish population of Corfu was grateful for the supportive attitude of Deliyiannis’ party during the troubles on the island and therefore wanted to vote for his candidate.

support. His followers put in great efforts to persuade the Jews to abstain from the elections in order to prevent Vassilakis to win the elections.¹¹⁸

From the moment that the Jews could not be persuaded to vote for Theotokis, his followers created an intimidating situation, which would make the Jewish population to leave the island. This turned out to be an effective strategy. So, the behaviour of the Corfu's mayor can be obviously explained, who was

totally absent from recent developments and did not work at all to restore order, while the Jewish district was guarded by military forces, reinforced by police constables, all judges were appointed as temporary interrogators, the judiciary, administrative and military authorities were constantly present in the Jewish district. Conversely, friends and family of the mayor collaborated for the annihilation and disappearance of the Jews, while the local newspapers who had the same political beliefs published any false rumour.¹¹⁹

In any case, the pre-electoral atmosphere was so tense and charged,¹²⁰ that the interrogator Cagadis in his confidential letter of the 14th of June to the Prime Minister declared that he finally postponed taking any penal measures against Rubina's family, although he considered it responsible for her murder, because that "could influence public order particularly on the eve of elections, by stirring religious fanaticism for the elections, a sentiment which did not cease to exist and can be manifested at the slightest provocation."¹²¹ It becomes apparent that this specific blood libel had escaped its initial religious dimension, serving financial and political purposes of the local, and not only local, society.

En lieu of an epilogue

The communal elections of the 7th of July showed M. Theotokis as winner. A big part of the Jews had already left the island. Of the total of 5.000, 2.000-3.000 Jews migrated¹²² to Great Britain, Austria, Italy,¹²³ mainland Greece and particularly Athens and Chalkis and to various areas of the Ottoman Empire, mainly Smyrne and Constantinople. Even if this figure is overrated it is certain that the Jewish community of Corfu, one of the biggest in the Greek state, was

¹¹⁸ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 34. Letter of Theagenis Kefalas to the Prime Minister on 5.7.1891.

¹¹⁹ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 1.

¹²⁰ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 33. Letter of the Prefecturer Bouklakos to the Prime Minister on 28.6.1891.

¹²¹ F.P.A., D.A., BVI/106, 30.

¹²² Dafnis, "*Oi Israilites tis Kerkyras*", 29.

¹²³ Yitzchak Kerem, "Corfiote Triestians. A Jewish Diasporic Community from Greece in the 19th and 20th Centuries", *Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Division B, vol. III, (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994), 187-194.

shrunk demographically, financially and culturally and could not reproduce the numbers it had lost.

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**Anti-Jewish Prejudices, Antisemitic Ideologies, Open Violence:
Antisemitism in European Comparison
from the 1870s to the First World War.
A Commentary**

by Reinhard Rürup

Abstract

Reflecting the achievements of comparative historical research, this paper tries to outline the new feature of European antisemitism since the late 19th century. Political antisemitism is presented as a protest movement against the modern society, and the new term antisemitism was immediately adopted into European languages. The Christian churches, too, shared in the making of antisemitism and its struggle against liberalism, capitalism and secularisation. Although only in a few European countries did specifically antisemitic parties take part in general elections, nearly all European antisemites shared fundamental antisemitic convictions. In conclusion the paper points to some methodological problems of researches on antisemitism, from the danger of isolating the object of study to the overestimation of the dimensions of antisemitism, given that antisemitic actions are more likely documented than forms of coexistence between Jews and Christians. Furthermore, it is argued that too little attention is given to the opposing forces against antisemitism, or to the integration of Jews into general society, or to the support, Jewish politicians received from non-Jewish voters, as may be demonstrated, for example by the German working class movement. The paper concludes with a remark that despite the radical agitation and even in the face of the acts of violence against Jews, the impact of political antisemitism remained limited until the First World War.

It is with good reason that comparison has been declared the “royal road” of historical research (Hans-Ulrich Wehler).¹ At the same time though, it is a road that historians have only ever embarked on tentatively. The number of comparative historical studies steadily increased in the second half of the 20th century, reflecting not only a broadening of the themes and a differentiation of the subject matter but also the continuously growing theoretical and methodological needs of modern historical studies. Nevertheless, down to the present day historical comparison has remained anything but the normal case for scholarly work: “Comparing is difficult and demands special effort” is how Jürgen Kocka laconically put it.²

¹ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Introduction to Geschichte und Soziologie*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1972), 24; Jürgen Kocka, “Historische Komparatistik,” *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1996), 49; for a survey on recent comparative research, see: Hartmut Kaelble, “Vergleichende Sozialgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts: Forschung europäischer Historiker,” *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1996), 91-130.

² This commentary was presented orally, using key terms and concepts as a basis. It has been slightly reworked for publication and in parts amended. The summarizing statements are based

As a rule two or at the most three countries are examined in international comparisons, and great effort and diligence is required if the individual countries are to be researched with the same attentiveness and the respective issues of interest compiled and elaborated from the available sources. For this reason it is more frequently the case that attention is focused on one country and the others included for the purpose of comparison are employed as a foil, enabling the particularities of the country of main interest to be recognized more distinctly and delineated more clearly. These kinds of study tend more towards furnishing a comparative perspective however than a historical comparative study in the strict sense. When the comparative interest centers not on just two or three countries but several, the preferred approach to pooling and presenting the studies remains the essay collection, where the singular contributions by specialists for the individual countries usually stand for themselves, more or less unconnected to the others. Measured against the claims raised by assertive historical comparative studies, this can only ever be a preliminary or intermediate stage, one that is indispensable however given the language competency required and the necessary familiarity with the specific situation of source materials and research. The more complex the theme to be examined in international comparison, the more difficult it is to go beyond a mere loose juxtaposition of contributions by specialists.

In the first decades of the 20th century limited to just a few pioneer studies, the history of antisemitism is meanwhile the subject of intensive scholarly effort across a number of disciplines in many countries and regions, above all in historical studies. For obvious reasons the main interest was always on developments in Germany and Austria, while for France and Russia, in part also for Britain, at least basic studies exist. In contrast, there is an urgent need to address the neglect of studies in Eastern Europe, Eastern Central Europe and Southeastern Europe, above all in those independent states whose territories were part of the Russian Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy until

on the notes I took on the individual presentations and the subsequent discussions during the conference. Given the specific character of such a commentary, it seemed to me to make sense to dispense with footnotes. My own understanding of modern antisemitism, which of course informs the following observations and considerations, is to be found in numerous publications: Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck + Ruprecht, 1975 / 2nd. ed. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987); Reinhard Rürup, "Antisemitismus und moderne Gesellschaft. Antijüdisches Denken und antijüdische Agitation im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert," *Das "bewegliche" Vorurteil, Aspekte des internationalen Antisemitismus*, eds. Christina von Braun and Eva-Maria Ziege, (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), 81-100; Id. "Der moderne Antisemitismus und die Entwicklung der historischen Antisemitismusforschung," *Antisemitismusforschung in den Wissenschaften*, eds. Werner Bergmann and Mona Körte, (Berlin: Metropolis Verlag, 2004), 117-135. For the particularities of Jewish history in the period under discussion here, see: Id. "Tradition und Moderne. Jüdische Geschichte in Europa zwischen Aufbruch und Katastrophe," *Holocaust. Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord und die Motive seiner Erinnerung*, ed. Burckhard Asmuss, (Berlin: Edition Minerva, 2002), 17-34.

1918 and belonged to the Soviet Union or were located within the Soviet sphere of influence after 1945. In the present case this led to a constellation in which along with Russia (and Lithuania) and the Kingdom of Poland, which belonged to the Tsarist Empire, the overwhelming majority of essays were devoted to parts of the Habsburg Dual Monarchy, with Hungary, Slovakia, Galicia, and Croatia-Slavonia as well as Romania, Bulgaria and Greece all featuring, while from other European countries only Britain, Italy and Sweden were each discussed in a single essay. Germany and Austria, but also France, the Netherlands and Belgium, and the Iberian Peninsula were left out. One justification for this is that it could be assumed that all those taking part were sufficiently versed with developments in Germany and Austria in particular.

The studies collected here were set a time period, from the end of the 1870s to the outbreak of the First World War; however, the two-and-a-half decades regarded as the phase in which modern antisemitism formed in Europe were only analyzed in their entirety in a few cases. As a rule they are case studies more narrowly defined in terms of time period which address particular incidents or developments, ranging from anti-Jewish agitation through to parliamentary debates, from anti-Jewish discrimination by the state or in civil society through to political and administrative resistance to antisemitic assaults. The common interest of the comparative project is antisemitism as a political movement, antisemitic social practices, antisemitic semantics and rhetoric, the cultural anchoring of antisemitism in the respective society, the significance of anti-Jewish Christian traditions for modern antisemitism, the importance of anti-Jewish violence from the “ritual murder” disturbances through to pogroms, above all in Tsarist Russia, and finally the social and political allies and opponents of the antisemites.

Given the heterogeneity of the individual country – or more precisely – case studies, generalizing considerations on the overall results and thematically summarizing statements are only possible to a limited degree and with some reservation. What is immediately striking is that hostility towards Jews in most of the countries investigated here did indeed change in the transition from the 1870s to the 1880s. Coined in the fall of 1879 in Berlin, the term “antisemitism” was adopted into the various European languages without much hesitation, and at the very least a part of those population groups harboring anti-Jewish sentiments began to “modernize” themselves in terms of their mindset and behavior towards Jews. As a finding of conceptual history, this does not automatically mean that from now on antisemitism in the individual countries was determined primarily by “imports” from the German Reich or the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy; it was however of importance precisely in Eastern and Southeastern Europe that antisemitism became manifest and politically active in a new way in the economically, socially and in part politically progressive European nations, and not just in socially backward countries.

Another remarkable aspect is that religiously informed anti-Jewish attitudes, the animosity towards Jews passed on by the Churches, continued to be of great importance, obviously for many people even pivotal, not only in socially less developed countries, but also in Germany, France and Italy in the final decades of the 19th century. Old and new augmented and intensified one another in the antisemitic movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In many countries, and the case studies make this very clear, political Catholicism drew on the old anti-Jewish resentments just as much as the new antisemitic tendencies in its struggle against liberalism, capitalism and secularization. Protestantism, mostly closely tied to political and social conservatism, took quite a similar course in those countries where it represented the majority.

Wherever antisemitism emerged as a reasonably distinct factor in politics, it represented the first non-conservative protest movement against modern society, or the modernization tendencies in a society in transition. The prevailing social-political mood underpinning and sustaining antisemitic agitation was anti-liberal in every respect, and the supporting strata almost always belonged to those who felt threatened by the economic and social changes triggered by the technological-industrial revolution and capitalism's rapidly advancing penetration of all economic relations. In countries where the government and its agencies were politically liberal or at least welcomed modernization, antisemitic protest was able to also focus on state institutions. This also proved to be the case when conservative governments called in the military to protect Jewish communities in an effort to reassert public peace in the wake of anti-Jewish disturbances and riots.

Modern antisemitism sought to be a – relatively – independent political movement, looking to find a place next to or perhaps even above existing political parties. Initial attempts at organizing sought to position it above party lines, for instance as an “Antisemitic League”, only to fail miserably everywhere. Attempts to stage “Antisemitic World Congresses” and to found an “Antisemitic International” ultimately proved unsuccessful. Specifically antisemitic parties who took part in general elections were founded only in a few European countries in the late 19th century. Even in countries where initial successes were achieved they never managed more than just a few percentage points of the vote, and overall one may consider those parties to be failures which saw themselves as “antisemitic parties” and placed antisemitism at the center of their programs. This does not rule out however that there were other parties, foremost those conservative and clerical in orientation, which sought to exploit the antisemitism pervading society for their own purposes, or even officially adopted antisemitic positions in their manifestos.

Alongside these attempts to establish organizations, generally a failure until the First World War, journalistic networks were developed between newspapers, journals and publishing houses which proved to be far more successful in spreading antisemitic ideas and programs in the mid- and even long-term. Not in every, but most certainly in many countries, there were skilled organizers or generous sponsors who made a decidedly antisemitic media policy possible before 1914. Aside from special constellations as in France, as a rule circulation was by no means spectacular, but there was a constant supply of antisemitic information and interpretations that kept the hard core of the antisemites interested while in a variety of contexts introducing casual or occasional readers to the world of antisemitic ideas. Since the 1870s and 1880s there was – for whoever was interested – an opportunity to become familiar with antisemitic ideas in a score of publication types: from flyers and pamphlets through to newspapers and journals, handbooks, scholarly or pseudo-scientific works, and not least novels and other forms of literature.

That modern antisemitism is more than a negative attitude towards the Jews living in the respective place or region is clearly evident in most case studies, albeit not all of them. As shown by a broadly scoped international comparison, modern antisemitism is in essence a political ideology. With the help of this ideology economic and social, political and cultural relations deemed undesirable and damaging are to be explained and overcome. The Jews are not only identified and presented as the main beneficiaries of the deplored developments but also as causing them. Whoever wants to change the world must therefore, so runs the logic of antisemitic ideology, get to the root of the problem, i.e. take up the fight against the Jews, their position and influence. The antisemitic “worldview” seeks to offer orientation and motivate followers to take corresponding action. In the process Jews are no longer defined as a religious community, but as an ethnic unit, an “alien peoples” or, referring to the power and interest-driven politics it was insinuated they pursue, a “state within the state.” Despite the continuing presence of the old prejudices, the “Jewish question” no longer revolved around religious antagonisms instead it had turned into a “social question” and a “cultural question.” The notion that Jews are a “race” is evident in different contexts, but for the period under study racist thinking was yet to take center stage in antisemitic agitation. The concept of race is still relatively vague and fluid at this stage, and many antisemites do not yet consider the “laws of race” to be principally irreversible. At the same time though, it is clear that thinking in racial categories, extending through to the construction of an unavoidable “racial conflict”, a “struggle for survival” between Jews and their “host peoples”, was increasingly gaining in currency on the eve of the First World War.

One decisive prerequisite for the antisemitic “worldview” was the notion that the Jews only seemed as if they were a small minority struggling for equality in society, while they actually possessed enormous economic and social power.

Complaints about “Jewish power”, about the allegedly fateful “Jewish influence” or the “Jewish spirit” in modern economic and cultural life abounded in ever new variations. “Judea is a power. Antisemitism opposes it”, is the lapidary statement given in the “Staatslexikon” put out by the Görres Society, an organization affiliated to political Catholicism in the German Empire.³ In this setting antisemitic conspiracy theories were able to flourish unchecked – right through to notions of a “Jewish world conspiracy.” What fundamentally distinguishes modern antisemitism from prejudices and aggression directed against other minorities is the conviction that Jews in the respective country, but also beyond the national borders, were all too powerful and therefore dangerous. Other minorities could be rejected and despised, stigmatized, socially excluded and even politically persecuted, but they were not considered dangerous in the same way, rather solely as undesirable and a nuisance.

The notions that the Jews were “alien” and “did not belong” linked into the European national movements over the course of the 19th century in a particular context, namely as these movements no longer saw themselves as an instrument of liberation from the old feudal structures of Europe and as a player in the pre-March “spring of the peoples”; instead, nationalist sentiments and organizations were concerned foremost with distinguishing their own nation from others, developing a frontline against the “enemies” of the nation, both domestically and internationally. When the process of nation-building was not based on the liberal program of the French Revolution, drawing instead on the shared descent, history, language and culture, the exclusion of minorities was an obvious consequence. This was by no means limited to the Jews, but they in particular were the objects of hate for radical nationalists in most European countries. To the national minorities struggling for their cultural and political independence in the Habsburg Monarchy and parts of Tsarist Russia, the Jews frequently seemed to be the beneficiaries of the prevailing power relations, and in the already established nation-states where the Jews were granted equal rights in the 19th century it was repeatedly doubted whether they really belonged to the nation. Not least because they were in many cases active beyond national boundaries economically and in familial relations, the Jewish minorities were seen as a factor threatening national security that was difficult to control. With the emergence of an integral and radical nationalism in Europe since the 1890s, nationalism and antisemitism became even more closely tied together; the potential threat to Jews carried by these nationalisms intensified greatly, and this was fully independent of any subjective view of Jewish individuals and groups.

³ *Staatslexikon*, ed. Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft im katholischen Deutschland, vol. 3, (Freiburg: Herder, 1894), 530.

What was new since the late 19th century was the experience of anti-Jewish violence on a massive scale, with perpetrators not shying away from murder and outrages in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Although in the period of emancipation a significant number of anti-Jewish outrages took place in Western and Central Europe, this was in the main “violence against property and possessions”, the demolition of Jewish organizations, businesses and homes; fatalities were the exception. Moreover, these “excesses” almost always took place in the context of general political and social disturbances or revolutionary upheavals, so that once the situation settled down again social peace was also restored for the Jewish minority. From the beginning of the 1880s however, the character and dynamic of anti-Jewish violence in Europe changed as in the Russian Empire, in particular in the Southwestern provinces, anti-Jewish pogroms broke out, which in their scale and radical nature overshadowed everything hitherto experienced with the exception of the Ukrainian massacre of the mid-17th century, triggering the first great wave of emigration by Eastern European Jews to Central and Western Europe as well as in rapidly growing numbers to North America. After a seemingly calming of the situation in the 1890s, there followed a second wave of pogroms at the beginning of the 20th century, ignited in 1903 by events in Kishinev, Bessarabia. In this city – present-day Chisinau – the Jewish population made up almost 30% of residents, and in two days 700 buildings were set alight, 600 business plundered and 47 people murdered before the military intervened. The pogroms continued into the following year at numerous places and in 1905/06 reached their grim peak with riots at no less than 674 locations, during which 3000 people were murdered and around 17,000 injured.

The Russian Empire was undoubtedly the center of this new form of violence, but news of these acts of violence sent shockwaves throughout Europe. And there was open violence against Jews outside of Eastern Europe, for example on the Greek island of Corfu, where in 1891, after two months of riots and around 20 dead, almost a third of the Jewish inhabitants left the island, or in France where anti-Jewish disturbances were registered in many locations in the 1890s and the acts of violence continued on after the turn of the century. The First World War failed to bring about a turn for the good; instead, with the revolutions and civil wars following in its wake, as well as the founding of new states and the struggles between nationalities this entailed, new waves of persecution and violence ensued. The number of Jews murdered on the territory covering the former Tsarist Empire between 1917 and 1921 is usually set at 30,000, but many estimates put the number as much higher. Anti-Jewish riots also took place in Warsaw, Vilnius and Lviv in November 1918, in Moravia and Slovakia, in Hungary following the overthrow of the soviet council government, and at the beginning of the 1920s in Romania. A new period of insecurity began for Jews in Europe, while for antisemites the move from words to action became ever shorter, with violent and even murderous

solutions to the “Jewish question” as they defined it no longer seeming impossible.

Gathering all this evidence, the question emerges if one may speak of a new European antisemitism since the 1870s, or if we are not rather dealing with a host of anti-Jewish movements in European countries, each possessing its own unique features and at best only loosely connected with one another. The answer is not simple and no hasty judgments should be made. To begin with we need to keep in mind that a tradition of Christian animosity towards Jews had existed throughout Europe since the High Middle Ages, in both Protestant and Catholic countries and regions. The European Enlightenment and its liberal movement tried to overcome the negative image of “the Jew” and the associated distorting picture of Jewish life, but were only partially successful in Western and Central Europe, while in large parts of Eastern and Southeastern Europe traditional anti-Jewish notions continued to circulate almost unchanged, even when there was close economic contacts and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Jews over long periods.

What is generally characterized as “modern antisemitism” arose in those European countries which were more developed politically and socially, namely as a post-emancipation and post-liberal phenomenon, as a reaction to Jews achieving equal rights and at a point in time as liberalism’s power to shape society and politics was diminishing, with conservative and clerical forces enjoying a revival. These preconditions are completely absent in Tsarist Russia. There were no strong liberal movements with a dominant position in public opinion, and there was no state pursuing a policy of emancipation, no equality before the law for Jews. In addition, Jews in the west and south of the Russian Empire not only represented a higher percentage of the population than in the rest of Europe, but actually formed large local and regional minorities in their settlement areas, at places even the majority, while in other countries they often lived scattered in very small communities and even in larger cities made up only a very small share of the population. The acculturation and assimilation process was far more developed in Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy than in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Despite all the discrimination still in evidence, Jews in these parts of Europe were largely integrated into the respective societies since the late 19th century, while the life of the large majority of Eastern European Jews remained determined by the traditional situation.

Given this combination of circumstances, the anti-Jewish or antisemitic intentions must demonstrate clear differences in their manifestation, objectives, activities and supporting groups. In addition, the specific conditions facilitating the rise of a political antisemitism – a political public sphere, the possibility of political organizations, the conducting of elections and generally the opportunity to influence politics “from below” – were generally lacking in

the Tsarist Empire. In this respect, it is extremely difficult to integrate the new antisemitism in the more advanced countries and the antisemitic movements in Eastern Europe into a unified interpretative framework. On the other hand, it remains striking that antisemitic tendencies came into prominence almost everywhere in the 1870s and 1880s, that antisemitic propagandists and their journalistic mouthpieces communicated with one another across a number of countries, that information was exchanged and events of interest for developing the antisemitic movement which took place beyond the border were closely observed and discussed. While there was certainly no controlling base which could have exerted a transnational influence, there were undoubtedly shared antisemitic fundamental convictions, which generally agreed with how this sentiment was summed up in Germany in 1879: “The Jews are our misfortune!”⁴ From France to Ukraine, from Lithuania to Hungary, Romania or Greece, since late 19th century the Jew-haters were convinced that Jews were responsible for and the cause behind the economic and social conditions they complained about, if not solely than at the very least to a considerable degree. The antisemitic utopia therefore had the same objective in all European countries – a world without Jews. In this sense it appears, despite all the obvious differences, justified to speak of a new transnational European antisemitism. Considering the catastrophe of the 20th century, the murder of the European Jews, it becomes clear that the two main elements of the new antisemitism since the final 25 years of the 19th century, the antisemitic ideology, radicalized even further in the subsequent period, and massive violence against Jews, formed the decisive preconditions for the genocide of Jews living within the Nazi sphere of influence.

Like antisemitism research in general, comparative studies into antisemitism are always in danger of isolating its object of study. As a rule, whoever is on the lookout for antisemitism and antisemites will make a find, but at the same time may easily lose any sense of proportion. This already begins with the sources: because they disturb public order, antisemitic actions have a far greater chance of being recorded and passed on than the peaceful cooperation or even coexistence between Jews and Christians. Whoever goes out on the street and screams or breaks laws attracts attention; whoever goes about their business without creating such a spectacle remains unnoticed. A rumor of ritual murder with all its turmoil and fears, the gathering of a riotous mob and outbreak of excesses, will produce, even when things calm down after a few days, far more official documents than thirty years of conflict-free coexistence. The danger that in this way antisemitic activities can come into focus as if under a magnifying glass, is even greater in international comparative studies than local, regional or national undertakings because the aim in the first instance is to gather and analyze as much detailed information about antisemites and antisemitic incidents as possible, entailing studious effort by

⁴ Heinrich von Treitschke, “Unsere Aussichten,” *Preußische Jahrbücher*, 44 (1879), 575.

researchers that cannot always be repeated for the broader social conditions. It is therefore with good reason that calls for more contextualization are becoming louder within antisemitism research in recent times.

It is still the case that too little is known about the “silent majority” in the individual countries. Moreover, too seldom distinctions are drawn between anti-Jewish prejudices and antisemitic attitudes. Negative “images of Jews”, religious and social prejudices towards Jews, were widespread in Europe, including the camps of the bourgeois liberals and the socialist labor movement. The situation could not be expected to be any different given the centuries-old anti-Jewish traditions deeply rooted in folk culture. Such prejudices are not without consequences in a modern or a modernizing society, but they are not the same as modern antisemitism, which is programmatic and focused on taking action, not only cultivating a social distance to Jews but committed to changing the world by combating the Jews. There are many examples of liberals and democrats who actively supported the emancipation of Jews and campaigned against antisemitism, but also confessed that they themselves were not free of prejudice against Jews. The situation was similar for many socialists who not only fought resolutely against antisemitism in theory but also in practice, while in a surprising and often appalling manner they took advantage of private correspondence or “off-the-record” statements to use anti-Jewish clichés.

Reports and accounts of anti-Jewish excesses always mention that – albeit frequently after a noticeable delay – the military was sent in to deal with the perpetrators of violence. Overall, too little attention is given to the opposing forces in the individual studies however, those forces which did not think or act in antisemitic terms, and took a stand against antisemitism. Even conservative and reactionary governments mobilized the state’s power to put an end to antisemitic disturbances. In most parliaments majorities supported equal rights for Jews and opposed antisemitic machinations. The radical antisemites were almost always isolated in political life. There were anti-Jewish, even antisemitic tendencies in the large Christian denominations at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, but it is unclear to what extent the respective “church members” were influenced. Even political Catholicism represented only a section of the Catholic population in the respective countries, other Catholics feeling more affinity to the liberal, democratic or socialist camps. Above all in the cities, but also at national or individual state elections, Jews were elected by a majority of non-Jewish voters in more developed countries. Between 1881 and 1914, around 10% of the deputies making up the Social Democrat Reichstag faction were Jewish or recognizably of Jewish descent (and that with a Jewish share of the population of merely 1%, which moreover due to its predominantly bourgeois structure was hardly viable as potential voters for a socialist party). Furthermore, with Paul Singer (until 1911) and Hugo Haase (until 1916) one of the two party chairmen and leaders of the

Reichstag faction – at the side of August Bebel and later Friedrich Ebert – were Jewish. This constellation did not prevent the Social Democrats from becoming the strongest faction at the elections to the German Reichstag in 1912.

On the eve of the First World War Jews were no longer outsiders in numerous European states, but actively involved in shaping politics and society. Their presence in secondary schools, including for girls, the number of students at universities and in specific academic professional groups was outstanding, their role in economic and cultural life so prominent that the antisemites declared their own position to be that of an apparently necessary defensive action against “Jewish superiority.” Prejudices and discrimination had not disappeared, but they neither hindered individual successes nor the social advancement of the Jewish minority. Jews performed military service like all other citizens, but in most states they were barred from taking an officer’s career, and in Prussia they were also denied access to the coveted reserve officer commissions. There were though famous exceptions, and precisely in that state where modern antisemitism was more virulent than in other countries: in the Austro-Hungarian Army almost one thousand Jews were promoted to the officers’ ranks up until 1910, 19 of them to that of general, and by around 1900 every fifth reserve officer was Jewish.

Whereas in Eastern Europe until 1914 and beyond minority status was never disputed for the majority of the Jewish population – they were perceived by the majority population as a clearly definable minority –, in large parts of Western and Central Europe the situation was different. In statistics Jews continued to be counted as a religious minority, but affiliation to Judaism was no longer considered the overarching factor for being Jewish. Religion had become a “confession” – “Jewish”, “Israelite”, “Mosaic” – and thus no longer the sole defining characteristic of identity. A Jew was now at the same time a German as well, was French or Italian, a bourgeois or a proletariat, an entrepreneur, academic or tradesman. Politically a Jew was conservative, liberal or socialist, was involved in interest groups and associations, and was poor, rich or middle-class. A Jew belonged to very different social majorities as well as minorities, and in terms of life within the Jewish community there was no lack of diversity and controversy between liberal and orthodox Jews, Zionists and German nationalists, modernizers and traditionalists. It was only in the eyes of the antisemites that the Jews were a clearly definable group, and even they were alarmed by the fact that many Jews had become “invisible”, i.e. as the assimilation process continued apace they were no longer identifiable as such.

The extent to which Jews were integrated into general society is not least discernible by considering the rise of denominational “mixed marriages” between Jews and Christians in the first decades of the 20th century. Up until

the end of the 19th century “mixed marriages” played an insignificant role statistically, and one reason for this was that when a Jew and Christian wanted to get married one of the them – in practice almost always the Jewish partner – had to convert to the other denomination as long as the institution of the “civil marriage” had yet to be established. A large percentage of “mixed marriages” were concluded since the turn of the century in Italy and the Netherlands, while the number continued to remain low in Eastern Europe. In most states the “mixed marriage rate” – the number from one hundred Jewish persons marrying a non-Jewish partner – fluctuated in the 1920s, ranging from 22 in Germany to 13 in Hungary, whereby the numbers in large cities – and this also holds for Eastern Europe – was always much higher than in small towns. Extreme figures were recorded at the beginning of the century with 32 in Copenhagen and in 1927 with no less than 56 in Trieste. If in large parts of Europe the partner of every fifth person getting married was from the majority society, then the line separating the majority from the minority could no longer have been so clear cut in everyday life.

Looking at how the life of the Jewish population in the various European countries developed shows that, despite all the radical agitation, the discrimination in everyday life and the acts of violence, the impact of modern antisemitism remained limited. For Jews, experiencing antisemitism was part of everyday life, but in the decades up for discussion here antisemitism was not a dominating factor in their lives. It prevented neither achievements nor successes, and it did not seem to seriously threaten the future of coming generations. Many Jewish organizations nevertheless openly waged a struggle against all antisemitic tendencies, while others believed that they could ignore antisemitism. What was graver and had greater consequences was the long-term impact of the rise and spread of modern antisemitism. Alone the fact that antisemitic movements formed in almost every European country and developed simultaneously albeit differently, was taken by antisemites as a sign confirming their basic ideological positions. While at the beginning of the 20th century antisemitism was certainly not a dominant element, it was obviously a component of political and social life in Europe. With the war, which ended in defeat for large parts of Central and Eastern Europe, the revolutionary upheavals and civil wars, the economic and social crises triggered by mass unemployment and inflation, antisemitic currents gained new impetus. Until 1933 they were more successful in some countries than in Germany, for instance in Poland and Hungary, but this changed dramatically when, following the Nazi “seizure of power”, radical racist antisemitism came to unrestricted power for the first time in Europe. From now on it was clear that the rhetoric would be turned into action. The path to genocide was not marked out in advance from the outset, but there could be no doubt that Jews no longer had a future in Germany, and later in all areas of Europe occupied by the German Army. That there were many “willing helpers” to the Nazi murdering in many European countries and regions – this is also part of the long-term

repercussions of antisemitism in the decades immediately prior to the First World War.

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The image of Antisemites in German and Austrian Caricatures

by Ulrich Wyrwa

Antisemitic caricatures had already drawn broad attention from one attentive contemporary observer and passionate collector – Eduard Fuchs, who had published in 1921 a huge volume on Jews in cartoons.¹ Already in 1901, he had published what remains to this day the most extensive history of caricatures of the European people.² The term ‘caricature’ goes back to the cartoons, the “*ritrattini carichi*”, literally “loaded portraits”, of Annibale Carracci in 16th century Italy.³ But not before the mid-18th century were caricatures used as a medium for political messages. The new art of portrait-caricatures may be understood as the art of making politics visible.⁴ In current historical research into the cultural aspects of political antisemitism, this iconographic source has received much attention. For nineteenth century Germany Thomas Gräfe, Michaela Haibl or Julia Schäfer for example have studied the manifold features of antisemitic cartoons.⁵ Antisemitic caricatures or political cartoons have even been examined from a German-French comparative perspective.⁶ Furthermore, this topic, cartoons as historical sources, offers insight into the relationship between the new cultural history of antisemitism and the pictorial turn in historiography.⁷

Interestingly enough, no attention has so far been given to the image of antisemites in the cartoons of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this brief collection of caricatures of anti-Semites from 1879 to 1914 is therefore twofold. Because of the blank space of German and Austrian antisemitism in

¹ Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte*, (München: Langen 1921).

² Eduard Fuchs, *Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker*, vom Altertum bis zur Neuzeit, 3 Vol., (Berlin: Hofmann 1901-1904); for Fuchs as a collector see “Walter Benjamin, Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und Historiker”, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 4 (1937), 346-381.

³ Gerd Unverfehrt, “Karikatur – Zur Geschichte eines Begriffs”, *Bild als Waffe. Mittel und Motive der Karikatur in fünf Jahrhunderten*, ed. Gerhard Langemeyer, (München: Prestel 1985), 345-354; Werner Hofmann, “Die Karikatur – eine Gegenkunst”, *ibid.*, 355-383.

⁴ Ernst H. Gombrich, “Das Arsenal der Karikaturisten”, *ibid.*, 384-401.

⁵ Michaela Haibl, *Zerrbild als Stereotyp. Visuelle Darstellungen von Juden zwischen 1850 und 1900*, (Berlin: Metropol 2000); Thomas Gräfe, *Antisemitismus in Gesellschaft und Karikatur des Kaiserreichs. Glimpse Politische Bilderbogen 1892-1901*, (Norderstedt: Books on Demand. 2005); Julia Schäfer, “Verzeichnet. Über ‚Judenbilder‘ in der Karikatur als historische Quelle”, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 10 (2001), 138-155.

⁶ Regina Schleicher, *Antisemitismus in der Karikatur. Zur Bildpublizistik in der französischen Dritten Republik und im deutschen Kaiserreich (1871-1914)*, (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang 2009).

⁷ William J. T. Mitchell, “The Pictorial Turn”, *Artforum*, March 1992, 89-94; Heike Talkenberger, “Von der Illustration zur Interpretation. Das Bild als historische Quelle. Methodische Überlegungen zur Historischen Bildkunde”, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 21 (1994), 289-313; Gerhard Paul, *Visual History. Ein Studienbuch*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2006).

this issue, the first intention of this presentation is to exhibit at least some of the most important German and Austrian Antisemites. Second, picking up one of Reinhard Rürup's remark in his commentary, this small collection intends to provide a brief presentation of the "opposing forces" which had taken "a stand against antisemitism". The images offer a look at the adversaries that arose to Antisemitism within German and Austrian civil society.

These cartoons are primarily found in left wing or socialist newspapers, such as the German *Der Wahre Jacob* or the Austrian *Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt*. The documents presented here demonstrate that the socialist working class movement – together with the liberal activities and the Jewish response - constituted an effective resistance to antisemitism.⁸

Furthermore, as these cartoons make clear, from the very outset of the new antisemitic movement, its opponents had a precise understanding of its dominant features. Already at the beginning of the new antijewish agitation initiated by the conservative Prussian newspaper *Kreuzzeitung* in the summer 1875, the liberal satirical journal *Berliner Wespen* had published a sharp cartoon 'Die alte Leier. Das Lied von den schlimmen Juden' (The same old tune. The song of the evil Jews) with apposite observations regarding the new quality of this anti-Jewish campaign.⁹

They also make clear, that contemporaries of the emerging antisemitic movement of the late Nineteenth century still retained a strong historical memory of the Hep-Hep-Riots of 1819, the first outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Nineteenth Century Germany.¹⁰ In many of these early cartoons, the Hep-Hep-Riots are taken as significant symbols for the new violence against Jews.

Interestingly enough, contemporary observers also correctly perceived the ambivalence in Bismarck's attitude towards antisemitism, which has been well described by the historian of the emergence of antisemitism in Imperial Germany, Paul W. Massing, noting that Bismarck must „be considered the first great manipulator of anti-Semitism in modern Germany“.¹¹

⁸ The decided opposition of the socialist movement against Antisemitism must be underlined against current publications which are reproaching the Social Democrat Party of being likewise responsible for the antisemitic penetrating of the German society. For example: Lars Fischer, *The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007). These studies methodologically tapping into trap of the so called "hindsight bias"; see: Vito Roberto, Kristoffel Grechenig, "Rückschafehler ('Hindsight Bias') bei Sorgfaltspflichtverletzungen", *Zeitschrift für Schweizerisches Recht* 130.1 (2011), 5-27. Regarding Firscher's presentation see the review of Stefanie Schüler-Springorum in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 291.1 (2010), 228-230.

⁹ *Berliner Wespen* n. 29, July 16th, 1875; facsimile in: Ursula E. Koch, *Der Teufel in Berlin. Von der Märzrevolution bis zu Bismarcks Entlassung. Illustrierte politische Witzblätter einer Metropole 1848–1890*, (Köln: Informationspresse Leske, 1991), 541.

¹⁰ Jacob Katz, *Die Hep-Hep-Verfolgungen des Jahres 1819*, (Berlin: Metropol 1994); Stefan Rohrbacher, *Gewalt im Biedermeier. Antijüdische Ausschreitungen in Vormärz und Revolution (1815-1848/49)*, (Frankfurt/M. New York: Campus Verlag, 1993).

¹¹ Paul W. Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949) 43.

Regarding cartoonists themselves, we may determine the author at least for some of the caricatures from the Austrian journal *Glühlichter*. The caricatures n. 4, 8, 9, 11-14 and 19 are drawn by Friedrich Kaskeline, born in 1863 in Prague, who studied at the Academy of Arts in Vienna. Kaskeline had worked not only for the *Glühlichter* but also for the magazines like *The Graphic* or *The Daily Graphic*. Furthermore he produced illustrations for books and postcards, among others a greeting card for a Jewish New Year.¹² The cartoon “Ein antisemitischer ‘Parteitag’” [Fig. 16] is drawn by the artist Fritz Graetz (1875-1915), who had worked after his studies in Frankfurt on the main for example also for the German satirical journals *Lustige Blätter* and *Der wahre Jacob*.¹³ Together with Friedrich Kaskeline he belonged to those artist, who had a determining influence on the profil of the satirical journal.¹⁴ The Schönerer cartoon of 1912 [Fig. 22] on the other hand was drawn by Moriz Jung (1885-1915). After his studies at the arts college in Vienna, Jung had drawn postcards, posters for example and he designed programme booklets for theatres.¹⁵

Like other political cartoons, the images presented here, offer not only a humorous side, they also carried unmistakable political-propagandistic meanings in their decisively negative portrayals of the Antisemites. To be sure, even in some of the socialist newspapers, Cartoons may occasionally be found that are not entirely free of antisemitic aspects. Under the “Variations of a well known utterance” in the *Glühlichter* of 1892 for example, where Lueger is asking if he looks like a ‘Judenfresser’, we see at the bottom of the page a Jewish figure standing in front of the stock exchange, drawn with the typical physiognomy of antisemitic cartoons, asking if he looks like a swindler. Furthermore, at the turn of the century, when Karl Lueger stood at the height of his political power and busily cooperating with the Jewish establishment of Vienna¹⁶ - the antisemitic journal Kickeriki pointedly reminded Lueger not to forget his antisemitic catechism. In those years, too, we see in the newspaper *Glühlichter* occasionally antisemitic or ambivalent cartoons directed (for example) against Lueger’s cooperation with Jewish bankers.

Finally, after the First World War, in the German socialist journal *Der wahre Jacob*, we can find certain cartoons in which antisemitic features appear, in marked contrast to the overwhelmingly unambiguous anti-antisemitic cartoons of the Nineteenth century.¹⁷

However, even the last cartoon presented here from the German *Kladderadatsch*, which gives a clear picture of the internal conflicts of the antisemitic movement and which treats with irony their passionate quarrels is

¹² Josef Seiter, *‘Blutigrot und silbrig hell ...’: Bild, Symbolik und Agitation der frühen sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung in Österreich*, (Wien-Weimar-Köln: Böhlau 1991), 40, 41, 189.

¹³ Ursula E. Koch, *Der Teufel in Berlin*, 266, 323.

¹⁴ Josef Seiter, *‘Blutigrot und silbrig hell ...’*, 72, 177.

¹⁵ *Wien um 1900. Kunst und Kultur*, ed. Maria Marchetti, (Wien: Brandstätter, 1985), 519.

¹⁶ John W. Boyer, *Karl Lueger (1844-1910). Christlichsoziale Politik als Beruf. Eine Biografie*, (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau, 2010).

¹⁷ To less attentions has been drawn to this difference in Julia Schäfer, *Vermessen, gezeichnet, verlacht. Judenbilder in populären Zeitschriften, 1918-1933*, (Frankfurt/M. New York: Campus, 2005).

not free from ambivalent features, as we may see looking at the contentment of the Jew who stands in the foreground.

Nevertheless these cartoons provide us a strong awareness not only of the distinctive and decisive role played by the emergence of the new politics of antisemitism in Imperial Germany and Habsburg Austria, they also offer indisputable evidence that the Jews themselves were by no means alone in their opposition to the new threat.

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Fields of research are the history of consumption, European Jewish history and the history of Antisemitism in Europe in particular in Germany and Italy, and the history of Jewish historiography.

Recent Publications: *Antisemitismus in Zentraleuropa. Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), (together with Werner Bergmann); Editor: *Einspruch und Abwehr. Die Reaktion des europäischen Judentums auf die Entstehung des Antisemitismus (1879–1914)* (Frankfurt/M.-New York: Campus, 2010); “Die Internationalen Antijüdischen Kongresse von 1882 und 1883 in Dresden und Chemnitz. Zum Antisemitismus als europäischer Bewegung”, in *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2009),

URL: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2009/Article=362>;

“Narratives of Jewish Historiography in Europe”, in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, eds. Stefan Berger, Chris Lorenz, (Hampshire – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

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Fig. 1



“A modern Reformer”

The Berlin Court preacher Adolph Stoecker (1835-1909) was one of the earliest activists of the antisemitic political movement. Although a theologian, he campaigned against the Jews primarily on social issues. Immediately after his first antisemitic speech and the foundation of his Christian Social Party, the weekly *Kladderadatsch* presented Stoecker in the pose of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of a Synagogue. Stoecker's theses however are composed of the only word 'Hepp-Hepp', the battle cry of the early antisemitic riots of 1819 in Germania.

Kladderadatsch. Humoristisch-satirisches Wochenblatt N. 53/54, November, 23rd 1879

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Fig. 2



A cartoon from the social-democratic journal *Der Wahre Jacob* from 1880 contrasted Stoecker's position as a court preacher with the conduct of his audience, presenting Stoecker as the „Patron Saint of the hooligans“. His speeches stimulate students and ordinary people to acts of violence against Jews.

Der Wahre Jacob, 1880

Gidal-Bildarchiv, Salomon-Ludwig-Steinheim-Institut

Fig. 3



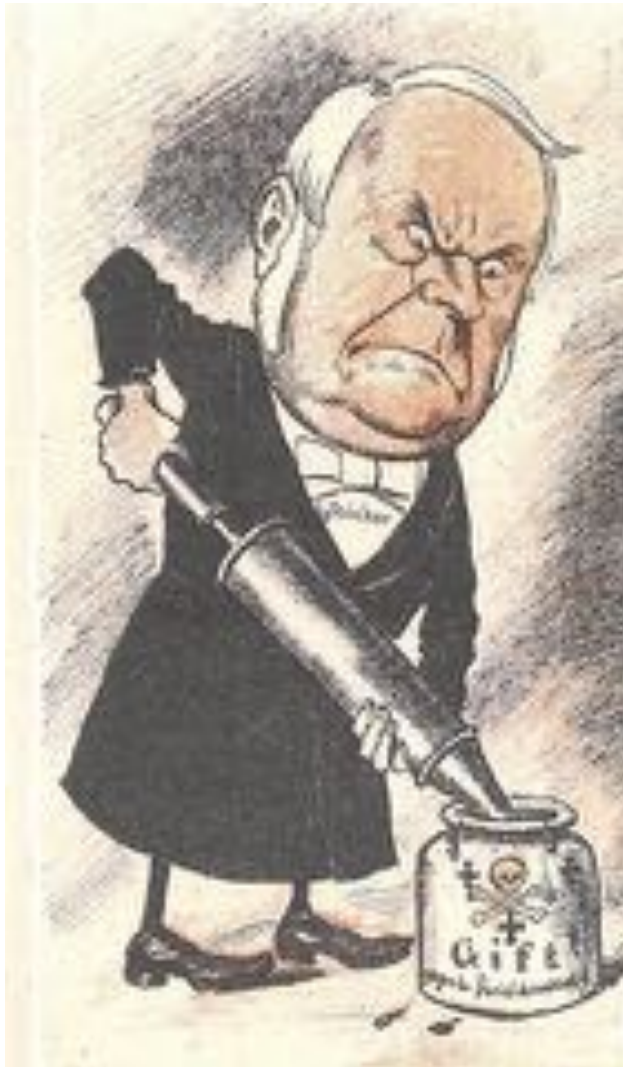
“Seed and fruit”

After the outbreak of antisemitic violence and the incendiary attack on the synagogue in the small town of Neustettin in Pommerania in 1881, a cartoon in a North German newspaper presented Stoecker’s speeches as the seed, which results in violence against Jews.

Die Reform. Ein Volksblatt, Altona, August, 16th 1881

Carl-von-Ossietzky Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg

Fig. 4



“For the German Parliamentary Elections“

During the election campaign for the election of the German Parliament in 1893, in which the antisemitic parties enjoyed their greatest success, the Austrian socialist satirical journal *Glühlichter* published a vicious image of Stoecker, presenting him as one of the most important feeders of the Socialists, “Sozialistenfresser”, filling his injection with poison.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, June 10th, 1893

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 5



One of the most spectacular and controversial antisemites in Imperial Germany was the Berlin teacher Hermann Ahlwardt, who had been elected into the German Reichstag in a by-election in 1892. Because of a case of fraud he had been dismissed from teaching, and so he became politically active. After taking a bad hit in the stock market, Ahlwardt caused a sensation with antisemitic brochures and public attacks against Jews, becoming a leading exponent of the so-called 'Radauantisemiten', Hooligan-Antisemites. The socialist satirical newspaper 'Der wahre Jacob' turned Ahlwardt into a source of ridicule.

Der Wahre Jacob N. 170, 1893

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Figg. 6 and detail



“Germania is preparing for the world exposition in Chicago”

Even contemporary observers noted the ambivalence in Bismarck’s attitude toward the Jews and the antisemites, and the socialist newspaper *Der Wahre Jacob* went so far as to depict Bismarck and Ahlwardt as Siamese twins, acting with Hep-Hep cudgels.

Der Wahre Jacob N. 157, 1892

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Fig. 7



“From the time”

In a further cartoon from the newspaper *Der Wahre Jacob*, Bismarck, Ahlwardt and the Antisemites are presented amongst the Figures, representing the conservative Party, the church, the army and the Manchester capitalists as forces that would destroy the social order, whereas the conservative media are accusing the Social democracy of wanting to destroy society.

Der Wahre Jacob N. 169, 1893

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Fig. 8



“The new Shock-headed Peter”

The success of the extreme hooligan Antisemite Ahlwardt in the by-election in 1892 had put the other wings of the antisemitic movement in Germany, the christian-social wing of Stoecker and conservative wing around Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg in a awkward position, attentively remarked upon by the Austrian satirical journal.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, April, 15th 1893

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 9



After the success of Ahlwardt in the general election for the German Reichstag in June 1893 an Austrian cartoon again picked up the internal frictions among German Antisemites, showing how Ahlwardt outclassed even Stoecker.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, Juni, 22nd 1893

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 10



“In Preparation for the Elections”.

In Austria, the former liberal politician Karl Lueger had become the most influential Antisemite within the Habsburg Empire. In the transition period of his conversion to clerical antisemitic positions, the Viennese satirical newspaper *Der Floh*, *The Flea*, picked up the opportunistic attitude of Lueger. His attention is called to a delegation for election waiting for him, and he answered: “Are these Germans, Czechs, Jews or Antisemites? I have lost the thread. I really don’t know if I have to be democratic, Czech, German, Jewish or Antisemitic.”

Der Floh. Politisch, humoristische Wochenschrift, May 10th 1885

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 11 and detail



“Medicine and hygiene in antisemitic terms”

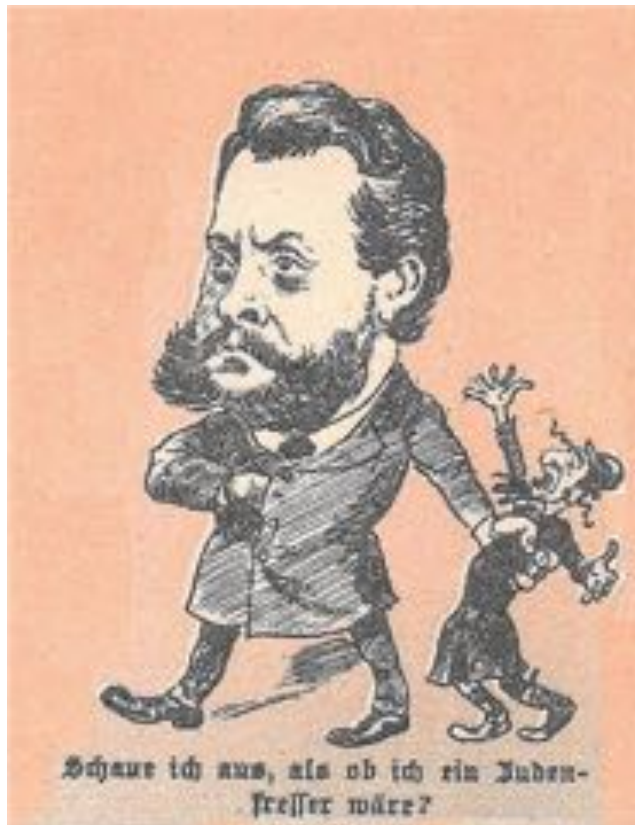
After Lueger's turn to anti-Semitism and preparing the foundation of a Christian-social Party the socialist journal *Glühlichter* scoffed at the medicine

of Lueger, who administered the patient a tincture called “Christian-social antisemitic rubbish”.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, October 15th 1892

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 12



“Do I look like a rabid antisemite?”

Occasionally, Lueger publicly professed that he was not an antisemite. Under the title “Variations of a well known utterance” the satirical newspaper *Glühlichter* treated with irony Lueger’s statements.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, December 20th, 1892.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 13



“Hunting Season”

After the foundation of the Christian-social Party, the Glühlichter, again, criticized the antisemitic policy of Lueger. On the occasion of the beginning of the hunting season 1893 the satirical journal put together various hunting scenes, among them the ‘antisemitic deer hunt’ of Carl Lueger.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, September, 30th 1893

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 14



“The Black-Social Reformer”

After the formulation of the Christian-social program of social reforms, the Viennese satirical socialist newspaper had taken the mickey out of these ‘Black-Social reformers’, presenting them by preparing their “clerical, christian-social, anti-Semitic Peoples-stultification-pulp”. They mixed a tincture of humility and modesty with poison against Social-democracy and boiled this mixture down with the bodies of some Jews.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, August. 31st 1894

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 15



“Awkward”

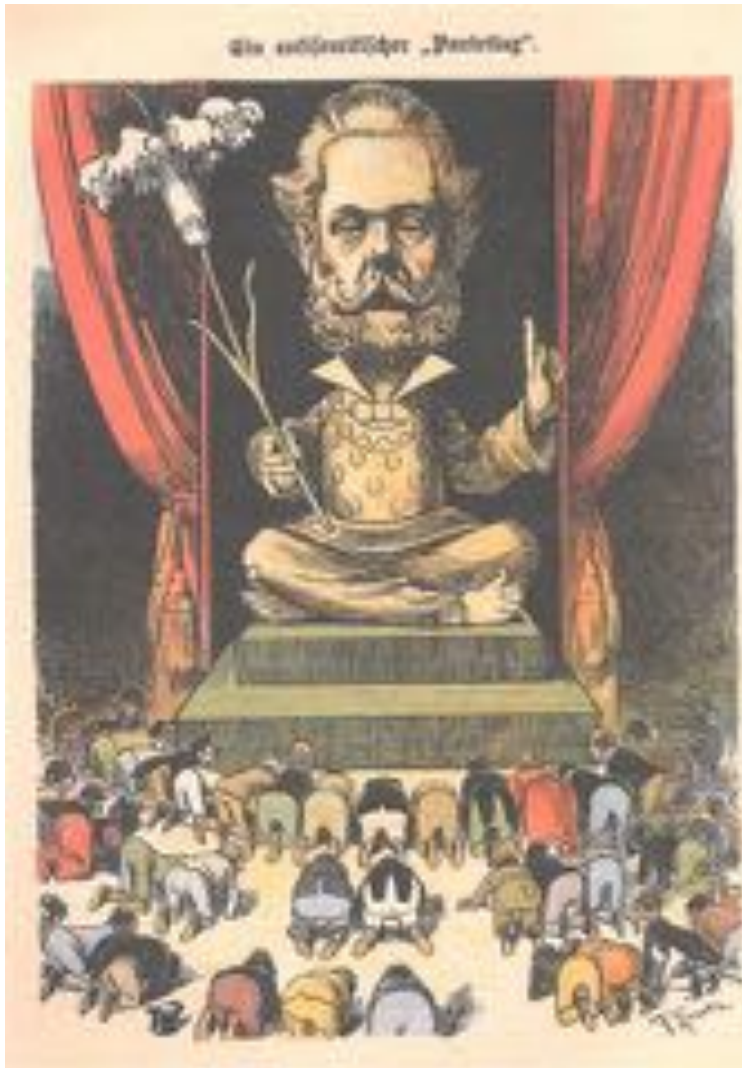
After his election victories by the Christian-social Party and the Emperor’s further refusal to appoint Lueger as mayor of Vienna, the satirical newspaper *Der Flob* treated Lueger’s reputation with irony:

“The proprietor Lueger: You may believe me, Sir, the chicken is really fresh; it is just the waiter that does not smell good.”

Der Flob. Politisch, humoristische Wochenschrift, April 4th, 1897.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 16



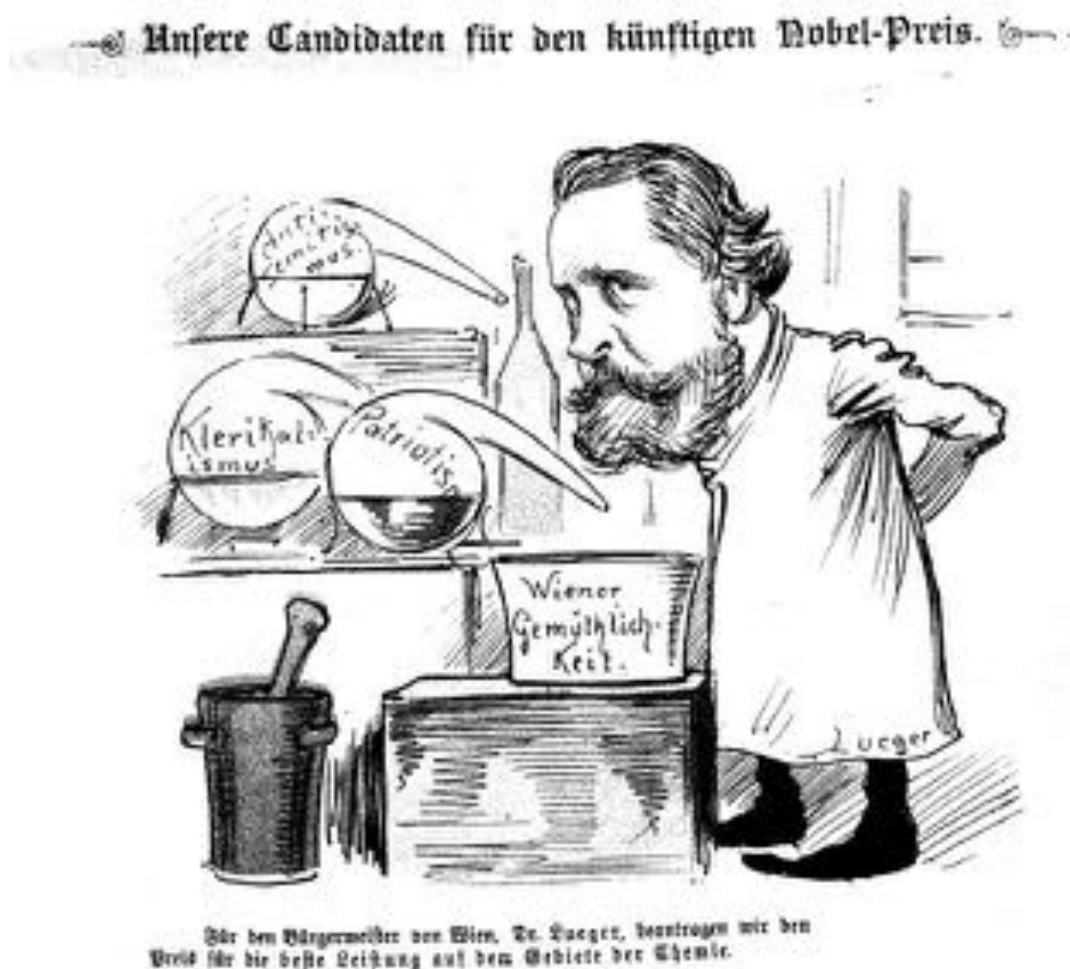
“An Antisemitic ‘Party Conference’”

In the period of his great political success within the Christian-Social Party, just before his nomination as mayor of Vienna, the socialist newspaper scoffed at the democratic image, Lueger had tried to give from his policy.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, September 17th 1896

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 17



“Our candidates for the forthcoming Nobel-Prize”

After having been appointed mayor of Vienna and after his public success, the satirical journal *Der Floh* made fun of Lueger’s political strategy. In the caricature, Lueger, as chemist, mixed different substances, including antisemitism, clericalism, and patriotism, to distil a new liquid called Viennese hospitality.

“We put in an application for a prize for the mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger: the prize for the best performance in chemistry.”

Der Floh. Politisch, humoristische Wochenschrift, December 29th, 1901

Fig. 18



“I’m no rabid antisemite”

Because of Lueger’s sporadic explanation not to be an antisemite, the open antisemitic satirical newspaper *Kikeriki* remembered Lueger not to forget his antisemitic convictions and presented him the antisemitic catechism.

Kikeriki, April, 13th, 1905

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 19 and detail



“The European Augean stables”

The Austrian journal *Glühlichter* even picked up the transnational aspects in the alleged fight of German and Austrian Antisemites against Capitalism, getting Lueger together with the anti-capitalistic German Antisemit Hermann

Ahlwardt. The personification of the *Glühlichter* however cautioned them, that they surly won't be able to clean up this stable of capitalism. Only the Herculean task of the proletariat with the shovel of socialism will succeed.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, January 3rd, 1893

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 20

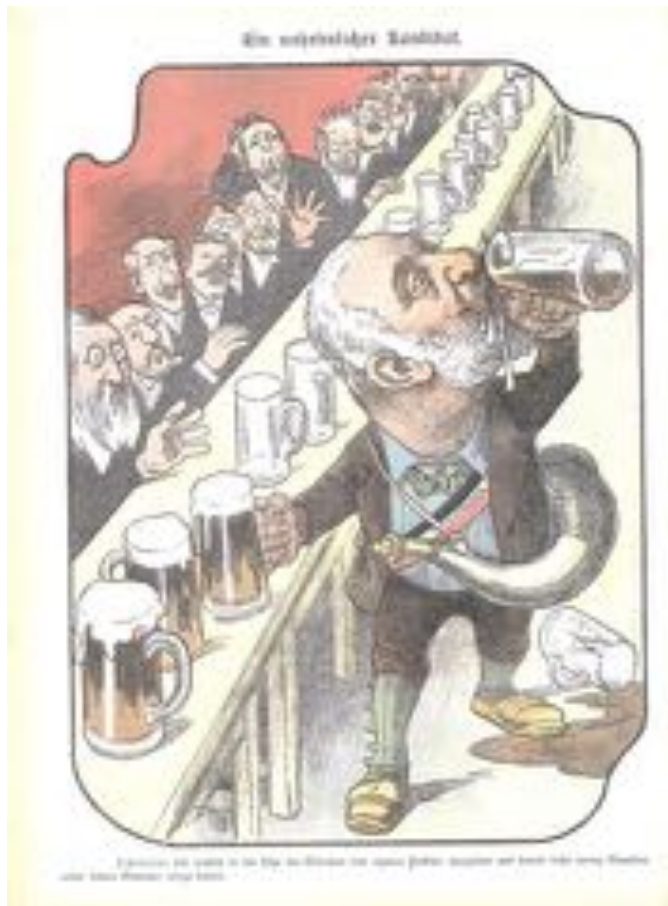


Next to Lueger, the pan-German politician Georg Ritter von Schönerer was the most prominent Antisemite in Austria. The journal *Der Flob* presented him together with two other antisemites as witches, boiling an antisemitic brew. In the added poem they shouted: “All the Jews must bleed”.

Der Flob. Politisch, humoristische Wochenschrift N. 17, April, 23rd 1882

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

Fig. 21



“An uncanny candidate”

Often, cartoons scoffed at the lifestyle and drinking habits of the antisemitic pan-German Politician and Bismarck-admirer Schönerer. During an election campaign it was said that Schönerer had drunk all of the available free beer, provoking quite a lot displeasure among his followers.

Glühlichter. Humoristisch-satirisches Arbeiterblatt, Wien, May, 8th 1907

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv, Wien

Fig. 22



When the Social-democratic Party gained a huge success in the general elections in Germany in January 1912, the antisemitic pan-German Politician Schönerer is explaining to his comrades to chuck in the pan-German idea: “It is all in vain”, he said. “The German people have become red and international”. Schönerer added that he would rather prefer to turn to an African tribe than to the Socialists. The cartoon picks up again on his drinking habits.

Neue Glühlichter, n. 4, February 1912.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien.

Fig. 23



“Uncomfortable”

At the peak of the Berlin debate on antisemitism, the satirical magazine *Kladderadatsch* took an ironical view of the quarrels among antisemites and those between antisemites and anti-antisemites.

Kladderadatsch N. 55, November, 28th 1880

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg.

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He studied history and philosophy in Heidelberg, Rome and Hamburg and completed his Ph.D. on alcohol consumption and working class culture in 19th century Hamburg. At the University of Potsdam he finished his habilitation theses on the Emancipation of the Jews in Tuscany and in Prussia in comparative perspective.

Fields of research are the history of consumption, European Jewish history and the history of Antisemitism in Europe in particular in Germany and Italy, and the history of Jewish historiography.

Recent Publications: *Antisemitismus in Zentraleuropa. Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), (together with Werner Bergmann); Editor: *Einspruch*

und Abwehr. Die Reaktion des europäischen Judentums auf die Entstehung des Antisemitismus (1879–1914) (Frankfurt/M.-New York: Campus, 2010); “Die Internationalen Antijüdischen Kongresse von 1882 und 1883 in Dresden und Chemnitz. Zum Antisemitismus als europäischer Bewegung”, in Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2009), URL: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2009/Article=362>; “Narratives of Jewish Historiography in Europe”, in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, eds. Stefan Berger, Chris Lorenz, (Hampshire – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

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Stamps, Stickers and Stigmata.
A Social Practice of Antisemitism Presented in a Slide-show

by *Isabel Enzenbach*

Antisemitic stickers were disseminated in Germany from the 1880s/1890s onwards. They were glued on letters or postcards, placed visibly in public space or collected in the private sphere. In rethinking antisemitism as a social practice, these stickers, stamps and adhesive labels can be seen as a prototypical source demonstrating the performative dimension of antisemitism. The antisemitic movement used various media such as leaflets, cartoons, speeches, historical novels, articles or newspapers to mobilize people and to build up a community. Condensing an antisemitic world view in a small format is one distinctive aspect of the stickers. Another is the adhesive reverse which contains a strong unuttered message: Glue me! Disseminate me!

From the last third of the 19th century onwards, antisemitic stamps and stickers could be produced easily, cheaply and fast. Yet elaborate stickers were also produced, imitating governmental insignias to coin an antisemitic iconography. Strong organization was unnecessary in printing and disseminating this flexible but lasting medium. It allowed the heterogeneous and fragmented antisemitic movement to demonstrate presence in the public realm, to permeate the population with anti-Jewish ideas, to establish slogans and to entrench an everyday practice of exclusion in the political culture. Various – quite modern – communicational strategies such as direct mailing, incorporation in the world of consumption and the use of public space were applied. The “Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens” (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, founded in 1883) reported about legal steps against the dissemination and the associated juridical difficulties.¹

In the following, stickers and stamps from the extensive private collection from Wolfgang Haney are presented. From the published edition,² stickers produced and disseminated between 1880 and 1914 were selected and annotated. The medium was not only used by antisemites. Some examples use the practice in order to combat antisemitism with the same medium.

¹ See *Im deutschen Reich* (1896) 10, 2, S. 522.

² *Alltagskultur des Antisemitismus im Kleinformat. Vignetten der Sammlung Wolfgang Haney ab 1880*, eds. Isabel Enzenbach, Wolfgang Haney, (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2012).

Fig. 1



“Liebesgabe zum Antisemitischen Agitationsfond” is a stamp proving payment of fees (*Beitragsmarke*) produced by the entourage of Wilhelm Marr and Ernst Schmeitzner, around 1880. Producing stamps and using sovereign signs was for the fragmented antisemitic movement a mean to appear publicly as an authority. The price of the stamp is stated to be a “gift of love” (*Liebesgabe*) for a fund for antisemitic agitation.

Original size of each stamp: 4,4 × 3,2 cm

Fig. 2



From the 1890s onwards stickers with the slogan “Don’t buy from Jews” designed like official seals were disseminated on letters and in the public sphere. The „Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens“ reported about these stamps seen in Leipzig and Aschaffenburg (Bavaria).

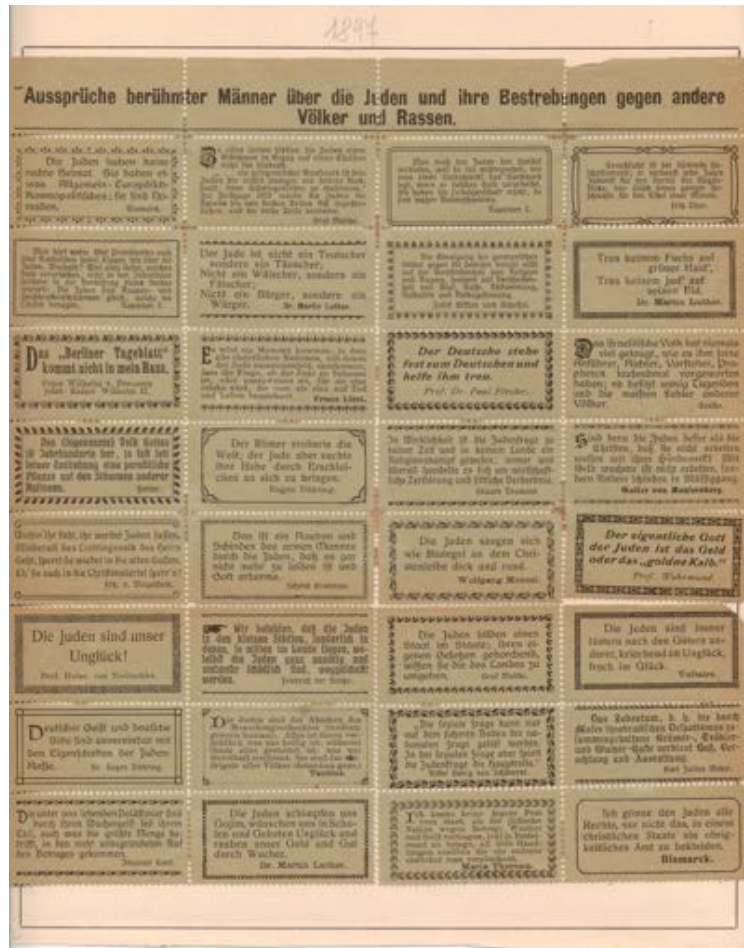
Original size: 3,5 cm diameter

Fig. 3



A small classified advertisement (in *"Deutsch-Soziale Blätter"* 1896) promoted stamps available in sheets with 100 or 1000 pieces. In Berlin a museum director noticed in 1893: "I found small red stickers (with the slogan *"Don't buy from Jews"*) glued on the wall in several compartments of the urban railway between the stations *Zoologischer Garten* and *Börse* in March at 8 o'clock a.m."

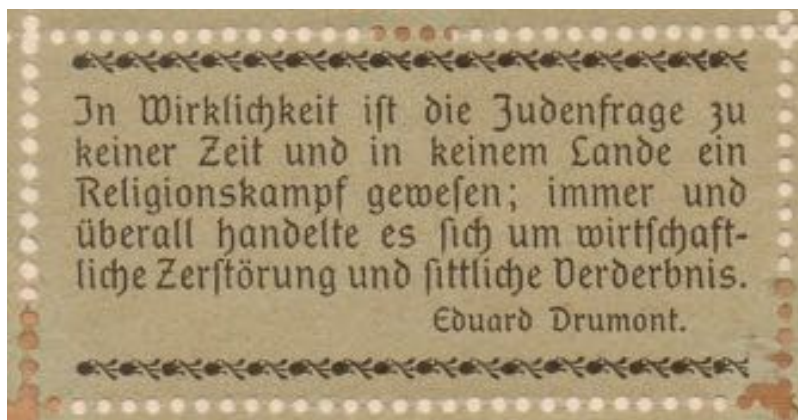
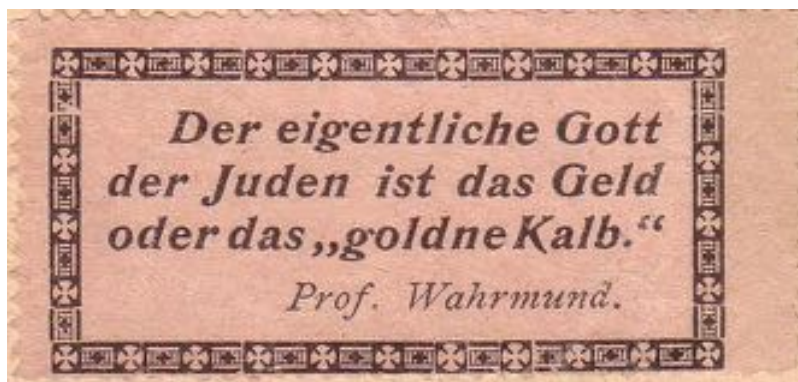
Fig. 4 and details



Das israelitische Volk hat niemals viel getaugt, wie es ihm seine Anführer, Richter, Vorsteher, Propheten tausendmal vorgeworfen haben; es besitzt wenig Tugenden und die meisten Fehler anderer Völker.

Goethe.

Goethe.





A 32-stamp sheet with “*Quotes from famous men about Jews*”. The quotes are extracts from Theodor Fritsch's book “*Anti-Semitic Catechism*” intended to decorate letters and postcards, around 1897.

Original size of the sheet: 22,5 x 20 cm

Fig. 5



Postcard with a letter decoration stamp (*Briefverschlussmarke*) quoting Bismarck: “Jews don’t have a homeland. They are somehow generally-European cosmopolitan. They are nomads.” The postcard was stamped in Frankfurt in 1909.

Original size of the stamp: 5,5 x 3 cm

Fig. 6



Skillfully decorated stamps were available in different colours with a huge variety of anti-Jewish quotes, from Kaiser Wilhelm II, Franz List, Johann Gottfried Herder; Eugen Dühring, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and many others. The letter decoration stamps represent the full range of antisemitic views and stereotypes.

Original size of each stamp: 5,5 x 3 cm

Fig. 7



The decorating stamps used quotes from famous authorities to legitimize antisemitism. Some sayings were quoted out of context or incorrectly as on this example using Friedrich II. Another technique was to quote Jewish authors or authorities such as Theodor Mommsen, who organized liberal resistance against antisemitism. This card was stamped in Rheinhessen in 1911.

Original size of the stamp: 5,5 x 3 cm

Fig. 8



The Frankfurt Hotel “Kölner Hof” barred Jews since 1895 and advertises itself as the “only Jew-free hotel” in the city. From 1895 till 1914 it used a variety of antisemitic media and created an own mixture of advertising and propaganda. This specifically designed seal exists in different variants, the green one is probably around 1900, the red seal was released around 1935 as a jubilee edition “Judenfrei seit 40 Jahren”.

Original size of the stamp: 7 cm diameter

Fig. 9 and details



In the tradition of the very popular picture sheets from the 19th century the *Kölner Hof* issued in 1912 a sheet with collection stamps (without franking). The collection consisted of twelve caricatures showing an anti-semitic group of figures such as “the scrounger or new immigrant citizen”, “peddler”, “rabbi”, “lawyer” or “banker”.

Original size of the sheet: 30 x 16,8 cm





Fig. 10



The "volkish" movement used for its propaganda among other media small adhesive labels. The slogan *Los von Juda* [Away from Juda] derived from the Austrian movement *Los-von-Rom-Bewegung* [Away from Rome!] which aimed at the incorporation of an Austria, freed from the Pope, into Germany. The label combines two anti-Semitic catch phrases with a map of a Greater German Reich and a pictorial incitement to throw Jews out of the country.

Original size of the label: 11 x 8 cm

Fig. 11



Even Ant-Antisemites used this medium. This sticker says: “Fanatical Jew-baiters mostly end in the madhouse like Pückler and others”. Graf Walter Pückler-Klein was an infamous antisemitic agitator. In 1908 he was committed to a psychiatric institution. Probably the label dates from the same time.

Original size of the label: 6,5 x 6,5 cm

Fig. 12



The well-known socialist slogan “Antisemitism is the *socialism* of fools” is on this sticker attributed to the liberal German Emperor Friedrich III who was German Emperor and King of Prussia in 1888. It is imaginable that the label was issued in the social environment of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*.

Original size of the label: 7,6 x 6 cm

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Marcello Flores, Simon Levis Sullam, Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci, Enzo Traverso (eds.), *Storia della Shoah in Italia*. two volumes. Torino: UTET, 2010.

by *Franklin H. Adler*

Publication of the two-volume *Storia della Shoah in Italia. Vicende, memorie, rappresentazioni* signifies an important turning point in our understanding of the persecution of Italian Jews under Fascism, the policy of deportation and extermination during the Nazi occupation, and how these events were reflected in public policy and in the national consciousness after the war. The collection is appropriately sweeping in scope, beginning with the nineteenth century and culminating in the contemporary period. The reader confronts close to thirteen hundred pages, divided into fifty essays written by different authors, not counting introductions to each volume by the four editors. More important than such statistics, which give some idea of the project's quantitative scale, a specialist would immediately recognize the qualitative strength of this collective endeavor, after a preliminary examination of its analytic architecture, indexes, footnotes and, most importantly, the intellectual stature of the assembled authors, all notable scholars who have made significant contributions to our contemporary understanding of this tragedy.

Why does publication of these massive volumes signify a turning point? Because with finality it puts to rest, with the full weight of scholarly authority, those mythical, folkloric, auto-exculpatory, and false truisms that went largely unchallenged until the late 1980s: that the anti-Semitic laws, never effectuated with commitment and rigor, were enacted simply to please the German ally; that Italians did whatever they could under the German occupation to protect and save Jews; and that the "good Italian" had to be clearly distinguished from the "bad German," the basis of what came to be understood in the popular expression *Italiani brava gente*. Reflected, if not commemorated, in *Storia della Shoah in Italia* is a new critical scholarship, emerging first in the wake of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1938 racial laws. The point of departure was precisely this common, generally uncontested view, so much so that the very expression *Italiani brava gente* is almost always targeted in the introductory remarks of everything written during the past two decades. Additionally, reflecting trends in current scholarship, this new collection reveals not only how the earlier view ascribed sole responsibility for what happened to the bad Germans, but avoided recognition of how Fascist anti-Semitic policy from 1938 to July 1943 facilitated the core practices of the Shoah under German occupation, deporting Jews and pilfering

their property. In turn, given the one-sided ascription of responsibility to the Germans, what had been masked was the nature and extent of Italian collaboration in all aspects of German policy. The second volume, dealing with postwar Italy, addresses the failure both to redress in a timely and equitable manner the wrongs visited upon Italian Jews and to facilitate their reintegration into national life. It demonstrates how such issues had never been major concerns of anti-fascism, generally speaking, or of the constituent political parties of the new republic. In fact, what had happened specifically to the Jews went largely unacknowledged to the degree that they became melded into a more general and less problematic category, victims of Fascism, as if they had been targeted for discrimination, then annihilation, primarily because they were “anti-Fascists” rather than “Jews.” There never had been a Nuremberg type process and the so-called Togliatti *epurazione* was so minimal and insignificant that all but a few fascists were held to account, while thousands of others, including those who collaborated with the Gestapo and committed despicable acts of barbaric criminality, were set free and returned to normal live well before most Jewish victims were able to recover lost occupational posts and property. The major virtue of this collection is carefully laying all the cards on the table, so to speak, providing in one place a carefully researched empirical account that can serve as the basis for further scholarly elaboration and public discussion.

Reviewing such a collection, given the constraints of time and space, is a daunting task. It is impossible to give attention to each of the fifty separate essays, all of which are appropriately authoritative and merit serious attention, so the remarks to follow shall deal rather with the collection as a totality, recognizing the limits of this approach and apologizing in advance for omissions that necessarily flow from such a perspective. Structurally, the essays are roughly the same length and generally summarize findings more fully elaborated by the authors elsewhere in larger monographs. Given the varying scope and complexity of the different subjects, measured against common space limitations, the results are understandably uneven, though none of the essays are in any sense deficient.

Formalities aside, two criteria may be invoked for substantive criticism: breadth and depth. The first speaks to the question of coverage, the degree to which the collection offers an appropriate range of subject matter and, within that range, whether or not there might be conspicuous holes or missing pieces. Here we are concerned primarily with descriptive adequacy. The second concerns analysis, the degree to which inferences are drawn, interpretations generated and perhaps causation attributed. Here we are concerned primarily with understanding, making sense of the facts. Of course,

the two criteria are necessarily interrelated: we do not collect facts and construct narratives randomly and naively, without, at least minimally, the guidance of some intuitive insights and hunches, if not formally elaborated methodological principles. Nor, for that matter, do we interpret or theorize in general or in the abstract, without at least some basic sense of the facts to be accommodated and the lay of the land.

Concerning the first criterion, breadth, little need be said. The *terminus a quo* must necessarily precede Fascism in order to situate the place of Jews in post-Enlightenment Italian development, especially the Risorgimento, the formation of Liberal Italy, as well as the multiple crises of Italian liberalism that found resolution in Fascism. Here the context of Jewish emancipation needs to be elaborated in order both to understand the notable social and political mobility Italian Jews experienced, as well as sources of resentment against them and actual anti-Semitism. Since the Shoah persists as a theme that haunts contemporary consciousness, tracing its aftermath, especially on relations between the Jewish minority and the general population, makes perfectly good sense as well.

So far, so good. Problems do present themselves, however, when it comes to some conspicuous gaps, both in the historical record and in the scholarly literature. Most surprisingly there is virtually no analysis of Fascism per se, especially before the mid-thirties, though it had already been in power for a formative decade, half its historical duration. Only by elaborating the various stages of Fascism, or at least what distinguished the twenties from the thirties, can we begin to ascertain how and why anti-Semitism became problematic only during the second half of the thirties, and not before. Fascism certainly is more than a background variable or a simple, unambiguous given, and by bracketing out the 1922 to 1934 period, one cannot grapple with the internal contractions and growing problems of legitimation that made recourse to imperialism and to racism plausible. Related to the absence of any focused analysis of Fascism, is the absence of any chapters that deal directly with the primary architects and agents of anti-Semitic public policy, minimally Mussolini, Bottai and even that important faceless bureaucrat who has received far too little attention anywhere, but whose fingers seem to be everywhere, long-serving Undersecretary of State, Guido Buffarini-Guidi. None were driven by deeply seated, anti-Semitic beliefs or sentiments, as opposed to the cynical, opportunistic targeting of Jews largely for instrumental purposes. But in order to grapple with that, one needs to know the political problems for which anti-Semitism was put forth as a solution, an end toward which anti-Semitism was a means. Only a serious analysis of Fascism, above and beyond a narrow focus on Jews, can help explain the context from which the abrupt

and extreme turn towards anti-Semitism emerged in 1937 and 1938. I will return to this problem later.

Beyond gaps in the historical record, there are a number of gaps regarding important issues already well addressed in the scholarly literature. The first concerns the myth of *Italiani brava gente*: what were its origins, how was it generated and disseminated, what were the interests at play, and how did it serve nation-building after the war to promote a “culture and politics of collective absolution”? As suggested earlier, the myth of *Italiani brava gente* has been frontally attacked in practically all the scholarly work on Jews and Fascism produced since the late eighties; in most it has actually served as the necessary point of departure. In fact, here, too, it is invoked on the very first page of the editors’ introduction to the first volume. And yet again, as in the case of Fascism, it is treated as little more than an unexplored given, despite the fact that the entire second volume is devoted almost entirely to the postwar period when this myth became so formative regarding common assumptions and public opinion, as well an instrument of Italian diplomacy aimed at strategically differentiating Italy from Germany, and playing the “Jewish card,” as it was actually referred to in official documents; that is, appealing directly to American Jews who presumably had disproportionate influence over U.S. foreign policy on matters of vital importance to Italy (postwar reconstruction, foreign aid, etc.). No scholar has done more on the myth of the good Italian than Guri Schwarz who has focused most of his attention on the postwar period. His essay “On Myth Making and Nation Building: The Genesis of the ‘Myth of the Good Italian,’” published by *Yad Vashem Studies* in 2008¹, stands as the definitive monograph on the subject, analytically incisive and rich in archival material.

Another gap regarding the scholarly literature concerns the Fascist concept of race, especially as it developed during the second half of the thirties. How can the ideological articulation of anti-Semitism be understood without substantively dealing with the protracted debates during the second half of the 1930s concerning biological and spiritual racism, as well as how such ideological articulations led both to the essentializing and racializing Italian national identity, leading to the “othering” of Jews? True, there is an essay on eugenics by Francesco Cassata, but this focuses on theories elaborated during an earlier period, and hardly exhausts all that could be said regarding how an interest in eugenics contributed to more fully articulated and institutionalized Fascist concepts of race. No scholar has devoted more attention to this than

¹ See *Yad Vashem Studies*, n. 1 (2008), pp. 111-143.

Giorgio Israel, whose book *Il Fascismo e la razza* will likely remain the definitive monograph on the subject. True, this was published only in 2010, but his earlier, extensive work on race, as well as on the expulsion of Jews from university science faculties and scientific associations, is amply referenced by many of the volume's contributing authors as well². One wonders why there is no essay in the collection on these issues by so important and prolific a scholar.

This criticism regarding gaps in coverage perhaps is inevitable in a project of this kind. Even within the space afforded by two large volumes, decisions regarding topic selection are difficult ones for editors, especially a group of four editors, to make. Undoubtedly, they bring to bear distinctive interests, values and concerns that may or may not be shared by other specialists who might have organized such a collection differently, in whole or in part. Despite the afore-mentioned gaps, there is coverage given to relatively new and important topics. Roughly two hundred pages are devoted in the second volume to the cultural significance of the Shoah in contemporary Italy, including essays on literature, cinema, and television. Significant space is given as well to postwar attitudes to the Shoah, as well as changing relations with Jews, on the part of the left, the right and the Vatican. Such contemporary topics have been largely under-represented in the standard literature, and their inclusion undoubtedly will generate further interest in extending scholarly and public attention beyond what had been a rather narrow focus on the Shoah itself and the more immediate postwar period. The inclusion of photos was a wise choice as well, since most pictorial histories of Fascism, even those published in recent years, omit any material on the racial laws or compulsory labor by Jews during the war. Specialists, of course, are familiar with this iconography, but not non-specialists and the general public.

Criticism regarding analytic depth, and the degree to which the largely descriptive essays actually deepen our understanding of the Shoah, might be more severe. To be fair, such criticism might be leveled against most post-1988 Italian scholarship on Italian Jews as well, work that in general has been richly descriptive but at the same time somewhat insular, typically atheoretical and limited in explanatory power. In this respect, the collection under review mirrors the literature at large and breaks no new ground. Only one essay really addresses a central problem of interpretation, Ilaria Pavan's "Gli storici e la Shoah in Italia." Here Pavan focuses on perhaps the one significant area of

² G. Israel, P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista*, (Bologna: Il Mulino 1998); G. Israel, *Il fascismo e la razza: la scienza italiana e le politiche razziali del regime*, (Bologna: Il Mulino 2010)

scholarly debate in recent years: what precipitated the 1938 campaign against the Jews, and whether this signified an abrupt *svolta* in Fascist policy or rather an extension of earlier, less visible anti-Semitic tendencies (in short, continuity or discontinuity with the past). This is one of those rare areas where scholars have attempted to go beyond the facts and draw inferences, generate interpretations and even cautiously touch upon causality. Pavan's essay not only recounts what others have argued in this debate with nuance and sophistication, but adds her own more recent contributions on how the Lateran Treaty of 1929 and the penal code of 1930 anticipated a fundamental shift in Italian nationalism from, for example, Gentile's inclusive, fluid, phenomenological-actualist concept, based on the collective self-constitution of a nation's varied inhabitants, to a far more restricted and fixed one, defining Italian identity exclusively in terms of religion (Catholicism) and biology (*stirpe*, soon further reduced to race).

Beyond the debate over interpretations concerning the 1938 campaign against the Jews, a number of highly significant analytic questions are left unexplored, only two of which can be touched upon here. While the collection of course focuses on the Shoah in Italy, no consideration is given to situating the Italian case comparatively within the broader European context. Many of the historical factors that were implicated in the persecution of Jews elsewhere were largely absent in Italy, especially prolonged controversies over Jewish emancipation, a prior history of anti-Semitic movements and political parties, and concentrations of unassimilated foreign Jews who were part of a massive wave of migration from East Europe to points westward (Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London, New York). By way of contrast, Italy's small Jewish population was highly assimilated and socially mobile. Of course, no European country was without anti-Semitism, but the scale and intensity of Italian anti-Semitism was well below the European norm, and especially regarding such major cases as Austria, Germany and France. Italy's Jewish community had experienced the highest rate of inter-marriage in Europe and arguably produced the highest proportion, given its minute size, of major leaders in government, business, the professions and the academy. Add to that the fact that Fascism was not initially anti-Semitic, becoming so only during the second half of the 1930s, and it would seem that Italy was one of the least likely countries to persecute its Jews and then collaborate in their deportation to the camps. For many non-Italian scholars, this particular history of nonconforming factors is precisely what elevates the Italian case to such comparative importance. While the field of Holocaust Studies initially focused on Eastern and Central Europe, the heartland of European Jewry and locus of annihilation, in recent times it has extended its range geographically and conceptually to accommodate other

cases implicated in the Shoah. In that respect, it is a shame that the collection under review demonstrates such little interest in these broader comparative discussions, not even in an attempt to grasp the larger context of which it was a part. That too is treated as a given, part of the general background, not a phenomenon itself illuminated.

A prominent place in comparative Holocaust studies is given to bystanders and indifference, and this is of particular relevance to Italy where there never had been mass mobilizations and campaigns of State violence against the Jews before the German occupation. Generally speaking, Italians were indifferent to the racial laws initiated in 1938, manifesting neither popular support behind the campaign against the Jews nor solidarity with them. This indifference was carried over into the post-war period, accounting partially for a collective amnesia about what specifically had happened to the Jews from 1938 to 1943. Whereas the collection under review reveals particular aspects of that indifference and amnesia, it fails to analyze the phenomenon in its generality. To do that, less attention needs to be focused on Jews and more on the socialization of Italians, especially the future *classe dirigente*, during the thirties. A familiar refrain among intellectuals who were formed during this period was the degree to which the racial laws opened their eyes to the true nature of Fascism. Unfortunately, almost none acted on this insight, as collaboration with the regime actually increased rather than diminished. The fascist past of prominent intellectuals, journalists and politicians, including their response to the persecution of the Jews, has to be understood less in terms of *individual* culpability and more in terms of *generational* motivations and choices, during Fascism and afterwards, highlighted, for example, in the recent contributions of Mirella Serri and Pierluigi Battista³. Until 1938, Jews were no different so far as being attracted to the benefits derived from activity in the GUF, and especially participation in the Littoriali. They too were part of a cultural consensus generated by the regime, and most likely would have continued, like all the others, to respond opportunistically to the positive and negative inducements orchestrated by the government. Of course, continued collaboration after 1938 took on a different and far more sinister significance, as the regime now made Jews objects of vituperation and aspiring, ambitious intellectuals were expected to participate in, if not actually promote, official anti-Semitism. Thanks to Francesco Perfetti's *Gli intellettuali di Mussolini*, we now know the full degree to which intellectuals, journalists, artists and

³ M. Serri, *I redenti. Gli intellettuali che vissero due volte 1938-1948*, (Milan: Il Corbaccio 2005); P. Battista, *Cancellare le tracce: il caso Grass e il silenzio degli intellettuali italiani dopo il fascismo*, (Milan: Rizzoli 2007); Id., *Il partito degli intellettuali: cultura e ideologia nell'Italia contemporanea*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza 2001).

musicians were actually subsidized, openly and covertly, by the regime to promote its efforts, and what happened in those few cases where opposition was publically expressed to the campaign against the Jews.

After the war, skeletons and blackshirts were consigned to the closet, so far as prominent and aspiring politicians, journalists, and academics were concerned, intent upon creating a new world and artfully forgetting the past. Yet the situation was far more complex, given the pitiful demise of Fascism and the somewhat contrived birth of a new republic, symbolically if not substantively anti-fascist. Beneath the level of official rhetoric and high culture, ample space was found for an alternative, popular public sphere of the center-right, where Fascism became an object, not so much of rehabilitation, as apologia and nostalgia. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that principled anti-fascism represented a small minority, and most Italians had supported Fascism, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, until the very end. It was in this context that the myth of *italiani brava gente* took root and found popular expression in such mass publications as *Borghese*, *Gente* and *Oggi*, thanks largely to the craft of journalists like Indro Montanelli, formed under Fascism, who cultivated and reinforced a largely uncritical, highly selective and almost benign recollection of Fascism. This phenomenon is skillfully analyzed and amply documented in Cristina Baldassini's *L'ombra di Mussolini*⁴. The point here is to understand the formation of a generalized culture where Jews and what had happened to them were subjects seldom raised and superficially dealt with when they were. To fully comprehend this generalized culture, so critical to understanding why Fascist anti-Semitism and the Shoah had been evaded, one needs to pay far more attention, not so much to Italian Jews, as to the contradictory nature of Fascism and the consensus it promoted, especially during the thirties, and then its aftermath.

In conclusion, *Storia della Shoah in Italia* is a major contribution that will be a point of reference for those interested primarily in what happened to Italy's Jews under Fascism, the German occupation, and the post-war period. It is unlikely to bridge the gap between this particular experience and more general scholarship on Fascism, not only because of the deficiencies noted above, but, in the larger sense, because of a curious situation that seems to persist in Italy: scholars who focus on the Jewish experience rarely have contributed to more general discussions on Fascism, and scholars who focus on Fascism have contributed still less on the Jewish experience. In fact, books continue to be

⁴ C. Baldassini, *L'ombra di Mussolini. L'Italia moderata e la memoria del fascismo (1945-1960)*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2008).

published on Fascism that fail to even mention the racial laws and the persecution of the Jews. For example, in 2010 Il Mulino published *Lo Stato fascista* by Sabino Cassese⁵, a significant monograph by a noted author. In practically all respects, it is a fine piece of scholarship, except there is not a word on how, when and why this state turned to racism after sixteen years, and what this signified in terms of its development. Precisely because of this bewildering lack of integration between the two fields of specialization, I fear that *Storia della Shoah in Italia* will largely stand apart, without significant impact on further studies of Fascism, however much these subjects are related historically, and however close in proximity they may be placed in bookshops.

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⁵ S. Cassese, *Lo Stato fascista*, (Bologna: Il Mulino 2010).

M. Flores, S. Levis Sullam, M.-A. Matard-Bonucci, E. Traverso (a cura di),
Storia della Shoah in Italia. Vicende, memorie, rappresentazioni, 2 voll., (Torino:
UTET, 2010)

by Guri Schwarz

This two volume collection of essays edited by Marcello Flores, Simon Levis Sullam, Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci and Enzo Traverso is dedicated to the reconstruction of the origins, development, consequences and memory of the Shoah in Italy. It constitutes the ideal continuation of a collective endeavor that began several years ago, leading in the first place to the publication of an impressive collection of essays – original for the most part – on the history of the Shoah and its memory, which was published in 2005-2006. That first work, edited by Marina Cattaruzza, Flores, Levis Sullam and Traverso - with the aid of an international scientific committee which, alongside the editors, included Omer Bartov, Dan Diner, Saul Friedlander - was dedicated to the issue of the Shoah in general terms, without dedicating specific attention to particular national cases and without giving space to the very Italian scenario¹. Thus with these latest two volumes that team of editors, joined now by the French scholar of fascist anti-Semitism Matard-Bonucci who substitutes Marina Cattaruzza, offers a focus on the Italian side of anti-Semitic persecutions in the Thirties and Forties. It must be noted that the fact that such an important historiographical initiative – which developed for several years and moved from an overall analysis of the phenomenon of persecution to the in-depth study of a particular national situation, involving a rich set of highly credited scholars from the US, Israel, and various European countries - was thought of and developed in Italy is in itself a novelty. These two connected operations testify to the awakening of an interest within Italian historiography to a theme, that of the Shoah, which until not many years ago was certainly not occupying a central position in the Italian cultural and academic world. It is now more than twenty years that Italian historiography has 'discovered' the Shoah, and has dedicated growing attention to the analysis of fascist anti-Semitic policies. We find gathered here most of the scholars - both experienced and established researchers as well as younger but nonetheless capable historians – whose works have contributed to the opening of this new season of scholarship concerning the Shoah in general, and Italian anti-Semitic persecutions in particular.

The editorial project was certainly extremely ambitious, and this new product – specifically dedicated to Italy – must be seen and evaluated in the context of the wider project. Not unlike the precedent opus this new two-volume

¹ M. Cattaruzza, M. Flores, S. Levis Sullam, E. Traverso (eds.), *Storia della Shoah. La crisi dell'Europa, lo sterminio degli ebrei e la memoria del XX secolo*, 2 vol., (Torino: Utet, 2005-2006).

collection of essays is subdivided in two parts, the first dedicated to “The premises, the persecutions and the extermination” and the second to “Memories, representations, legacies”; furthermore it must be noticed that each of the two volumes is organized into several autonomous and yet connected sections, each approaching the problem from a specific thematic angle. The earlier publication dedicated to the overall analysis of the Shoah (and its memory) frames the general context in which the particular Italian case is now reconstructed and analyzed. This seems to justify – at least in part – the fact that in these latest two volumes the wider international context appears to be ignored, while the analysis immediately plunges into the specific problems raised by the observation of the Italian situation.

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The first volume is made up of 26 independent essays, and the authors are for the most part Italian scholars (with the exception of Matard-Bonucci, Klinkhammer and Zuccotti). The first section goes under the title “Emancipation and Nation”, and is subdivided into two parts: the first one dedicated mainly to the cultural premises of the phenomena of racism and anti-Semitism in the XIXth and XXth centuries, the second to their deployment within the fascist regime. The first essay to open the volume is written by Tullia Catalan, a researcher of the University of Trieste, who offers a concise presentation of the condition of Italian Jews between 1848 and the early XXth century, illustrating through the use of the most recent historiography the internal dynamics of the small but lively Jewish group, as well as suggesting a revision of the generally accredited idea that emancipation and integration could developed in XIXth century Italy with virtually no problems and no obstacles. It is followed by a contribution by Simon Levis Sullam, who presents what he calls the «enemies of emancipation», meaning that rich and varied cultural framework which opposed the concession of equality to the Jewish minority and deployed anti-Judaic ideologies. He moves from the presentation of anti-Jewish riots in Mantova, Acqui and Rome in the first half of the XIXth century, to anti-Semitic stereotypes in popular literature, and finally offers a brief illustration of catholic and liberal anti-Jewish discourses in the second part of the century. Although not containing any novelty, this essay has the merit of presenting the state of the art in a rather thorough and convincing way. Furthermore it must be noted that the insistence on the need to study with attention the presence, the articulation and the evolution of anti-Jewish discourse reflects the general tendency of the latest historiographical debate to reconsider the conventional view of liberal Italy and, by so doing, to raise questions on the connections between that season and the fascist era. In this respect a key element is represented, obviously, by catholic anti-semitism. This is the object of a specific contribution by Annalisa Di Fant, who presents with clarity the nature and evolution of phenomenon in the XIXth and the XXth centuries. Her essay, which summarizes the results of her own research

and draws on the fundamental contributions by Giovanni Miccoli – undoubtedly the most prominent historian of catholic anti-Semitism in the modern period – contributes to illustrate the rich and intense set of traditional prejudices present within the catholic world, as well as their function in the context of the political and cultural battles of unified Italy. Then we move on to a more general overview on the biases present in the liberal conception of citizenship, through a contribution by Michele Nani. He summarizes here the results of his own studies on the presence of three – variously connected – discourses on racial diversity within post-unification Italy: anti-African, anti-southerners and anti-Jewish². Finally, this first section is closed with a convincing description of the various strands of racist thought within the Italian scientific community, offered by Francesco Cassata, a young and yet prolific and authoritative scholar who has distinguished himself by publishing several fundamental volumes on Italian eugenetics and the different trends marking the racist conceptualizations present within the intellectuals³.

Obviously this section was meant to present the social and cultural premises for the analysis of fascist anti-Semitic policies. While each of the essays is well written and there are no major flaws or omission to be found – the major limit seems to be the lack of attention on social and socialist anti-Jewish rhetorics, which have started to be analyzed only very recently⁴ – , it seems that such a presentation is insufficient. This reflects the general condition of scholarship regarding the issue, that is still limited and would need to be developed further: while we have assisted in the latest decades to a multiplication of in depth studies on fascist anti-Semitic policies – their genesis, evolution, implementation and consequences – there is still a lot work to do on the previous period. What we find here are contributions that – while not offering any new findings per se – present the reader with the idea that the issue of anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance in liberal Italy is of great importance to the understanding both of the Italian nation-building process and to the birth of fascist ideology. For this very reason the reader would have wanted to know

² M. Nani, *Ai confini della nazione: stampa e razzismo nell'Italia di fine Ottocento*, (Roma: Carocci, 2006); on the same issues – but not considering the anti-Semitic element – see also A. S. Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911. Meridionalism, Empire and Diaspora*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

³ F. Cassata, *Building the New Man. Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth Century Italy*, (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011); from the same author, concerning fascist racism see also “*La Difesa della Razza*”. *Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, (Torino: Einaudi, 2008). On the development of racist ‘science’ in Italy see also: G. Israel, *Il fascismo e la razza: la scienza italiana e le politiche razziali del regime*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010); R. Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista*, Firenze 1999; G. Israel and P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista*, (Bologna: Il Mulino 1998); ; A. Treves, *Le nascite e la politica nell'Italia del Novecento*, (Milano: Led, 2001); C. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2004); A. Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, (London-NY: Routledge, 2002).

⁴ M. Battini, *Il socialismo degli imbecilli. Propaganda, falsificazione, persecuzione degli ebrei*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2010); M. Toscano (ed.), *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana: dalla fine dell'Ottocento agli anni Sessanta*, (Venezia: Marsilio, 2007).

more, and especially it would have been important to clarify the connections between liberal and fascist Italy. This is of course a huge historiographical problem which is still at the center of much debate; in recent years some scholars' – Alberto Mario Banti being the principal figure in this respect – have pointed out the presence of a cultural code which made wide references to blood and ethnicity within Italian national discourses, and insisted on the elements of continuity between the liberal period and the fascist one⁵. In this respect, as well as with other relevant issues too, the editors of these volumes seem to have chosen to avoid taking a clear stance.

The second section of the first part proceeds chronologically into the fascist era. It is opened with an essay by Matard-Bonucci, who reflects on the connection between racism and the building of a totalitarian regime during the 1930s. Coherently with the analytical stance taken in her monograph dedicated to the analysis of fascist anti-Semitism⁶, the French scholar tends to set aside the issue of the cultural origins of the phenomenon and its connections with pre-existent conceptions of the nation, insisting instead on the political function of racial policies and propaganda for the development of Mussolini's totalitarian project. Her position is essentially in line with De Felice's interpretation of the phenomenon⁷, downplaying the role and relevance of anti-Jewish prejudice in Italy, and insisting on the fact the laws of 1938 represented a clear break with the past (both the immediate fascist past as well as the more remote national history). A contrast with De Felice's interpretation emerges instead with regards to the implementation of the racial legislation, while the renown historian of fascism and biographer of Mussolini stated that such policies knew a scarce and inefficient implementation, Matard-Bonucci – in line with the scholarship developed since the 1990s and with the results of her own research work – insists on the fact that the local authorities, the prefects in particular, were very serious in applying the racial norms, and often went well beyond the text of the laws, interpreting them so as to take the harshest possible course of action against the Jewish minority. In the closing paragraphs Matard-Bonucci obviously confirms that Mussolini's anti-Semitic policy was not – as was widely believed in the early post-war years – in any way neither a product of direct or indirect pressures from Germany, nor a price paid for the alliance with Hitler. Yet she does not fail to remember how such a policy shift must be considered in a European context, stressing how anti-Semitism had become, by the late 1930s, a key element in all nationalist movements.

⁵ For a groundbreaking research on the central role of images e rhetorics concerning ethnicity and blood ties in the construction of the Italian national discourse see A. M. Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento: parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita*, (Torino: Einaudi 2000); for the connection and continuity between the cultural codes of Risorgimento and those of Fascism see especially the less convincing analysis offered in Id., *Sublime madre nostra: la nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011).

⁶ M.-A. Matard-Bonucci, *L'Italie fasciste et la persécution des Juifs*, (Paris: Perrin, 2007).

⁷ R. De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy: a History*, (NY: Enigma Books, 2001).

The connection between the development of the totalitarian project, the construction of the fascist 'new man' and racial anti-Semitism is also confronted in Francesco Germinario's essay, which approaches the problem from the point of view of intellectual history. He dedicates some brief but convincing pages to the presentation of key fascist intellectuals and their vision of the racial issue, stressing in particular the weakness of fascist racial theories and ideology. Concerning the question of the origins of the phenomenon in Italian culture and history, the author states that they must be looked for not in preceding racial tradition and discourse, but rather in the history of the idea of an anthropological revolution – the building of a 'new man' – that predates fascism and of which the regime is presented as the most radical and passionate interpreter. Nonetheless the essay puts much emphasis on the rupture represented by the implementation of a racial and anti-Semitic legislation, so much so that, according to Germinario, we can see in those developments such a radical mutation of fascism's ideological framework that he qualifies it as "the nazification of fascism". So fascist anti-Semitism would appear to be an element that indicates how the Italian regime gradually lost its ideological autonomy and was drawn into the national socialist worldview. This is of course a key issue that connects to previous debates and interpretations and seems to be potentially misleading as it re-opens the issue of the influences – direct or indirect – of the German regime on Italy in the development of racial policies. We must remember that – in the framework of a narrative of national absolution – many had insisted on the fact that the racial twist in fascist policy was due to foreign influence; nonetheless there is no proof of direct or indirect pressures on the political side and – furthermore – the autonomy and originality of fascist anti-Semitism has instead been one of the key elements highlighted by Italian historiography in the last thirty years in order to re-evaluate and finally study with attention that delicate and controversial passage. Thus Germinario's statement appears to be highly problematic, as it certainly touches a very sensible point⁸.

The issue of the relationships between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy is critically reconstructed in the essay by Andrea D'Onofrio. It is certainly clear that the choice made by Mussolini with the publication of the notorious 'Manifesto of Racist Scientist' of 1938 pushed Italian racial debates – as well as of course the practical policies – in a direction, that of 'biological racism', which was in many ways in contrast with the dominant positions in cultural and academic world. Thus drawing the Italian racial doctrine in some ways closer to Germany. Such a shift, which caused further confrontations and debates and was never fully accepted by various sectors of the Italian cultural elite, is nonetheless not to be seen as a passive acceptance of the Nazi outlook on the problem and – as D'Onofrio points out – must be read within the context of the political and ideological dialectics between the two regimes.

⁸ He has further developed his interpretation in an independent volume: *Fascismo e antisemitismo: progetto razziale e ideologia totalitaria*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza 2009).

A brief description of the racial policies implemented by Mussolini in the African colonies is offered by Nicola Labanca, certainly the most prominent scholar of Italian military and colonial history. He honestly points out how the research on colonial racism still needs to be developed further. The essay concentrates on the legislative measures taken in the colonies to prevent sexual unions between the Italian and the local population, insisting – in a line of thought that has a certain tradition, dating back at least to the third edition of De Felice's book on fascist anti-Semitism⁹, and which appears convincing – on the connections between colonial racism and internal/anti-Semitic persecutions.

In this same section we also find an interesting contribution by Alberto Cavaglion on the role of Italian Jews in the anti-fascist struggle. This is certainly a relevant element, nonetheless it appears strange not to find any specific essay on the other side of the problem: how Italian Jews related to fascism, and the role that many had in supporting the regime from the early beginnings of the movement up to the racial campaign. The participation of Jews as active supporters of the Fascist movement since its birth, and then of the regime, is one of the peculiar elements of the Italian case and would have deserved further attention.

The volume then moves on to the second part, dedicated to the persecutions between 1938 and 1943, that is the period between the beginning of active racial policies to the fall of Mussolini and the occupation of Italy by German military forces. This part is opened by a documented and detailed essay by Michele Sarfatti, one of the principal scholars of Italian anti-Semitic policies, who presents origins and evolution of the legislation in those five years. Coherently with his earlier contributions, Sarfatti insists on pointing out how the racial twist was under preparation at least since 1935-36¹⁰. Unlike the other contributors, Sarfatti stresses how the development of such a policy by the dictator depended mainly – even though not solely – on the fact that Mussolini was nurturing the belief that Jews were an external element: non-national and not prone to full absorption and submission to fascism.

Fabio Levi instead offers some keen insight on the victim's reactions to persecution. Basing himself on memoirs and diaries, the scholar from the University of Torino presents the anguish, disbelief and the inability to fully grasp the proportions of the events by Italian Jews. He illustrates the strategies enacted to live through "the storm", as the persecution is often defined in Jewish memoirs. The personal (often intertwined with the political) reactions of that part of the minority (both Italian and foreign Jews) that chose exile in response to persecution, is the object of a brilliant contribution by Enzo Traverso. The issue of Jewish exile from Italy has not yet been the object of

⁹ See. R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia sotto il fascismo*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1972; the first edition was published in 1961; the english edition, see note n. 7, is the translation of the 1993 edition).

¹⁰ See M. Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy: from equality to persecution*, (Madison Winsconsin: Winsconsin U.P., 2006).

systematic research, and Traverso offers here some basic elements to comprehend that part of the story. The essay begins by presenting some basic data on the numbers of those who went in exile after 1938: 6000 people, of which 2000 in the USA and 2000 in Latin America, 504 in Palestine and the rest scattered in various nations from the UK to Australia. To these must be added another 6000 that sought refuge in Switzerland since September 1943. Then the author proceeds to illustrate the personal, professional and political drives which lead to emigration, putting the Italian case into a wider comparative context and finally presenting four cases concerning Italian-Jewish intellectuals such as Carlo Rosselli, Carlo Levi, Max Ascoli, Arnaldo Momigliano. In this section we also find an essay by Gabriele Turi, one of the leading historians of Italian culture and cultural institutions. He faces the issue of how intellectuals responded to the racial and anti-Semitic turning point of 1938. His essay does not offer any new insight on the problems and is limited to a synthetic presentation of recent findings. Finally, a contribution by Alessandra Minerbi closes the section, by illustrating the peculiarities of Italian legislation concerning those of 'mixed' race. This is a key issue, as it allows to comprehend according to which criteria the Jews were identified. Furthermore, the diversity in the Italian legislation on this matter, as compared to the German one, has often been considered not only a distinctive element of Italian racial policies, but also a choice that proved to be in many ways harsher, as it provided those of 'mixed' origins - or who had made mixed marriages - less protection. The essay offers several new elements, and presents the evolution of the condition of the 'mixed' both in the first phase of persecution (1938-1943), as well as in the second one (1943-1945).

We are thus lead to the final section of the first volume, which is dedicated to the time of killings and deportation operated by the German occupying forces with the active collaboration of local fascist authorities faithful to Mussolini. This final portion of the volume is made up of nine separate essays. In the first three Lutz Klinkhammer, Luigi Ganapini, and Davide Rodogno, present a synthesis of their earlier research¹¹. Their essays deal, respectively, with the mechanism of German occupation, the characteristics of the last phase of Mussolini's regime with the creation of the Italian Social Republic, and the policies of the Italian occupying forces in Southern France, Greece and the Balkans. While the first two are confined within the time frame 1943-1945, the essay by Rodogno obviously includes the earlier period (1940-1943), illustrating the complex dynamics of the Italian occupation system and its policies concerning the Jews, and insisting on how such policies must be read in their proper context: that of cynical calculation of the interest of the states, of Italian strategies concerning the administration of the occupied territories, and of the wish to distinguish Italy from the Germany.

¹¹ See L. Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia: 1943-1945*, (Torino: Bollati Borighieri, 1993); L. Ganapini, *La repubblica delle camicie nere*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1999); D. Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian occupatin during the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2006).

Three essays are concerned with the protection offered to the persecuted Jews, by common people, by the Resistance and by the Church. Lilliana Picciotto offers here some of the results on her detailed ongoing study of the road to survival for Jews in occupied Italy, Bruno Maida briefly illustrates the attitude of the Resistance movements, while Susan Zuccotti critically discusses the responsibilities of the Vatican. Mimmo Franzinelli and Carlo Spartaco Capogreco instead deal with the arrest and murder of the Jews; the first with an essay on delators, the second with a synthetic presentation of the places and times of deportation. While Valeria Galimi faces the issue of bystanders and, more generally, of the understanding that there was of the fate awaiting the deported Jews. Overall this section appears poorer and less convincing than the earlier ones, it is especially striking to note the disproportion between the quality and relevance of the contributions concerning the salvage of Jews (by common people, the Church, the Resistance movement) and those dealing instead with their capture and deportation. In particular it can be noted that the contributions by Ganapini and Franzinelli do not address adequately the key issue: how and to what extent did the Italian authorities collaborate with the round ups and the deportation? Considering how the question of Italian responsibilities in arrests and deportations has had a central role in the debate that has been ongoing in the last twenty years, from such an important collective endeavor we would have expected to find some more complete and convincing considerations on the period 1943-1945.

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The second of the two volumes of this collective effort is dedicated, as we have said earlier, to the issues of memory and cultural representations. It is organized in three separate sections. The first is entitled “Times and rites of memory” (but in truth there is scant attention to rituals as such), and it is made up of six essays. Among them must be noted the excellent contributions by Filippo Focardi and Paola Bertilotti, who offer us a well rounded view of the different stages of post-war memory and of the role played by the memory of racial persecutions within the antifascist national narrative. Focardi concentrates on the early post-war years (1945-1947), a period that is crucial both for the large amount of memoirs published as well as for the construction of the founding narratives of the Italian Republic. The essay touches briefly but attentively several different issues, from the transmission of information concerning the extermination policies by the newspapers, to the fate of the many volumes of memoirs published in that period – with special attention to female memoirs and to the exceptional figure of Primo Levi – up to the cancellation of all faults and responsibilities of the Italian nation, with the construction of the ‘myth of the good Italian’. He shows quite well how the early post-war period was not in any way a time of silence; in fact it was a period marked by an exceptional production of testimonies. The time of silence and oblivion would have come later, with the Fifties. From this season

Paola Bertilotti starts here keen analysis, that is developed up to the latest years. The essay is rich and shows great ability in offering an overview of the different seasons of memory in post-war Italy.

In this first section we also find brief essays by Raffaella Di Castro, who presents a synthesis of her psycho-sociological research on third generation memories in the Italian case, and by Ilaria Pavan, on Italian historiography and the Shoah, presenting the evolution of research from the immediate post-war years up to now. Marcello Flores and Valeria Galimi co-sign a brief essay on a subject that has not yet been studied adequately: the trials concerning Shoah-related crimes in post-war Italy. While the theme is certainly relevant, this very short essay appears quite descriptive and analytically weak. The passages on relevant events like the Italian echoes of the Eichmann trial, the Bosshammer trial, and on the Priebke case don't add much to earlier knowledge and often fail to highlight some of the key problems. For example, the Priebke case is read as a testimony of the growth of attention in the Shoah memory. It is undoubtedly so, yet how did this happen? What agencies were involved? What were the implications of such an event? What happened with Priebke was extraordinary: on August 1 1996, after the military tribunal established that the accused was guilty as charged but that he should nonetheless be freed, the Jewish population of Rome responded with an uproar and literally besieged the tribunal, holding Priebke and the Court captive until the Minister of Justice found a way to arrest him again and make way for a new trial in front of a civil court. Two problems are raised by those events, and the public debate that preceded and followed them: 1. Priebke was being tried for complicity in the Ardeatine Caves massacre, where 335 Italians (some of them Jews) were killed as a reprisal for an earlier partisan action. Such an event had been a key reference point for anti-fascist memory and identity since 1945; and within such framework only very little space had been left for the specific Jewish plight. The Ardeatine Caves massacre had never before been seen or represented as specifically connected to the memory of the Shoah. Yet in the 1990's the overall memory shifts transformed the trial of Priebke in an event directly connected to the memory of Jewish extermination. 2. In that case Jewish memory, and the 'Jewish side' of the war tragedy acquired center stage. But there is more: we also assist to the Jews, the tiny Jewish minority, taking to the streets and defying public authority in a way that was absolutely unprecedented.

What is crucial here is the connection between the rise of the memory of the Shoah, the decline of the anti-fascist narrative, and the development of a new and different – more proactive and forceful – stance on part of the Jewish minority. Of course the fact that the emergence of such a memory implied a greater public role for the minority is not surprising. Yet this element seems to have been set aside in this specific essay, and – with few exception – this seems to have been the case for the whole volume.

Here and there we have hints, or brief passages concerning Italian-Jewish memory, yet no specific essay is dedicated to this issue. We have, in fact, one

essay by Mario Toscano, from the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, dedicated to the Jews in Republican Italy, yet his contribution offers only a very synthetic description of Italian-Jewish institutional life, concentrating on the inner dynamics of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. Thus we do not have any contribution that deals with Jewish memory (or, better, memories); that would have been important for three sets of motives. First of all because the Jewish group had a key role in preserving the memory of the persecution as well as in offering legitimacy first to the so called ‘myth of the good Italian’, and later to the overall revision of the past that brought about a new awareness concerning national responsibilities in the racist campaign. Secondly because the relationship between Jewish memory (or memories) with the anti-fascist national narrative is a key element to understand the evolution of the latter and the role played by Auschwitz in collective imagination. Thirdly because the evolution of Italian Jewish memories attests to the redefinition of the groups identity and the construction of its relationship with the State, the nation and its past; thus it would have been fundamental to consider such factors as they would have allowed to better comprehend the process of post-war reintegration.

Reintegration, in fact, is not merely a question of legal rights and material compensation for the losses and the injustices suffered by the persecuted. Reintegration is a more complex phenomenon, entailing the mechanisms of identity building and in which – inevitably – memory and interpretation of the recent tragedy played a key role. The fact that only a very small number of Italian Jews chose to leave the country after the war, and that many who had left before chose to return, is a clear indicator of the persistence of the bond between the Jews and the Nation. A bond which was of course influenced by the living conditions, the possibilities of getting back properties and jobs, but which was certainly confirmed by the idea that the ‘true Italy’, that the authentic spirit of the Nation, was not the one incarnated by the fascist regime which enacted the persecution. In accordance with virtually all post-war political and cultural forces, the Jews pledged their faith to the myth of the ‘anti-fascist Nation’; a representation of the past which constituted one of the corner stones of the Italian political and institutional system for several long decades following the end of the war. Unfortunately, except for a few precise but limited considerations made on this matter by Paola Bertilotti, there is little or no attention to this set of questions. Reintegration is in fact presented exclusively in its material aspects, considering factors undoubtedly relevant but that alone do not allow to fully grasp the socio-cultural process which were taking place since 1945 and, with them, to represent the role and function of memory.

The second part of the volume is dedicated to communities and institutions, and – after the presentation of Jewish communal life by Mario Toscano, we find a well documented reconstruction of legal reintegration and economic reparations – since the immediate post-war years up until today – offered by the jurist Giorgio Sacerdoti, President of the CDEC Foundation. Other essays

in this section deal with very diverse aspects of the post-war phase. Tommaso Dell'Era, of the University of Viterbo, illustrates in detail the personal and professional vicissitudes of those Italian scientists who had contributed to the development of fascist racist ideology, and who appeared as the signatories of the Manifesto of Racist Scientists of 1938. Of those ten intellectuals, one – the neurologist Arturo Donaggio – had died in 1942, and the others had to undergo enquiries by the authorities that set to purge the social system and the institutions of figures involved with the regime. As has been shown by a series of studies such a process was all but linear and coherent, and – after a determined start – it had only a very limited impact on Italian society. This is true also for these specific figures: of the seven who had been academics, six maintained their role and position until when they reached the age of retirement. Only one – the physician Emilio Franzì – was never hired back into the University, but mainly due to the support he gave to the Fascist Republican Party, created by Mussolini in his Italian Social Republic, and not for his role in the racial campaign.

Gadi Luzzatto Voghera offers a brief overview of the attitudes of the Left towards the Jewish problem in post-war Italy. His essay touches several interesting problems in a time frame that goes from the immediate post-war up to the early Nineties, ranging from the memory of the Shoah and the identification of the Jews as a paradigmatic victim, to the position taken by left wing parties and movements toward Israel. The lack of adequate bibliography, and the fact that the author did not compensate with original research, inevitably leads this to contribution that merely scratches the surface. Very many questions remain open concerning, for example, the image and perception of the Palestinians in the left, and especially in the post-68 movements, or the relationship between Italian and Palestinian terrorist groups during the seventies. There is definitely the need to do some proper historical research on the subject. The essay on the left is followed by one on the right, or rather on the neo-fascist far-right, written by the journalist Antonio Carioti. His contribution offers a clear and convincing presentation of the neofascist attitudes towards the Jews, their long lasting anti-Semitism, as well as their changing perception of the State of Israel.

Two essays are dedicated to the Catholic world and its positions regarding the memory of the Shoah, and the issue of anti-Semitism. The first subject is touched by Alberto Melloni, senior catholic academic, while the second is the object of a detailed research by the post-doctoral scholar Elena Mazzini. The second one appears to be definitely more interesting and problematic, reconstructing the inconsistencies present in the Catholic world's discourse on racial anti-Semitism: its efforts to distinguish it from traditional anti-Judaism, and to deny any connection between the actions and discourses of the Church in earlier times to the recent tragedy. This part of the volume is closed by a precise reconstruction, written by the jurist of the University of Catania Ernesto De Cristofaro, of Italian memorial laws.

Finally, the last section of the second volume is dedicated to the presence of the Shoah in Italian post-war culture, with ten very different contributions. We have essays dedicated to different media and forms of expression: Millicent Marcus on the cinema, Emiliano Perra on television, Laura Iamurri on visual arts, Robert Gordon on literature, and Roberta Ascarelli on women writers. These contributions, while quite different in style and quality, offer a well rounded representation of the presence of the Shoah in Italian cultural production from 1945 to the present. A further enrichment is offered by a specific essay dedicated to the figure of Primo Levi, written by Marco Belpoliti who has been the curator of his collected works.

Four more essays, very different in nature, contribute to the presentation of the Italian memorial system. Elisabetta Ruffini, of the Istituto Storico della Resistenza of Bergamo, reconstructs with detail and intelligence the history of the Italian memorial in Auschwitz; a site of memory which has recently been at the center of a conflict separating Jewish and anti-fascist memories. Valentina Pisanty's essay instead should have offered some insight on the banalization of the Shoah in the Italian case, yet her contribution appears quite and overall definitely unsatisfactory. The journalist Lia Tagliacozzo offers some insight on the Italian echoes of the Lebanon war (1982), and on the ensuing terrorist attack performed by a Palestinian assault group to the primary synagogue in Rome. Her contribution is one of the first on that delicate moment, and – although more research is certainly necessary – the author correctly indicates how the debates and the events of that year heavily influenced the relationship between Italian (and especially Roman) Jews and the rest of society. Finally, David Bidussa closes the volume with an insightful reflection on the celebrations of the 'Day of Memory' (27th of January, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz) which, on the basis of a law passed by Parliament in the year 2000, has come to be dedicated every year to the commemoration of racial persecutions and the extermination of the Jews. His critical reflection on how to remember, on the various ambiguities of Italian commemorative policies and on the problems arising after ten years of memorial exercises, represents both an occasion to understand what happened in that first decade of the new century and to conceptualize how to face the difficult task of commemorating without producing merely vain and empty rhetoric¹².

It is not easy to evaluate such a rich and complex collective work. Such operations tend to address two very different publics, that of the specialist scholar and that of the more general readers. It is extremely hard, if not impossible, to satisfy the needs of both. I believe that there are three main problems with this operation. The first concerns the lack of interpretative clarity: the editors have evidently chosen not to take a clear stand on several

¹² See also, by the same author, *Dopo l'ultimo testimone*, (Torino: Einaudi, 2009). For a critical outlook on the transformation known in the last decades by the politics of memory in the Italy (and in Europe), and on the emergence of the memory of Jewish persecutions see also G. De Luna, *La Repubblica del dolore. Le memorie di un'Italia divisa*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2011).

controversial issues. The main ones are 1) the connections and relationships existing between fascist antisemitism and precedent historical and cultural experiences; 2) the meaning and significance of the racial turn in Mussolini's policy. Thus the first volume presents different and non coherent contributions, a fact that might disorient those readers who are not perfectly acquainted with the debates on these problems. Furthermore one could say that probably more attention could have been given to the pre-fascist period, as in fact the understanding of the dynamics of integration and anti-Semitism in liberal Italy appear to be a key factor for a better comprehension of the roots racial persecutions.

Another fault in these volumes concerns the weakness of the introductions written by the editors. These are extremely brief and, again, testify that the intent was more descriptive (showing the state of the research) rather than analytical (providing a new coherent outlook on the events). This attitude also lead the editors not to take a stand concerning key terminological questions: in their introduction, and throughout the two volumes the terms "Shoah", "Holocaust", "Genocide" are used as synonyms. This choice, maybe made to respect the different sensibilities of the authors and their diverse national and cultural backgrounds, seems to ingenerate some confusion. We all know that the terms are not synonyms and that each implies a different vision and conception of the phenomenon. It could be noted that it is not by mere accident that the volumes bear in the title the word "Shoah", as the term has gradually conquered the Italian cultural scene since the Eighties. That was the result, among other factors, of a long and intense campaign by Italian-Jewish institutions that refused the term "Holocaust" because of its religious implications.

The choice of not choosing is questionable, as are of course all choices concerning the architecture of such complex cultural operations. Nonetheless the volumes certainly contribute in offering a synthetic impression on the state of research concerning the Italian case. For this reason they probably would deserve to be translated into English, as this would be a good occasion to introduce the results of Italian historiography to a wider scholarly public.

Guri Schwarz, University of Pisa

“Israele più solo, più forte” [Israel: the more lonely, the stronger], *Limes. Rivista italiana di geopolitica*, n. 5, October 2011, pp. 320

by *Arturo Marzano*

This issue of *Limes*, a bimonthly Italian geopolitical magazine born in 1993, entirely focuses on the political loneliness of Israel in the aftermath of the “Arab Spring”. It is divided into three parts. The first one, *Israel is Alone*, includes 13 essays, a short article by A.B. Yehoshua (already published on the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*), and two interviews to Israeli experts of security studies. The second one, *And All around Land is Trembling*, is strictly connected to the first part and is composed of 11 essays and one interview to Salman Sayh, Director of the Doha Brookings Centre. The third part, *Imazighen: a Berber Spring*, is much smaller and consists of 5 papers dealing with the current situation of the Berber minority in North Africa.

The main idea of the issue is that Israel has never been that isolated. Yet, at least currently, it is not weaker. As the Editorial “Not from this world?” clearly states, a series of events have progressively weakened the diplomatic status of Israel (and its perception). Specifically, the diplomatic crisis with Turkey; the fall of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has been the Israeli closest Arab leader for three decades; the American retreat from Iraq and the increasing Iranian influence on Baghdad; the Israeli uneasiness following the Palestinian Authority statehood bid at the United Nations; the risk of a power vacuum in Syria that might endanger the entire Middle East; the American influence decline in the region. On the contrary, the only diplomatic “plus” for Israel in the last year has been the Saudi Arabia strong stance against the Iranian influence in the region, which motivated the armed intervention and harsh repression of the Shia rebellion in neighbouring Bahrain.

According to the Editorial, if the three circles of the Israeli geo-strategy are analysed – the inner one (the Palestinians), the intermediate one (the neighbouring countries), and the external one (the other actors in the Middle East) – the most dangerous for Israel is the third one. The Palestinians are not presenting a real threat, given the still ongoing division between *Hamas* and *Fatah*, despite many attempts to reach an agreement. As to the Arab neighbours - keeping aside Jordan, which managed, so far, to find its way through the “Arab Spring” - political forces in Egypt are not interested in armed confrontation with Israel and therefore, even if «Israel has lost a useful point of reference, it did not get in exchange an aggressive enemy» (p. 19). It is

true that the Northern front is worrisome, and for this reason Israel is carefully following up the situation in Syria and Lebanon, but things seem to be under control, at least in the short run. On the contrary, as to the external circle, the Israeli isolation is more evident than ever, especially if a comparison is made within a larger historical horizon, i.e. considering the strong relationships Israel and Iran used to have until 1979 and the strict Israeli-Turkish partnership (in particular in terms of security) still working a few years ago.

While the inner circle is not widely addressed in the issue – only Umberto De Giovannangeli concentrates on the Palestinian bid for statehood – several articles deal with the intermediate and the external circles. For example, Amikam Nachmani and Margherita Paolini concentrate on the crisis with Turkey; Ofir Winter and Paola Caridi tackle the relationship between Israel and Egypt; Mordechai Kedar and Lorenzo Trombetta deal with the situation in Syria and the challenges that Bashar Assad's fall might create; Mauro De Bonis and Fabrizio Maronta focus on the relationship between Azerbaijan and Israel, favoured by their common enmity with Iran.

The American umbrella

As said, according to the Editorial, even if «Israel is (...) more lonely, it is not less secure» (p. 23). The main two reasons are that the Arab spring has deepened the rivalries among the Arab states and that the «American umbrella is still stable, though less waterproof than earlier» (p. 25). In this regard, the possibility that Washington might stop defending Jerusalem, which would lead to questioning the very existence of Israel, is considered «unthinkable» (p. 25). Though such a comment is totally sharable, the main question that *Limes* falls short of asking is not “what will happen” if the US stop protecting Jerusalem, but “how should Israel behave not to let it happen”, i.e. not to let the relationship between the US and Israel deteriorate.

If a decline in the US support for Israel is currently “unthinkable”, any analysis of the American-Israeli partnership should still consider that signals of an increasing uneasiness in the American perception of the Israeli politics are more and more visible. From this point of view, *Limes* does not pay attention to two intertwining phenomena that should be taken into consideration while dealing with the American support of Israel.

On one side, several diplomatic incidents occurred between Israel and the US in the last two years, which led to severe critics by American leading figures. On the other side, there is a minor - yet increasing - process of disaffection towards Israel by several sectors of the American Judaism. In this issue, no

article addresses any of the two aspects, and the only essay that deals with American Judaism (Martino Mazzonis, “Without Jewish vote, No Obama 2012”) only focuses on the importance of the Jewish vote in the next Presidential elections, especially in crucial states such as Pennsylvania and Florida (p. 163). Without denying the relevance of such an aspect, a more nuanced analysis of the American Jewish attitude towards Israel would have helped in better depicting the complexity of the US-Israeli relations.

The internal enemy

A very interesting topic that this issue deals with concerns the risks to Israel’s existence coming from “inside” rather than from “outside”. According to the Editorial, Israel «might not succumb to an enemy, but can surely destroy itself» (p. 26). If Zionism will increasingly concentrate of the ideas of Jewish exceptionalism and divine privilege, abandoning its universal values, «the future for Israel and (...) the Jewish Diaspora will be dark» (p. 25-26).

This idea is shared by Menachem Klein, professor at the Bar-Ilan University, author of the article “A residence in the jungle”. By using as a title for his contribution a famous quotation by the Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, Klein states that the more Israel perceives itself as an oasis in the jungle of the barbarism, the more it becomes a prison, which won’t protect its citizens but will endanger them. On the long run, only political actions can guarantee the security that military option only provides on the short run. Therefore Israel needs to be put under pressure from the outside, i.e. the international community, in order to reach an agreement based on a two-state solution approach, since «it will never reach such an agreement by itself» (p. 118).

Similar conclusions, but with a more pessimistic tone, are shared by Carlos (a nickname used by an Italian diplomat) in his article “Israel’s options if you really love it”. By overturning an expression that was created by Israeli former Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban to describe the Palestinian alleged attitude towards peace - «The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity (for peace)» - Carlos states that it was Israel to have indeed missed a great opportunity in 2002, when the Arab League proposed a peace agreement based on the two-state solution through the so-called Beirut Initiative. If the Israeli refusal might have been understandable at that time – it was one of the worst moments of the Second *Intifada* in terms of Israeli civilian casualties – Israel does not have any justification if it misses that opportunity now. Unfortunately, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is not ready for such an action. Therefore, Israel should be strongly advised and even forced to sign

an agreement by its «real friends», who «should not be worried about the protection of Israel now (it is able to do that by itself), rather about its safety tomorrow» (pp. 137-138).

In light of what Menachem Klein and Carlos write, the triumphal tone that characterizes Ofir Haivry article “The demographic decline. A myth difficult to destroy” is quite awkward. After having criticised all demographers who dealt with Israeli and Palestinian populations so far, by stating that they provided wrong data, Haivry states that future is in favour of Israel, since Jewish birth rate is increasing, while Arab one is decreasing. Therefore, moving from demography to politics, Haivry states that «we should not use alleged demographic previsions (...) to identify solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict». On the contrary, «using some trends to justify specific solutions (the Israeli retreat from territories inhabited by Arab population) might unexpectedly become a justification for the opposite solution» (p. 54). The question whether time is in favour of Israel or of the Palestinians is a never-ending dispute and it is always possible to find completely opposite opinions. For this reason, hosting another essay with a different position on the same topic might have been useful to depict a more nuanced picture of the situation.

In conclusion, despite a few shortcomings – some essays are not particularly thorough; some others are not linked to the main topic; no contribution addresses the “big chill” in the relationship between Israel, Germany, France and Great Britain - this magazine issue is interesting and provides the reader with a deeper knowledge on a topic that is too often neglected in the Italian panorama, both at academic and journalistic level.

Arturo Marzano, University of Pisa

András Kovács, *The Stranger at Hand. Antisemitic Prejudices in Post-Communist Hungary*, Boston-Leiden: Brill 2010, pp. 211

by *Adam Kerpel-Fronius*

International attention has focused on Hungary since the landslide victory of right-wing parties in the general elections of 2010. The emergence of an extremist right-wing party, Jobbik (Movement for a better Hungary), gaining almost 17% of the vote with radically xenophobic slogans, seemed especially alarming. Many commentators spoke of a disturbing rise in antisemitism, creating the impression that, for one of Europe's largest Jewish communities, life has become dangerous.

But are these notions supported by empirical data? Are Hungarians more antisemitic than, say, their Western European counterparts? Are antisemites in Hungary particularly militant and politicized? And what about knowledge of the Holocaust? Are Hungarians unaware of their country's role in the mass extermination of Jews in 1944/45, or do they tend to deny it?

In empirical studies conducted on a regular basis since the early 1990s, the sociologist András Kovács of the Central European University in Budapest has tried to find answers to these questions. It is obvious from the very beginning that he is not looking for easy explanations, but seeks to provide a comprehensive model of the structure of antisemitism in Hungary today.

The first chapter of the book describes how the »Jewish question« resurfaced in Hungary after the fall of communism. This makes worthwhile reading even for those who are more familiar with the subject. We learn that although under the communist regime the issue had been a taboo, it had never completely disappeared – neither on the part of the regime that consciously kept track of the Jewish or non-Jewish descent of its subjects, nor in intellectual milieus, which more often than not defined themselves along the divide of supposedly Jewish or non-Jewish dominated groups. This phenomenon later found its continuation in the row between »urban« and »popular« intellectuals in the 1990s.

The re-emergence of supposedly long-forgotten antisemitic topics and codes in public speech came as a shock to many, but Kovács sees the main reason behind it not so much in the prevalence of anti-Jewish sentiments, but in the logic and the dynamics of the political competition after the fall of communism. The new parties, which essentially all stood for the same set of political goals (dismantling of the old system, parliamentary democracy, free-

market economy) had to find a symbolic space in which they could differentiate themselves from one another. That symbolic space was found in history, especially in the way the new political actors interpreted the Horthy regime of the interwar period. While the urban, liberal side rejected virtually everything Horthy stood for, the conservatives – exactly because Horthy was declared a fascist throughout the communist era – sought to rehabilitate the pre-war regime. Inevitably, a row has ensued on the responsibility of the pre-war elites for the Holocaust. As for antisemitism, this melange proved particularly explosive: »For the conservatives' opponents, the most effective means of shattering the legitimacy of the conservative position in the eyes of the public was to call attention to the possibility of a hidden antisemitism behind it. Meanwhile, the conservatives – employing a similar strategy – attempted to portray their liberal and left-wing opponents as covert or overt apologists for the communist regime. They accused them of hiding behind the veil of antifascism, which, in certain cases, they considered to be motivated by the memory of the Holocaust. In this manner, by means of the identity-politics debates, antisemitism became the direct focus of the political debate.« [p.26f.]

It was in this context that openly antisemitic opinions appeared at the centre of the political debate, namely those advocated by the recently deceased playwright-turned-nationalist-politician István Csurka. Csurka made a point of condemning the Holocaust, but presented the »Jewish question« as highly relevant in the Hungarian nation's supposed struggle to preserve its identity and freedom. He and others spoke of »us« and »them«, »they« being those who have always served foreign, »cosmopolitan« interests in order to colonize and exploit »our« country.

Here, Kovács also points out the relevance of the linguistic continuum in which these debates took place: while some moderate conservatives, without being antisemitic, were apologetic towards some aspects of Horthy's regime, real antisemites felt encouraged to move into the arena and, by talking about the same subjects, had the opportunity to present their views as part of the legitimate discourse.

Chapter Two presents the empirical data on antisemitism. The two main studies analysed were conducted in 1995 and 2002 respectively. The assembled data and the thoroughness with which the author interprets them is fascinating, although occasionally, a few of these passages are somewhat tedious to read. The data show that Hungarian antisemitism is neither above average in international comparison (in fact, it is lower than in most Western European countries), nor was there significant growth in the number of antisemites since the 1990s: they still account for about a quarter of the adult population. The

studies allow us to identify social groups that show more inclination to be antisemitic than others: they tend to be more anomic, more conservative and slightly more religious than non-antisemites, and typically live in Budapest. Anti-Jewish sentiments are not particularly high when compared to the respondents' feelings about other »foreign« groups living in the country; in fact, only the German minority is more popular than the Jews, while the Roma minority population is rejected by most respondents.

Chapter Three is about the general knowledge of the Holocaust in Hungary. The results indicate that while the level of knowledge on this subject is acceptable in international comparison, there are only very few people who have profound knowledge of the facts. A majority of the Hungarians also know about and accept their country's responsibility for the deportation of her Jewish citizens. Still, most of the respondents also think that Hungarians suffered as much as the Jews did, and thus relativize the Holocaust. On the other hand, outright denial of the Holocaust is a marginal phenomenon.

The notion that the level of antisemitism has not risen significantly since the end of communism is also underlined by the latest data in the book from 2009 (the Hungarian original was published in 2005). However, one important development did take place during the period covered: the emergence of a new group whose extreme antisemitism was of a distinctively political nature. These people weren't antisemites because they felt particularly frustrated, but because antisemitism became part of their nationalistic ideological identity. Also, particularly in recent years, antisemitic rhetoric has become part of mainstream discourse, thus creating the impression that antisemitism was out of control. Thus, the question which arose in 2005 was: if a political party should emerge which opts to exploit the antisemitic electoral potential, what would be the reaction of the established parties at the political centre? In 2010, this scenario in part became reality, and while Fidesz (»Alliance of Young Democrats«), led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has succeeded in containing the threat Jobbik posed, it never totally distanced itself from the far right in order not to alienate too many of its own nationalist voters. Still, in the light of what we learned it seems logical that Jobbik's main strategy has been to capitalize on negative sentiments against the Roma instead. With regard to Jobbik's antisemitism, Kovács suggests: »This does not mean that antisemitism is absent from the rhetoric of the radicals, but that it does not take the form of anti-Jewish political demands.« [p. 201] And yet, the outcome of this political adventure is still uncertain.

András Kovács has presented us with a standard reference work on the origins and the nature of antisemitism in contemporary Hungary. His book not only

offers in-depth interpretation of the vast amount of data gathered, but also provides an excellent introduction to the nature of intellectual discourse in Hungary over the last two decades. As a next step, it would certainly be interesting to juxtapose Kovács's findings with studies on the subjective perception of Jews of their own situation in Hungary today.

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Vladas Sirutavičius, Darius Staliūnas (eds.), *A Pragmatic Alliance. Jewish-Lithuanian Political Cooperation at the Beginning of the 20th Century*, Budapest and New York: Central European University Press 2011, pp. 400.

by Klaus Richter

From a linguistic point of view, the history of Lithuania prior to the end of the Second World War poses a challenge. Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Belarusians, Latvians and Germans made Lithuania part of the multi-ethnic belt stretching from the Baltic Sea coast to the Balkans. As each of these groups had its own language (or more than one, e.g. Hebrew and Yiddish in the case of the Lithuanian Jews), researching on multi-ethnic Lithuania becomes a complicated task. Moreover, the broader trend in Central Eastern Europe after 1990/91 to write history as national history has enforced the exclusion of Jews and other minorities. Vice versa, books on the history of the Lithuanian Jews tended to show little understanding for the life of ethnic Lithuanians, focusing instead on conflicts and anti-Jewish violence.

The book discussed here serves as a remarkable indicator for a reversal of this trend. Over the last years, Jewish history has experienced an upsurge on the Lithuanian book market, but hardly has there been a volume that has so inextricably connected the development of political ideas and movements of both Lithuanians and Jews. This was only possible because all contributors to this volume have used a wide array of sources in all the relevant languages such as Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish and German.

Editors *Darius Staliūnas* and *Vladas Sirutavičius* determine the main aim of this volume to deconstruct the “ethnocentric view [...] that prevailed in Lithuanian historiography for a long time” (1) and define as main common questions for the articles what role the groups assigned to each other in their respective political plans, and what attitudes the respective elites adopted towards each other, while at the same time stressing the importance of territorial concepts. The volume covers roughly the time period from the late 19th century until the year 1923 when the League of Nations accepted the incorporation of Vilnius into Poland. This year, according to the editors, marked a turning point, as Lithuanians had considered Jews to be important allies only as long as the Vilnius question had remained an open issue. This period is characterized by political transitions and ruptures: the Revolution of 1905, the creation of the Imperial Duma and the First World War, which was followed by the emergence of an independent Lithuanian state on a national basis, struggling

for survival between Bolsheviks and the new Polish state. Although Lithuanian activists considered Jews a valuable ally against the Poles, the editors state that economic anti-Semitism played a vital role for Lithuanian nationalism and had a significant influence on the cooperation between Jews and Lithuanians, which was thus more “reminiscent of a pragmatic, that is convenient alliance, rather than a firm union based on common principles” (15).

The first article, written by *Mordechai Zalkin*, analyzes the “silence of sources” (22) regarding Jews and Lithuanians, i.e. the reasons why the Lithuanian nationalist movement was practically absent in Jewish pre-World War I writing. He attributes this to the fact that everyday interactions made the Lithuanian peasantry much more important for Jews than Lithuanian intellectuals. Jews described Lithuanian peasants as part of an organic Lithuanian territorial space, which was part of a larger “Litvakland” (34). Lithuanian “high culture” thus went largely unnoticed; the idea of “assimilation” into Lithuanian culture remained unthinkable. According to Zalkin, it was only with the emergence of independent Lithuania that there was a growing interest of Jews in Lithuanian culture, which led to “a limited partnership accompanied by preserving their Jewish identity and interests” (37).

Darius Staliūnas sees the turn of the century and the emergence of a political sphere as the crucial turning point in the relations between Jews and Lithuanians, a process which culminated in the elections for the Imperial Duma. The ensuing co-operation of Jewish and Lithuanian political parties was, according to Staliūnas, rather a result of common anti-Polish views than of common goals. Moreover, the co-operation was hampered by reasonable doubts of Jews whether Lithuanian politicians were at all capable of organizing the Lithuanian peasantry, who were regarded as uncivilized and under the influence of local authorities, landowners and Catholic priests. *Vladimir Levin* further delves into Lithuanian-Jewish political co-operation in the late Imperial period. Illustrating the different concepts political activists (especially of the Jewish socialist Bund party) had of territorial entities such as “Lithuania”, “Poland” and “Russia”, Levin emphasizes that Lithuanians and Jews co-operated in all four Duma electoral campaigns, as both groups were situated roughly on the “progressive”, “oppositional” side of the political spectrum. Levin particularly elaborates on the contacts between the Lithuanian Social Democrat Party (LSDP) and the Bund. While Jewish politicians regarded Lithuanians merely as “brothers in misery” (92), their co-operation did in fact create a “firm basis” (108) for future co-operation in post-war independent Lithuania.

Marcos Silber analyzes the development of political attitudes of Jewish politicians towards the emerging independent Lithuanian state at the end of World War I. In detail, Silber looks at four different visions of a future Lithuania: those of Folkism, Bundism, Russian Zionism and German Zionism. However, all these designs came to a halt when the German occupants set up a purely Lithuanian council to develop plans for a Lithuanian state on an ethnonational basis. Such a state seemed a “frightful choice” (149) for Lithuanian Jews, who were eager to create a state more congruent with the historical *Lite*, i.e., the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The unreliability of Bolshevik Russia, however, led to the abandonment of such ideas and the acceptance of a Lithuanian state offering strong minority rights. *Eglė Bendikaitė* further elaborates on the position of the Zionists in Lithuania regarding visions of a future post-World War I Lithuania and focuses on the work of Jewish lawyer Simshon Rozenboim. Bendikaitė convincingly claims that the realization that *Lite* was unattainable was the main impetus for Jews to turn towards Lithuanians as political allies, with the attempt to include Vilnius in the future state becoming the strongest bond between those two groups.

Vladas Sirutavičius pays a close look at the elections to the Constituent Seimas in early 1920, which has been mythologized as a national manifestation of Lithuanians with a voter turnout of more than 90%. Sirutavičius de-constructs this myth on the basis of the fact that precise population figures of post-war Lithuania remain unknown. Regarding Jewish-Lithuanian relations, Sirutavičius shows that the Lithuanian press ran a campaign for electoral participation, which states that the Jews, who were allegedly better organized than the Lithuanians, would be overrepresented in the Seimas. *Theodore R. Weeks*, on the other hand, analyzes the situation of Jews in Vilnius, which in 1920 was occupied by Polish troops. This, Weeks argues, rendered the option by then preferred by Jews – Vilnius as the capital of a Lithuanian state – obsolete. Moreover, Weeks quotes sources that indicate that Jews abstained from taking part in the 1922 Sejm elections in Vilnius due to a heightened anti-Semitic atmosphere in the city. Week’s article shows that neither Poles nor Lithuanians were seriously interested in Jewish concepts of a multi-ethnic Vilnius as the capital of a multi-ethnic state and Jews thus “had to choose between two mutually exclusive nation programs, neither of which was their own” (222).

The book is a valuable addition to the corpus of recently published studies on Jewish-Christian relations in the early 20th century and almost a pioneering work regarding the history of Lithuania. One of its achievements is that it reveals several desiderata and starting points for future research, one of which would be a more transnationally oriented approach on the relations of Jews and other ethnic groups in whole *Lite* and putting this territorial concept into

perspective with Lithuanian and Polish federal concepts, which evolved at the end of World War I and have been neglected in the national narratives thus far. For now, this volume stands as the first wholehearted attempt at writing a common Jewish-Lithuanian history, which neither “integrates” Jews into “Lithuanian history” nor the other way around. Thus, the book manages to show to what extent co-operation between the groups was possible and how conceivable mutual active support in general was.

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Luigi Reale, *Mussolini's Concentration Camps for Civilians. An insight into the nature of fascist racism*, London: Valentine Mitchell 2011, pp. 194.

by Matteo Stefanori

With this book, Luigi Reale presents to the Anglo-Saxon public an aspect of Italian history almost unknown at an international level and too often filtered through stereotyped images of Italians during the War and of the alleged softness of Fascist Regime. Already from the cover, the author makes the aim of the book very clear, in fact, above the title *Mussolini's Concentration Camps for Civilians*, there is the picture of two Italian women inside Mauthausen nazi lager. In the introduction, the author asks himself, in a rhetorical way, how little we know about the Fascist concentration camps and how little Italians themselves still know about Mussolini's apparatus of repression against civilian or military populations, or individuals persecuted for reasons of race. To this end, Reale doesn't hesitate to suggest the responsibility of Italian historians, which, for too long, have presented – and published in the textbooks – Fascist racism as a “diluted” and gentle form of the racist and anti-Semitic politics adopted in Germany, or at the most, as a way to regulate the relationship with indigenous populations of the colonial territories, conquered in the '30s. So, the author intends to catch the characteristics of Fascism's racist and anti-Semitic politics, as a specific phenomenon of that form of regime. Reale develops his analysis through the study of a particular aspect of the Fascist dictatorship, that is the setting up and the functioning of the concentration camps, created between 1940 and 1943: therefore, they appear as an instrument not only of political repression, but also of racial discrimination against civilians and ethnic and religious minorities.

There are five chapters to the book: in the first part, he analyzes the characteristics of Fascist racism and antisemitism, focusing on the race laws of 1938; in the second one, the politics of internment, confinement and concentration in the camps implemented by the regime from 1940 onwards. The first two chapters focus on analogies and differences between Fascist and Nazi racial and anti-Semitic politics. The author discusses the law promulgated in Italy on November 17th 1938, in order to outline its main characteristics; then, he compares it with the Nuremberg laws, in order to highlight the different purposes at the basis of the two laws¹. Reale claims that, if for Nazis

¹ The reference text used by the author is the documentation contained in a Fascist publication of the time, inside which both laws are mentioned: “Le leggi razziali tedesche – La difesa della

the racial issue rest on biological factors linked to the myth of a pure Aryan race, in Fascism, 1938 laws are the result of a political calculation, that was consistent with the functioning of the nationalist state and therefore more based on political/cultural principles than of “blood”. Just according to these different characteristics, in the author’s opinion, Nazism found in the practice of extermination a solution to the danger of a genetic contamination of pure German blood, while Fascism, between 1940 and 1943, created a system of camps «with the goal of isolating and removing all civilian rights from their largest minority group, the Jews» (p.51). A similar statement is then developed in the two following chapters, in which he analyzes in detail the politics of confinement and internment implemented by the Fascist regime. Reale suggests a list of the different camps opened by Italian civil and military authorities during the first three years of the War in Italy and in the territories occupied by the Italian army, intended to receive different kind of internees: war prisoners, civilian populations (particularly Slavonics from the Yugoslav occupied territories), ethnic and religious minorities, such as Gypsies and Jews. Through the specific analysis of some facilities (such as Casacalenda camp in the province of Campobasso, reconstructed thanks to the documentation found in the local archives) and the in-depth examination of the rules and of the guidelines at the base of their daily functioning, the author shows the characteristics of these instruments used by the regime, in order to put into practice its repressive and racial politics. The last part of the book focuses on the functioning camps between 1943 and 1945, that is during the Nazist occupation of the peninsula and, finally, on the activity of some organisations which helped internees in the camps, such as the Holy See, the International Red Cross or the Delasem (the main Jew rescue organisation).

At the end of his study, Reale reaches the conclusion that Hitler and Mussolini set up concentration camps for different reasons; infact, the racist politics of the two dictatorships evolve, as we already said, in two different directions. However, according to the author, Fascist racism is not only a theoretical phenomenon or a mild form of Nazist derivation: «the [racists] laws found a concrete and destructive practical application with goals that were original in nature» (p.160). As attested by the concentration camps opened in Italy between 1940 and 1943, Fascist racism has a practical and specific application against civilians and minorities, especially those who are seen as enemies of the state, such as the Jews: «the racism legislation issued by the fascist regime was

razza del mondo”, in *Quaderni della scuola di mistica fascista “Sandro Italico Mussolini”*, (Milan: A. Nicola & Co.), 1940.

just as calculated, the application of the race laws just as racist and destructive to human rights and life» (p. 3).

The merit of Reale's book is to offer to the anglo-saxon public an analysis of the nature of Fascist racism and anti-semitism, partly revising the most popular historiographical interpretations, especially abroad, and helping to debunk the false myth of the alleged kindness of Italians in war (such as the stereotyped image of the "Italians good people" – "Italiani brava gente" in Greece and in the Balkans or of the watered-down Fascist violence).

But then, it is surprising (and a little bit confusing) Reale's choice of not updating the bibliography with the studies published, not only in Italy, in the last two decades. This missed attention to the most recent results achieved by the historiography, especially in Italy, makes Reale's work inaccurate in some parts, because it doesn't consider new documents, new interpretative keys and the debate they generate. Actually, it is not very clear if the choice not to take into account most of the researches published in the last years is voluntary or not: the book is infact the reworking of the author's graduation thesis, dating back to 1994, result of his studies at Rome University La Sapienza and at London King's College. If Reale quotes only a few of the most recent works on the subject, however, at the same time, he proves to follow the evolution of the facts, like when he pieces together fragments of the trial against an Italian concentration camp's prison guard and he communicate his death, occurred in 2010!

Considering this, it is just the fulcrum of the research that is very penalized; infact, the reconstruction of the system of the camps set up in Italy between 1940 and 1943 and the draft of a complete list of the facilities known hitherto, can no longer be defined as a totally original element published "for the first time" (p.158): a scientific comparison with the important contribution on the subject by Carlo Spartaco Capogreco² (published in 2004 by Einaudi, one of the main Italian publishing houses), for example, would have been good for the content of Reale's work, adding some useful informations about the research already carried out by the author and clarifying some aspects of the law, of the typology of the internees and of the functioning of the camps. Even the reconstruction of Casacalenda camp, as original as it is, because it is based on unpublished archive documents, doesn't add nothing to that we already know about internment of foreign civilians, Jews and not, in Italy and about

² Carlo Spartaco Greco is the author of an exact reconstruction of the system of the camps set up in Italy and in the occupied territories during World War II (C.S. Capogreco, *I campi del duce. L'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista (1940-1943)*, (Torino: Einaudi), 2004.

the laws against them, during the War³ 3. The reference to the recent Italian historiographic debate on the subject of racism/anti-semitism/Fascist repressive system would have enhanced the part concerning the peculiarities of the laws of 1938, their link with the colonial laws, the more or less “biological” criteria inside them⁴ 4. The last part, concerning the functioning camps during the Nazist occupation and the repressive instruments used against civilians and Jews in 1943-1945, clarified by recent studies on Salò Republic, would need an updated bibliography.

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³ For example, the important (but never mentioned) study by Klaus Voigt on the politics towards the foreign Jews (K. Voigt, *Zuflucht auf Widerruf: Exil in Italien 1933-1945*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1989-1993; italian translation K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario. Gli esuli in Italia dal 1933 al 1945*, (Florence: La Nuova Italia), 1993-1996.

⁴ For example, the works by Roberto Maiocchi or by Michele Sarfatti, but also those by the french historian Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci on the political use of Fascist anti-semitism. R. Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1999; M. A. Matard-Bonucci, *L'Italie fasciste et la persécution des juifs*, Perrin, 2007; M. Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, (Torino: Einaudi) 2007 (English translation: M. Sarfatti, *The jews in Mussolini's Italy: from Equality to Persecution*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 2006).

Filippo Petrucci, *Gli ebrei in Algeria e in Tunisia, 1940-1943*, Firenze: Giuntina 2011, pp. 194

by Daniela Melfa

In French North Africa the Jews, and other minorities in the colonised world, have been considered an 'in-between' community. They were attracted into the French sphere of influence, especially in Algeria where the Crémieux Decree (1870) led to their automatic naturalisation. On the other hand, the *grana*, Jews from Leghorn settled in Tunisia, were a bastion of Italian culture. In *Gli ebrei in Algeria e in Tunisia, 1940-1943*, Filippo Petrucci focuses on the dramatic period of the Second World War, and the numerous injustices suffered by Jews. Although the majority of North African Jews lived at that time in Morocco, the author chooses to analyse the Algerian *départements* and the Tunisian Protectorate where the census of 1941 registered respectively almost 120,000 and 90,000 Jews.

The introductory chapter deals with the French conquest of Algeria (1830) and Tunisia (1881), by examining its consequences for the Jewish population, the emergence of anti-Semitism and Zionism in North Africa. Even if historical Arab anti-Semitism is not neglected, attention is mainly on the French hatred of Jews that was progressively institutionalised. After the 1938 Italian Racial Laws that hit Italian Jews, the Vichy Statutes of 1940 and 1941 worsened conditions for all Jews in French North Africa. In his meticulous depiction of the discriminatory laws, Petrucci highlights that, paradoxically, Jews were more penalised in the Maghreb than in France. Their greater proportion over the European population in Algeria (12-14%) and the limited higher education opportunities in French North Africa rendered, for instance, fixed quotas at universities an unbearable block (pp. 104-105).

In the face of 'barbarous deeds' (p. 174), representatives of the Jewish communities did what they could to reduce distress. In Algeria, where the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* had not set up an education system as in Tunisia, communitarian schools were created. In Tunisia, in order to avoid indiscriminate roundups, religious authorities cooperated in providing a workforce. Filippo Petrucci draws abundantly on their memories (Maurice Eisenbeth, Paul Ghez, Robert Borgel and others), along with a wide range of archival sources.

In Algeria anti-Jewish measures were zealously implemented, while the authorities in Tunisia were less rigorous, at least until the Axis occupation. Through a comparative approach, Filippo Petrucci tries to understand the different fate of Jewish communities in the French possessions.

If in 'cosmopolitan' (p. 51) Tunisia, Jews had been victims of sporadic prejudice since the late-nineteenth century, in Algeria there was a history of deep-rooted anti-Semitism, and racist political parties. Anti-Semitism caused 'the most sordid violence'¹ in early August 1934, when in Constantine about twenty Jews were massacred. The then mayor Émile Morinaud did not bother to return from his seaside holiday. Without interruption, under Vichy, Morinaud, along with several *pieds-noirs*, approved the repeal of the Crémieux Decree in 1940 (pp. 84-85).

Indirect administration offered room for manoeuvre used by the French Resident General in Tunisia, Jean-Pierre Esteva (1940-43), and Munsif Bey (1942-43): the former delayed the enforcement of laws and also funded Jewish charities, while the latter resumed the traditional role of protector of the *ahl al-ḥitāb* (pp. 127-128). Nowhere did the Catholic Church speak out (p. 89).

In order to grasp why the principles of the National Revolution were promoted in Algeria, it would have been useful to shed light, as suggested by Daniel Rivet², on the discriminatory nature of the colonial order, whose partition into ruling and subjected classes was in line with Petainist policies. There is just a mention of this affinity when the author evokes Alī Boumendjel's refusal of anti-Semitic politics because Arabs were also subjected to racism (p. 89). Then, the intertwining between anti-Semitism and colonial patriotism would have deserved more attention. Actually, French settlers at the outposts of the French Empire were spurred on by fervent nationalism that prompted them to exceed the citizens of the *Métropole*.

The idea of appealing to the Arabs by mistreating Jews proved ill-founded. Actually, among Muslim natives, popular hostilities and 'jealousy' (p. 88) appeared side by side with the noblest devotion of several 'righteous'³, such as the reformist al-'Uqbī. This intriguing topic is briefly described, and the Muslim majority remains in the background.

¹ Jacques Berque, *French North Africa. The Maghrib Between Two World Wars*, (London: Faber&Faber LTD 1967) 255.

² Daniel Rivet, *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve de la colonisation*, (Paris: Hachette 2002).

³ Robert Satloff, *Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands*, (New York: Public Affairs 2006).

Even if some North African Jews were deported to Europe, the Holocaust was not directly experienced in the Maghreb. Petrucci wonders if this was because of logistical deficiencies or an absence of extermination plans, but he does not offer new elements to solve the issue.

Several works have been produced on the Jews of North Africa during the Second World War and the Paris-based *Société d'Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie* has made a significant contribution to which Filippo Petrucci refers (Claude Nataf, Michel Abitbol, etc.). A more articulate and in-depth analysis of the existing literature on the subject would have helped readers to appreciate the originality of Petrucci's book, just as attentive proofreading would have reduced the number of misprints.

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Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in Late Imperial Russia*,
Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2009, pp. XIII – 382

by *Elissa Bemporad*

The work of Simon Dubnov, the dean of Russian Jewish history, aptly captured (albeit not intentionally) the fissure existing between high culture and low culture in late-nineteenth century Russian Jewish society. Even after he rejected the *maskilic* apologetic stance of history writing as a means to ascertain the legal status of the Jews of Russia (the largest Jewish community in the Diaspora and the only one in Europe still deprived of civil equality), and became the advocate of a populist-nationalist interpretation of the Jewish past, Dubnov was unable to bridge the gap between the masses and the cultural elite. How was it possible to reach the broad Jewish public in the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland, thereby promoting Jewish national identity formation, which was Dubnov's prime intention, without even considering the option of Yiddish as the language of scholarship and culture? Especially when in 1897 - with an unparalleled modest linguistic acculturation compared to other countries in Europe, - 97 percent of the 5.3 million Jews in the Russian Empire claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue?

The underlying tension in the idea of writing a "history of the people" addressed explicitly to the Jewish audience in the Pale lied, therefore, in Dubnov's choice of language: the people, for whom and about whom he wrote in order to consolidate and spread national identity, had no knowledge of Russian (during the same 1897 census, only 26 percent of Russian Jews claimed to be literate in Russian). Dubnov himself summarized his ambivalent approach to "the people" and the language question in a definition of the "Jewish Clio's craft," in 1893. "The history of the people is not a mere science such as mathematics or botanical research," wrote Dubnov, "but is rather a living science that has a direct and immediate influence on the national *Weltanschauung*. In fact, history is not even a science, but rather a 'living teacher,' a teacher of life... By explaining to the people their past, making them aware of their biography, history will penetrate their souls and force them to know themselves; it will create a national philosophy, and what is more, ...exert an influence on what is called 'national character.' This is a science about the people and for the people..."¹ Despite his grand vision of history as the cornerstone of a secular Jewish national identity, like so many other

¹ Simon Dubnov "Istoricheskie soobshchenie," *Voskhod* 7 (1893), p. 11.

Russian-Jewish *inteligenty* at the time, the historian and nation-builder Dubnov could not overcome the deep-rooted barrier separating cultural celebrities from the common folk on the Jewish street. Or at least not until 1905-1906.

Entitled *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Indiana University Press, 2009) Jeffrey Veidlinger's ambitious study on the emergence of public culture among early-twentieth century Russian Jewry recounts a world of ideas, beliefs and performances (as well as its promoters and beneficiaries), in which the barrier between high and low culture dwindled and, in some instances, gave in entirely. This was at the time of the 1905 Manifesto issued by Tsar Nicholas II, following the abortive First Russian Revolution of that same year, when hope and excitement merged with the violence and the destruction of the pogroms that followed. With the curtailment of Jewish political activity by the tsar, many Jews replaced (at least temporarily) the enthusiasm for political messianism in the form of resettlement to Palestine or utopian socialist reconstruction *in situ* so beautifully described by Jonathan Frankel,² with "cultural messianism," or putting their faith in cultural reconstruction, nourishment, and enrichment. Taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by the March 4, 1906, Temporary Regulations on Societies and Unions, namely the first tsarist legislation to recognize the right of private individuals to form societies (even if under the rigorous scrutiny of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs), a number of Jewish liberal nationalists sought to construct and promote Jewish public culture. By building public institutions to raise, redefine and modernize the intellectual creativity and aesthetic interests of Russian Jews, activists and common folk came together, for the first time, in a communal and national endeavor to create Jewish culture intended to be public. From St. Petersburg to Odessa, from the shtetls of Congress Poland to the small towns in Volhynia, many young Jews "exchanged prayer halls and synagogue pulpits" for the newly established public libraries, literary societies, drama circles, theaters, musical groups and orchestras, as the Jewish traditional restriction against the modern notion of cultural (secular) leisure began to wane. What makes Veidlinger's book so remarkable is therefore his ability to reveal the junction between professional cultural production and its dissemination, between cultural reception and the amateurs' response to the cultural project. So that the protagonists of this book are not only the professional cultural producers like Dubnov, but also the folk recipients and re-enactors of this secular culture: the musicians, performers, patrons, subscribers, librarians, members of the fire brigade ensembles, and amateur historians, who, given the multilingual reality

² Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

of Russian Jewry, might have referred to this new secular culture as *Kultur* (in Yiddish), *Kul'tura* (in Russian), *Kultura* (in Polish), or *Tarbut* (in Hebrew).

In a commendable effort to recreate Jewish reading habits beyond the Talmud, in chapters two and three Veidlinger introduces the reader to the most widespread cultural institution of the time, the public library. Connecting the average Jew and the cultural movements of the early-twentieth century, public libraries (Jewish sections in the municipal libraries, as well as parochial Jewish libraries that emerged from private lending libraries, coffeehouse or tavern libraries) became a powerful surrogate of the *besmedresh* (study hall), and came to provide a glimpse into the world of the modern. Whether supported by the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (Obshchestvo dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdru evreiami v Rossii, OPE), founded in St. Petersburg in 1863 to enlighten the Jews of Russia through acculturation and Russification, or with funds allocated through the *korobka* (a tax levied on kosher meat to fund the needs of the Jewish community), the library developed into the largest Jewish communal organization beyond the synagogue. With a membership typically fluctuating between 100 and 400 outside major urban centers, the library spread modernization and enlightenment and, in the words of a contemporary, “it was like a magical incantation, a siren that enticed people there, and no force in the world could keep them back” (p. 34). But beyond “the magical incantation,” how integrated really was the library into the local Jewish communities of the Pale of Settlement? The process of cultural standardization - described by Veidlinger as perhaps too linear and uncomplicated - must have involved fierce tensions and dramatic rifts among the members of the community, triggered by generational, political, religious, and even class differences.

What kind of books did the average Jew in the largest Jewish community of Europe crave to read in the early-twentieth century? By examining the holdings of a number of public libraries, Veidlinger suggests the primacy of Russian-language books among library collections. Not only did the pre-1905 official restrictions on acquisition of books in Yiddish, as well as the general paucity of Yiddish-language materials in print, determine the predominance of the Russian-language book. As Veidlinger points out, librarians resisted the acquisition of books in Yiddish (and even in Hebrew) for fear of parochializing the library and creating backwardness in what was supposed to be the most modern cultural space in every city and town in the Pale. It is therefore not surprising if in 1911 the Odessa Jewish Clerks' Library, “subscribed to fifty-one Russian-language journals and five journals in European languages but only three in Hebrew and one in Yiddish” (p. 85). Its Jewish readers – not unlike their Russian neighbors - preferred belletristic to non-fiction

works. The most popular books at the time included the works of novelists Anastasiia Verbitskaia, Mikhail Artsybashev, and Alexander Kuprin, as well as Russian classics Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev. With the exception of the works by Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem, the circulation of fiction originally written in Yiddish was significantly less than that of Russian fiction; at the same time, however, Jewish readers enjoyed having access to Yiddish translations of major works of world literature, including Jules Verne, Guy de Maupassant, Charles Dickens and Anatole France. By virtue of the greater selection of reading material available, the Jewish public library deeply affected the reading habits of Russian Jews, more significantly than the underground Bundist reading circles or the *maskilic* private libraries of the nineteenth-century. The unintended consequence of Veidlinger's admirable attempt to pinpoint the reading habits of the "typical Jew" of the late Russian Empire is however to downplay the immense regional, demographic, cultural and linguistic differences between, for example, Congress Poland, Bessarabia, Moscow, or Podolia, superimposing homogeneity on a geographically and culturally disparate Jewish world.

Chapter four deals with the emergence of Jewish literary societies, in particular the Lovers of the Hebrew Language Society (Hovevei Sfas Eyver) – which by 1910 had established 48 branches throughout the Empire seeking to spread the knowledge of Hebrew language and the development of Hebrew literature; and the Jewish Literary Society (Evreiskoe literaturnoe obshchestvo) – which was founded in St. Petersburg in 1908 and by 1911 counted 122 branches distributed across the Russian provinces. While its members and activists disagreed on whether the society should promote Russian-language acculturation, Hebrew as a spoken tongue, or Yiddish as a literary language, in its brief existence the Jewish Literary Society succeeded in generating an impressive network of lecturers, who were regularly dispatched from the capital to the provinces with guidelines about cultural events and recommendations on reading materials. Despite ongoing and unpredictable harassment by the governor, city gendarme or secret police – which eventually resulted in the society's liquidation in the summer of 1911 – the branches sponsored lectures, discussions, and concerts attracting young Jews to libraries, wedding halls, and beer gardens.

Entitled "Cultural Performance: The People of the Book and the Spoken Word," chapter five is perhaps the most compelling section of the book. Here, Veidlinger considers the most common form of secular cultural performance among early-twentieth century Russian Jewry, namely "spoken-word events" such as poetry readings, lectures, debates, and conventions. Attending secular "spoken-word events," which forged "Jewish modes of speaking and

listening,” was something entirely new for most Jews in the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland, so much different from its religious counterpart, the sermon delivered by itinerant preachers and rabbis who moved from town to town. The “spoken-word events” were rare occasions for common people to interact with the authors of the texts they read, be in close proximity with the celebrities of the day and even learn their oratory skills. As Veidlinger poignantly argues, the writers’ speaking tours in the provinces became Jewish national events, symbolic moments of national unity. When Hebrew and Yiddish writer and cultural activist Y. L. Peretz spoke at the Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, he was greeted by mass hysteria, as enormous crowds cheered for him at the railroad station. When he arrived in Minsk, in 1907, the “entire town was topsy-turvy... By 8PM the Paris Hall... normally reserved for weddings and other activities - was so packed that one could hardly breathe...college students, the labor force and the radical intelligentsia had come” (p. 148).

Chapters six and seven trace the institutionalization and professionalization of drama circles, klezmer bands and fire brigade orchestras, as grassroots musical and theatrical groups considerably shaped Jewish public culture. Striving to be part of the modern world, shtetl inhabitants joined amateur drama circles, signed up for dance classes, and set up choirs in the provinces. In their new European dress, they emulated the repertoire – and sought to gain the status - of professional cultural producers in the metropolises. And what about Jewish women? While the world of Jewish public culture was still heavily gendered, many young women found their way to the new public spaces, partaking if not as cultural producers at least as recipients. Challenging deeply-ingrained social and religious norms, they freely intermingled and socialized in public in these (at least allegedly) “gender neutral spaces,” far removed from the traditional notions of religious society and the confines of rabbinical authorities. In some instances, young women even played an active role in performing public culture. As Veidlinger contends, by joining drama circles many girls violated, for the first time, the longstanding Jewish taboo against women appearing on stage (p. 207).

In chapters eight and nine Veidlinger studies the St. Petersburg elite learned societies. He dwells, in particular, on the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society (*Evreiskoe Istoriko-etnograficheskoe obshchestvo*) established in the Russian capital in 1908. With the goal of promoting the academic study of the Jewish past and serve as a meeting place for social and scholarly exchange among leading Jewish intellectuals, the society also sought – most interestingly - to reach out to the broad public, disseminate education to those excluded from universities, and popularize the study of Jewish history among adults and

children so as to instill in them a deep “national self-awareness and love for their people and past” (p. 250). Unlike Dubnov’s efforts of the 1890s, the post-1905 national venture of collecting sources regarded as crucial for the study of the Russian-Jewish past (minute books of Jewish communities, Jewish folk sayings and gravestone impressions) could become triumphant. This time Dubnov - himself one of the founders and promoters of the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society - could erect his national project on preexisting social networks of cultural producers and recipients eager to forge a national secular culture, as well as rely on the changed attitudes towards the Yiddish *jargon*, no longer indiscriminate victim of tsarist legal restrictions, but new-found literary language of the Jewish *intelligentsia*.

But the cultural project so accurately depicted by Veidlinger was short-lived. The story of Jewish voluntary associations and societies ended abruptly (perhaps too abruptly in Veidlinger’s rendition) with the devastation of the Great War. To be sure, massive migration, war dislocation and, eventually, the establishment of a new totalitarian political order in parts of the region destabilized and transformed Jewish cultural life. However, the cultural producers and recipients who survived the violence of World War I and the Civil War, and found themselves in the new geopolitical context of the post-World-War-I era, arguably sought ways to circumvent the state-promoted eradication of independent social and cultural organizations in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia. Within the Bolshevik constraints of state-sponsored associations and societies, many strove to collect and preserve Jewish artifacts of historic and ethnographic value, establishing archives and museums, while others produced an idiosyncratic Soviet Jewish public culture made of theater and drama circles, musical performances, public libraries and “spoken-word events.” Grassroots Jewish secular culture was no longer viable under the Bolsheviks, and yet some elements of continuity in the attempt to carry on Jewish modernization and national identity formation might have very well persisted even after 1917.

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