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The Russian Jewish Diaspora and European Culture, 1917-1937

Edited by

Jörg Schulte
Olga Tabachnikova
Peter Wagstaff

BRILL

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European Culture, 1917–1937

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Peter Wagstaff

Contributions to the present volume have their origin in a series of conferences and workshops held between 2008 and 2010 at the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages, University of Bath, the University of Portsmouth Centre for European and International Studies, and the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College London. Entitled 'Cultural Continuity in the Diaspora: Paris and Berlin in 1917–1937: The Experience of Russian Jews in an Era of Social Change', the project was developed under the aegis of the Leverhulme Trust Academic Collaboration—International Network scheme.

The principal motivation for the choice of project was the belief that the theme—the diasporic experience and cultural activity of Russian Jews in Western Europe in the period between the two world wars—was seriously under-researched, and that such research as was being carried out was fragmented, in both geographical and disciplinary terms.

Initial objectives focused on: the reconstruction of the chronological history of Russian Jewish emigration to Germany and France; the definition and analysis of Russian Jewish cultural values and the renegotiation of identity in various fields of cultural production; the identification and analysis of social, cultural and professional links between Russian Jewish emigrants, their metropolitan communities and their new German and French environment, including the Jewish communities.

These initial objectives were modified and enlarged once the full range of participants' interests became clear with, in particular, an insistence on the significance of Warsaw as a centre of Russian Jewish cultural activity. The geographical scope of the project was therefore broadened beyond the emphasis on Berlin and Paris as centres of diasporic culture. This decision has been justified by the richness of subsequent contributions to the project and to this volume. It became clear, too, that this need for geographical enlargement was matched by a desire for generic inclusiveness, so that, while the analysis of literary production continued to form the core of the Network's interests,

it was felt important to embrace a wide range of cultural productions including the visual arts, music and ballet, as well as aspects of the social and political implications of Russian Jewish emigration.

Central to the theme of cultural continuity is memory, both individual and collective, which ensures the persistence of tradition, of experience and belief, within and across borders and cultures, from one generation to the next; it operates, in short, as a form of translation, enabling the transmission and renewal of meaning from one time and place to another. In the course of this project it has become clear, from contributions on work in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish, that the role of the translator was crucial to an understanding of the processes involved in cultural transmission. Underpinning these and other examples was a common awareness of the essential basis for all translation acts and of the limitations and responsibilities of the translator. This is an awareness that translation 'has an ethical as well as an intellectual dimension [...] Good translation [...] proceeds not by the motives of dominance and acquisition, but by respect. It is a word for a set of practices by which we learn to live with difference, with the fluidity of culture and with the instability of the self' (White 1990: 257).

We wish to express our thanks to the Network's co-organisers, Professor Susanne Marten-Finnis, of the University of Portsmouth Centre for European and International Studies and to Dr François Guesnet and Professor Michael Berkowitz of the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College London. It should be noted that the untimely death of the original co-organiser, Professor John Klier, cast a shadow over the project, but that his successors at UCL have been unfailingly supportive and creative in contributing to its development. In addition, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to Mr Jim Dingley of the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum in London for his invaluable contribution in helping to edit this volume.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Leverhulme Trust in enabling the fruitful and stimulating international collaboration the results of which are presented in this volume.

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RUSSIAN-JEWISH CULTURAL RETENTION IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WESTERN EUROPE: CONTEXTS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

François Guesnet

Towards the end of the 19th century, 6.25 million Jews were living in all of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Until 1925, in the course of not even two full generations since mass migration out of the region began, almost half of this largest agglomeration of Jews in European history, or three and a half million people, had left, two thirds of them leaving the Russian Empire. The vast majority, 2.65 million, emigrated to transatlantic shores, mainly to the United States and Canada, and some to Argentina. Though most had intended to go to the *goldene medine*, or the United States, around ten per cent of these migrants stayed behind in Europe: starting to immigrate around 1870, two hundred thousand Jewish migrants settled in the United Kingdom, mostly in London, Manchester, and Leeds. Immigration to France started later. Between 1880 and 1918, approximately 35,000 Jews from eastern Europe immigrated, mostly to Paris. It was only after World War One that a liberal immigration policy aiming at attracting cheap labor force led to the immigration of 60,000 Jews from Poland, Hungary and Romania. 15,000 of the 175,000 Jews living in France before World War Two originated in Russia. Migration from various regions of the Habsburg Empire to Vienna, taking off in the 1870s, accounted for one hundred and fifty thousand people approximately. Immigration to the German Empire from Eastern Europe was first and foremost directed to the imperial capital city of Berlin, and accounted for approximately 70,000 people (Guesnet 2001, *passim*). Eli Lederhendler sums up the contentious issue of the migrants' movitations in the following way:

> Research on the causes and the timing of the Jewish immigration has dwelt upon both the social-political element (persecutions) and on economic elements (socioeconomic deprivation). Mob violence against Jews and Jewish property—pogroms—broke out in the Pale of Settlement in the spring of 1881, following the assassination of the tsar, Alexander II,

> and this is often considered to be the spark that touched off the large-scale exodus. The question is far from settled, and it is far more complex than it would appear, for several reasons: 1) the migration actually began, albeit on a smaller scale, in the 1870s, 2) scholars have shown that the 1881-era migrants came initially from centers of Jewish population hardest hit by poverty more than from those areas directly affected by the pogroms, and 3) the migration was selective—migration was much higher among younger, working-age people, and was responsive to business cycles in the American economy (Lederhendler 2008, 510–12).

From the outset, Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe showed a significantly higher percentage of family migration, a clear indicator for the resolve to leave for good, with no intention to return to Eastern Europe (Guesnet 2001, 70). Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe started in the early 1870s (Erickson 1996; Turnock 1996). One of the most important factors in the growing flow of emigration was the new affordability of travel, due to the opening of new railroads. The creation of Russian-Jewish communities in the most important central and western European metropolises Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London, was in most cases the result of interrupted transmigration, as the intended destination was mostly North America. Violence and political factors were important additional incentives, especially when they were combined with physical dislocation, e.g. the expulsions from Kiev in the 1880s, or the expulsion from Moscow in 1891, the massive deportations during World War One, the results of the revolutions of 1917 and of civil war in its aftermath, leading to escape and exile. The secondary importance of political factors in the early stages of Russian-Jewish migration is documented by the fact that until World War One, the most important migration movement of Russian Jews was directed to the economically thriving Kingdom of Poland. Following one of the early statistics available, some two hundred fifty thousand Russian Jews settled in the *Privislanskii Krai*, as the Kingdom of Poland was called in consequence of the 1863 uprising (Kaplun-Kogan 1917, 4).

The late 19th century thus saw the emergence of a *transnational Russian-Jewish community* with its homeland in the Russian Empire, small bases in most central and western European metropolises and a substantial new settlement in Canada and the United States, thus forming a 'transnationalism from below' (Guarnizo and Smith 1998, *passim*). Russian Jews in Berlin and Paris represented a small segment of a highly heterogeneous migrational cohort, with numerous links back to the Empire and further up the migration chain to North

America. Being located neither at the heart of Russian culture, nor at the intended destination of the emigration movement, Russian Jews in Western Europe felt the impact of migrational transitoriness even stronger than other communities on the move, as Olaf Terpitz explains in his contribution. This had a strong impact on Russian Jewish cultural production and continuity. It took place in communities marked by highly diverse regional origin, political or religious affiliation, social and material standing, linguistic skills, and individual perspectives and endeavours. How can one thus assume that there is such a thing as cultural continuity? And if we can discuss creative or intellectual endeavours among the members of this group, to what degree can we describe them as aimed at cultural continuity?

In the social sciences, two answers have been given to the question of what the main factors were in fostering ethnic or cultural retention: some claim that discriminatory attitudes and practices of the external society strongly encourage ethnic and cultural seclusion, while others argue that 'persistent ethnicity is generally attributable to groups' "feelings of cultural superiority"' (Takenaka 2003, 469). In this respect, the very high percentage of Russian Jews in Israel considering their Russian original culture as superior to Israeli culture seems worth mentioning (Remennick 2001, 517). Cultural continuity implies an idea of shared religious, cultural, emotional and moral values, realized through practices of social and cultural bonding. Beyond the literary, journalistic and other forms of intellectual production, cultural identity in the context of a diasporic situation is reasserted on a day-to-day basis in a variety of social contexts: being active in a voluntary association, meeting with friends in a coffee house, participating in the deliberations of a political party or the board of a religious congregation, discussing family issues and the prospects for the children's education. In each of these contexts, questions of *cultural belonging*, of *heritage* and *continuation* on the one hand, and of investments in *new contexts* on the other, are weighed against each other, consciously or not.

Thus, cultural continuity has many faces, and these faces, to remain with the image, can be turned in two different directions. Social scientists today argue that a successful integrational process needs cultural continuity, as it stabilizes members of a community living in a situation that is potentially precarious. Cultural continuity empowers members of a migrant community. But it can be put to widely divergent purposes. It can immunize against acculturation or integration, it can perpetuate communal, social, familial structures and hierarchies,

balance the impact of encounters of discrimination, or just define a limited number of linguistic and cultural elements as markers of identity, allowing for the constitution and perpetuation of a transnational diaspora.

Technical or other material conditions often dictate these choices. Obviously, the Russian-Jewish community in Warsaw around 1900 preserved stronger ties to the 'homeland' than the one in Berlin after the Bolshevik revolution. Russian Paris was not only far away from Russia, but offered many opportunities for cultural, religious, and intellectual transformation, potentially offering membership in French culture, especially prestigious in and appealing to the Russian cultural tradition. Rather than define the actual self-positioning of Russian Jews on a scale measuring linguistic or cultural acculturation, it seems necessary to understand that cultural continuity relies first and foremost on a fiction created among members of a migrant community about the community's life at its place of origin (Takenaka 2003, 470). This image, or this fiction, is intensely debated and negotiated within this diasporic community, but tends, like all forms of nostalgic reminiscence, to be overly positive (Kobrin 2010, 180–190, Takenaka 2003, 469). The reference back to a fictional origin gets all the more important as the identity of the community 'becomes increasingly "elastic", if not "fluid", being constantly shaped and re-shaped by multiple influences from the different societies migrants actually live in' (Remennick 2002, 517). This does not necessarily lead to what has been called in post-colonial studies 'hybrid' identities. More recent discussions have suggested a redefined 'cosmopolitanism' as a more accurate term, implying the co-existence of various cultural and linguistic codes, enabling the 'cosmopolitan' migrant to move back and forth in more than one cultural code—a highly relevant concept for any discussion of cultural retention (Pécoud 2004, *passim*). Those involved in diverse fields of cultural production: teachers, writers, musicians, journalists, religious virtuouses, would write, teach, perform, preach in a Russian-Jewish context, but could do so using, for example, new narrative or productive strategies. As the contribution of Jascha Nemtsov to this volume demonstrates, one field of an extremely dynamic expression of Russian-Jewish cultural continuity in Vienna was music—an arena of cultural production which could be based on the significant resources for the performance and publication of music. In this respect, the multilinguality of Eastern European Jews constitutes a major factor in investigating cultural continuity, as cultural continuity did not

necessarily take place in Russian, or in Hebrew or Yiddish. Processes of translation, which were the focus of the second conference in context of the research network on Russian-Jewish cultural continuity in Western Europe, would lead to the expression of specifically Russian-Jewish concerns, even if they were to be cast in literary form in other languages, or in other media altogether, such as music, the fine arts, historical research, communal involvement, or philosophy. Thus, continuity could in fact encompass a wide variety of cultural products. How homogenous was this Russian-Jewish diaspora? Beyond the evident political differentiation, one may ask what role was played by diverse regional and social origins. Are we looking exclusively at members of the academic and artistic elites? How do we define what is cultural? For example, how do we integrate continuities and changes in religious culture, e.g. in the sphere of liturgy and prayer? Or do we only consider texts written or published in Russian by a secularized and russified intelligentsia as part of a Russian-Jewish cultural continuum?

The present volume attempts to assess strategies of cultural continuity on the basis of a broader range of cultural production, and on the basis of an investigation into the processes of translation of cultural expression, a perspective explicitly addressed in the first section of this volume, but implicitly present in contributions to its later sections as well. Albert Baumgarten explains to what degree Elias Bickerman's research into the history of the Maccabees was influenced by his anti-bolshevik convictions. Olga Tabachnikova describes how two Russian-Jewish émigrés, Max Eitingon and Lev Shestov, attempted to weave together an Eastern European Jewish line of collectivist consciousness and socialist utopia with Central European psychoanalysis. Especially in the fine arts, in publishing and music, highly diverse markers of Eastern European origin—Cyrillic or Hebrew script, Russian avant-garde graphic design, traditional Jewish tunes—would be combined with the aesthetic expectations of a Western European Jewish public. Even if one does not agree with the notion of a 'new ethnicity' (Brenner 1998, introduction), the strategy of combining Eastern European identity markers with Western European taste and aesthetics was characteristic of the interwar period and practised across many fields of cultural production. Any investigation of cultural continuity should bear in mind the relevance of the 'aesthetics of reception'—most cultural agents need, want, look out for echo, a public, resonance, recognition. The different fields of cultural production had differently shaped and

sized target groups, and very few of them were as hermetic as David Vogel, discussed in the present volume by Glenda Abramson, in his attempt to recreate the Baudelairian *flâneur* in Hebrew.

As Takenaka rightly argues, diasporic cultural production usually strikes a balance between the urge to assert and celebrate communal particularities and the need for a broader public: 'It is important', he writes, 'to examine the mediating mechanisms between the two—how community institutions play a role in bridging "the old" and "the new"—as well as the "triadic relationship" between the host society, the migrant community, and "home" in shaping their meanings' (Takenaka 2003, 474). Accordingly, cultural retention and continuity emerge in order to cement a sense of community in the diaspora, and not on the basis of homeland ties or an ideal of Russian-Jewish culture, but of the shared encounter of emigration and the creation of an imagined community.

This effort was marked by significant tensions which appear in almost all of the contributions to this volume. To what degree can we identify an individual creative process as part of a communal tradition or culture? Should we not concede the possibility, or even the likelihood, of a process of artistic or intellectual emancipation from the potentially restrictive dictates of former cultural contexts? Throughout the discussions in the context of this research network, transmediality, transtextuality and processes of translation have been at the centre of our interpretations. A significant part of these processes of artistic and intellectual transformation had a significant utopian, transformative, even revolutionary impetus—be it by discovering new forms of artistic expression, by redefining the reach and expression of Hebrew and Yiddish (discussed in the first section on translators and writers, and in the second one on philosophical, academic, and political endeavours), or, as Alexander Ivanov describes it for the activities of ORT, by adding yet another version of the enlightened idea of productivization and occupational transformation. The strongest retentional impetus is to be found, not surprisingly, among the members of the academic and intellectual elites: In their struggle against the Communist experiment in Russia (Vladimir Khazan on Rutenberg and Burtsev), in their attempt to 'immortalize the crime in history' (Efim Melamed on the Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv). Whichever of these complex processes of artistic and intellectual production, translation, and transformation we investigate, what seems to unify them is the sheer intensity of creative energy, the strong belief and commitment that these are able to change the world.

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PART ONE

RUSSIAN JEWISH TRANSLATORS AND WRITERS

SCHILLER'S *WILHELM TELL* IN BIALIK'S TRANSLATION[1]

Anat Feinberg

July 28th 1936, which happened to be Tisha be-Av, was a particularly hot summer day in Tel Aviv. In the evening, spectators at the Habima theatre watched the première of Friedrich Schiller's play *Wilhelm Tell*, directed by the German-Jewish newcomer Leopold Jessner.[2] Many in the audience knew the works of Schiller. After all, Schiller was the most admired German poet among the Jews, as the poet David Frischman evinced in his article 'Meshorer le-Dorot' (1905). Schiller was adored by the German-Jewish bourgeoisie and revered by 'our religious brethren', in Frischman's wording.[3] He was the 'most admired poet in the ghetto', according to Mordechai Ehrenpreis.[4] Indeed, up to 1881, Schiller was the best translated German poet into Hebrew.[5] The Jews respected Lessing, mainly because of his noble Jew Nathan; they honoured Goethe; but they felt a special

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[1] The article is based on my comprehensive study in German of Bialik's translation of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* and its production at the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv in 1936, under the title 'Schweizer Freiheitskämpfer als hebräische Helden: Schillers *Wilhelm Tell* in der Übersetzung von Chajjim Nachman Bialik', in *Rück-Blick auf Deutschland: Ansichten hebräischsprachiger Autoren*, ed. by Anat Feinberg (München: Edition text + kritik, 2009), pp. 50–91.

[2] For Leopold Jessner's life and work, see: Anat Feinberg, 'Leopold Jessner: German Theatre and Jewish Identity', *Leo Baeck Yearbook* (2003), 111–133; Matthias Heilmann, *Leopold Jessner—Intendant der Republik. Der Weg eines deutsch-jüdischen Regisseurs aus Ostpreußen* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005); Anat Feinberg, 'The Unknown Leopold Jessner: German Theatre and Jewish Identity', in *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre*, ed. by Jeanette R. Malkin and Freddie Rokem (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2010), pp. 232–260.

[3] David Frishman, 'Meshorer le-Dorot', *Kol Kitvei Frishman* (Warsaw and New York: Lili Frischman Publishing House, 1930), vol. 6, pp. 9–18 (15).

[4] Mordeḥai ʾErenpreis, *Bein Misraḥ le-Maʿarav* (Tel Aviv: Sigalit, 1986), p. 20.

[5] See Naʾama Shefi, *Germanit be-ʿIvrit: Tirgumim mi-Germanit ba-Yishuv ha-ʿivri 1882–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitsḥaḳ Ben Tsevi and Leo Baeck Institute, 1998), esp. pp. 61–62. In a bibliographic article published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Schiller's death, Shmuel Lachower provides a list of 21 books which had been translated into Hebrew as well as 180 poems, see: Shmuʾel Laḥover, 'Fridrikh fon Shiler be-ʿIvrit: Bibliografiyah 1817–1955', in *Yad la-ḳoreʾ*, 4 (1956), 59–75. See also: B. Saphra, 'Schiller in hebräischem Gewand', *Ost und West*, 5 (1905), 299–310.

affinity—'ḳurvah [*sic*] shel neshamot'[6]—to Schiller who was 'a friend, who consoled and comforted them'.[7] Although Schiller himself was no enthusiastic friend of the Jews,[8] 'our Schiller'—as Heine called him—was so highly esteemed that poems and parodies modelled on his verse were written in Hebrew and in Yiddish.[9] One of the better known examples is Avraham Gottlober's 'Dos Lid funem Kugel' (1863) which followed Schiller's 'Lied von der Glocke'. The list of those who translated Schiller since the Haskala includes the poet Meir Halevi Letteris, the linguist Moshe Schulbaum, and David Radner, who in fact provided (in co-operation with Israel Fraenkel) a prose translation of *Wilhelm Tell* in 1879. Still, the poet Yaakov Fikhman was most critical of the various Schiller translators. In contrast to Joseph Klausner, Fikhman maintained that these translations had no influence on Hebrew literature. If at all, he added, 'they had a negative influence'.[10] This harsh verdict was voiced by Fikhman in his article ''Al ha-Tirgumim' which appeared in *Hateḳufah* in 1923. Ironically, the same year saw the publication in Berlin of a new translation of *Wilhelm Tell*, this time by the national poet, Hayim Nahman Bialik.

It was in hunger-ridden Odessa, during the Russian civil war, that Bialik translated *Wilhelm Tell*. His wife Mania recounts in her memoirs: 'In the days of the Bolsheviki, when it was almost impossible to get hold of goods and commodities such as light or heating, I was occasionally in the kitchen while Hayim Nahman was lying in bed, as he worked until late at night with the light of a small lamp translating *Wilhelm Tell*. All of a sudden I heard a loud cry coming from his room. I was frightened and rushed to him: What happened? I asked. He sat up in bed and cried: I want to go to Eretz Israel.'[11]

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[6] According to Frishman, 'Meshorer le-Dorot'.

[7] Samuel Meisels, 'Deutsche Klassiker im Ghetto: Eine Aufsatzreihe', *Blätter der Neuzeit*, 1 (1922), 8.

[8] For Schiller and the Jews, see: Norbert Oellers, 'Goethe und Schiller in ihrem Verhältnis zum Judentum', in *Conditio Judaica: Judentum, Antisemitismus und deutschsprachige Literatur*, ed. Hans Otto Horch and Horst Denkler (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 108–130; Hans Otto Horch, 'Friedrich Schiller, die Juden und das Judentum', *Aschkenas*, 16, 1 (2006), 17–36; Daniel Jütte, 'Schiller und die Juden: Bestandsaufnahme zu einem problematischen Verhältnis', *Tribüne*, 44, 2 (2005), 118–125.

[9] Cf. the introduction in Andreas B. Kilcher, *Geteilte Freude: Schiller-Rezeption in der jüdischen Moderne. Mit einer Edition der hebräischen und jiddischen Übersetzungen der Ode an die Freude* (München: Stiftung Lyrik Kabinett, 2007).

[10] Yaʿaḳov Fikhman, ''Al ha-Tirgumim' [part II], *Hateḳufah*, 19, Nissan-Sivan 1923, 413.

[11] Mania Bialiḳ, *Pirḳei Zikhronot* (Tel Aviv: Dvir 1963), p. 25, cited by David Aberbach, *Bialiḳ* (Tel Aviv: ʾIdanim, 1992), p. 24.

Unmistakably, the struggle of the Swiss hero for independence and sovereignty captured Bialik's imagination. Thousands of miles away from Eretz Israel, he translated Schiller's call for freedom out of a deep solidarity with his own people. 'It is the vision of a people that stood up when things became unbearable', wrote Fikhman,[12] and others maintained that Bialik reanimated the glorious Maccabees.[13] Moreover: Bialik felt attracted to *Wilhelm Tell* because he discovered something biblical in it.[14] Indeed, Schiller himself confessed that when writing *Wilhelm Tell* he profited greatly from his own study of the Bible at the prestigious Karlsschule.[15]

Like many of his East-European Hebrew-writing colleagues (among them Frischman and Brenner), the young Bialik studied German with a private teacher, 'My ashkenazi [here in the sense of German], the agronomist. A miserable teacher'.[16] The teacher did not think twice: he confronted his young pupil immediately with Schiller and Lessing. Bialik acquired literary German, but did not feel secure in the everyday spoken language. His young admirer, Shimon Rawidowicz, who accompanied Bialik once on a trip to Leipzig, recalls how sorry the poet was, being unable to chat and play with a German girl who was capering around in the compartment.[17]

Thus, it is hardly surprising that Bialik kept a Russian translation on his desk as he was translating *Wilhelm Tell* into Hebrew. A few years later, while preparing the translated text for publication, he consulted two friends who were fluent in German: the teacher and proofreader David Yosef Bornstein, and the linguist Nissan Berggrün. In contrast to the poetic freedom he allowed himself when translating *Don Quixote*,[18] Bialik followed more or less strictly Schiller's original text. His rich, biblical language is full of associations and allusions to lines and episodes in the Old Testament. Bialik's splendid diction reinforces the

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[12] Yaʿaḳov Fikhman, ''Al ha-Teatron ha-klasi', *Bamah* 1–2, October 1936, 3–14 (13).

[13] See Ernst Simon, *Chajjim Nachman Bialik: Eine Einführung in sein Leben und sein Werk* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), p. 120.

[14] Fikhman, ''Al ha-Teatron ha-klasi', 13.

[15] Cf. Ernst Simon, 'Hadavar nishmaʿ', *Bamah* 1–2, October 1936, 42–45 (44). See also Ernst Simon, *Chajjim Nachman Bialik*, pp. 119–123.

[16] *'Igrot Ḥayim Naḥman Bialiḳ*, ed. P. Laḥover (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–39), vol. 1 (1937), p. 169.

[17] See: Shlomo Sheva', *Ḥozeh beraḥ*: *Sipur ḥayav shel Ḥayim Naḥman Bialiḳ* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1990), p. 220.

[18] See: 'Asaf 'Inbari, 'Don Ḳiḥot shel Bialiḳ', *Maʿariv*, supplement, 18. November 2005, 27; 25. November 2005, 27.

dramaturgy, relating Schiller's plea for freedom to the dream of a Jewish renaissance in the old homeland.

לנו הארץ, כי שרשנו בה זה שנות אלף!

This is Bialik's translation of the verse 'Unser ist durch tausendjährigen Besitz / Der Boden.'[19]

The love for one's native country is the central motif, and it is suffused in Bialik's translation with the longings for Zion. So, for instance, when Bialik translates Ulrich von Rudenz's vow of fidelity to his beloved Berta:

> Im Vaterland willst du die Meine werden!
> Ach, wohl hab ich es stets geliebt! Ich fühls,
> Es fehlt mir zu jedem Glück der Erden. (III.ii.1696–1698)

פה, בארצי ובמולדתי, להיות לי תבחָרי!
הוי ארצי, אכן גם-מאז אהבתיך ולא חדלתי
התכון ברכת אלהים על-אדמות מבלעדיִך?[20]

Wilhelm Tell is the only text in which Bialik follows 'an exact syllabic metre, the only one in which all lines end with a *mil'el* cadence, as had been common in the poetry of the Haskala,' writes Uzi Shavit.[21] Fickman, who was not happy with Bialik's choice, said that Bialik recognized in the biblical metre 'a tempestuous power [...] a prophetic dynamics'.[22] When Bialik decided in favour of this metre, 'an instinctive feeling' prevailed, 'the orient triumphed over the occident'.[23]

In an article about Bialik's *Wilhelm Tell* (1936), Akiva Ernst Simon pointed out that the number of biblical allusions and their associative significance increases in the course of the play.[24] A close comparison of the German text with Bialik's translation shows that the allusions to and parallelisms between the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and the

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[19] *Kitve Ḥ. N. Bialiḳ u-Mivḥar Tirgumav* (Berlin: Ḥoveve ha-Shirah ha-ʿIvrit, 1923), vol. 4, p. 70. All quotations are taken from this edition. The quotations from the original are taken from Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. II, Dramen 2, ed. by Peter André Alt (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), pp. 913–1029, (p. 959, line 1269).

[20] Bialiḳ, *Kitve*, vol. 4, p. 92.

[21] See: ʿUzi Shavit, *Ḥevle Nigun* (Tel Aviv: Haḳibuts Hameʾuḥad in cooperation with the Katz Institute at Tel Aviv University, 1988), p. 185.

[22] Yaʿaḳov Fikhman, *Shirat Bialiḳ* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialiḳ, 1953), p. 412.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ernst Simon, 'Hadavar nishmaʿ'.

fate of the Swiss under the yoke of the Habsburg pervade the entire text. In the idyllic atmosphere of the Lake of Lucerne, the Vierwaldstättesee, which Bialik translates as 'ha-Yeʾor', Konrad Baumgarten storms in. Bialik translates: 'daḥuf umevohal', reminiscent of the Book of Esther 8:14. He asks for help, having beaten to death one of the seneschals, who demanded 'Ungebührliches' from his wife. Bialik translates: 'Vayʾomer ʿanotah'. The affinity to the sufferings and hardship of Israelites in Egypt is conspicuous not only in the choice of 'ha-davar nishmaʿ' for 'Die Tat ward ruchbar',[25] but also in the association of 'ʾani hikitiv' to 'vayakh ʾet ha-mitsri' (Exodus 2:12), and of 'Vayʾomer ʿanotah' to 'vekhaʾasher yeʿanu ʾoto' (Exodus 1:12).

Here are two further examples among many underlining the allusion to the fate of the Israelites in Egypt:

> Wie die Tagdiebe ihre Pflicht bestehlen! (I.iii.358)

Bialik translates as:

נרפים אתם, נרפים! ומלאכתכם תרמית עינים! (כט)

which echoes the line in Exodus 5:17

ויאמר: נרפים אתם, נרפים! על כן אתם אומרים....וגו'

Another example:

Auch über euch hängt das Tyrannenschwert (I.iv.678) Bialik translates as:

גם-אליכם, דעו, שלוחה היד ונטויה הזרוע (מד)

which brings to mind Exodus 6:6:

וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה

as well as

ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה

of which we read in the Pessach Haggada.

Bialik clearly draws a parallel between two detestable tyrants, Gessler and Pharaoh, yet takes poetic freedom and does not aim at

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[25] See Simon, 'Hadavar nishmaʿ'. See also Dov Sadan in the chapter 'Bein Lashon nodaʿ le-Lashon nishmaʿ ve-ʾifkha', in *Ḥayim Naḥman ve-darko bi-Leshono u-Leshonoteha* (Tel Aviv: Haḳibuts Hameʾuḥad, 1989), pp. 387–410.

an exact symmetry. This is clear from the way he translates 'Nun gebt Rat' (II.ii.1350) as

הבה נתחכמה עתה (עד)

echoing Ex. 1.10

הבה נתחכמה לו

In the biblical story, the Egyptians are afraid of the Israelites, 'let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply' (Exodus, 1:10). Bialik attributes this wording to the Swiss who ponder together how to liberate their people from tyranny.

Moreover, Bialik's translation evokes heroic episodes found in the books of Joshua and Judges, in which the conquest—or the liberation—of the country is described, as well as episodes in which the first steps of the Israelites in their newly won homeland are recounted. Here are but two examples: when the Swiss people recount how they threw off the yoke of the vicious tyrant, Stauffacher says:

> Die alte Zürich selbst schloß ihre Tore,
> Die dreißig Jahr' lang offen standen, zu (V.i.2993–2994).

Bialik intensifies the dramatic impact:

גם-צִיריך עיר קדומים, שעריה לא-ידעו בְּרִיח
זה שלושים שנה—סוגרת ומסֻגרת עתה (קסב)

Clearly, Bialik recalls the siege of Jericho (Joshua 6:1):

ויריחו סוגרת ומסוגרת מפני בני ישראל, אין יוצא ואין בא.

When Stauffacher recounts how the evil messengers plucked the eyes of Melchthal's father 'mit spitzgen Stahl' (I.iv.576), Bialik translates:

ובמסמרי ברזל עיניו נִקֵּרו (מ)

thereby calling to mind Samson's fate

ויאחזוהו פלישתים וינקרו את עיניו ויורידו אותו עזתה

'And the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes' (Judges, 16:21).

Bialik paints the famous European drama with oriental hue.[26] Here are some examples:

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[26] Cf. Avraham ʾAvrunin, *Meḥḳarim bilshon Bialiḳ ve-Yalag* (Tel Aviv: Vaʿad ha-Lashon ha-ʿivrit in cooperation with Mosad Bialiḳ and the Union of Hebrew Teachers in Israel, 1953), pp. 112–117.

Der Föhn—סערת תימן
Die Gletscher—שנירים
Der Bannberg—חרמונים

Der Drachen—תנין, echoing the miraculous act during which Moses and Aaron cast down the rod before Pharaoh and 'it became a serpent' (Exodus 7:9–10).

Die Jagdhörner—קול שופר

The dying Attinghausen brings to mind the dying Isaac about to bless his sons. Bialik translates the line 'Warum kommt er nicht, / Um meinen letzten Segen zu empfangen?' (IV.ii.2378) as:

למה בושש לבוא ותברכהו נפשי בטרם / אלכה מזה (קל)

reminiscent of Genesis 27:4

בעבור תברכך נפשי

and Genesis 27:25

למען תברכך נפשי

When Tell is arrested, Bialik writes:

היסחב איש נקי הבורה (ק)

evoking the story of the innocent Joseph who was cast into a pit by his brothers (Genesis 37:24).

Bialik's translation enriches the original German text, adding the national-Jewish dimension, without corrupting it. Stauffacher cries out (III.iii.1852): 'Schrei, bis du berstest, Schurke!', and Bialik translates:

קרא בגרון, נבל! כַּנאד הִבקֵע!

a reference to Isaiah, who seeks to 'show my people their transgression' (Isaiah, 58:1):

קרא בגרון אל תחשך כשופר הָרֵם קולך והגד לעמי פשעם

Parricida, who is guilty of murdering his uncle, the emperor, becomes in Bialik's translation:

עול ימים כמוהו, בן פורת

Schiller writes: 'So jung, von solchen adeligem Stamm' (V.ii.3191), and Bialik associates the line with Jacob's blessing of Joseph (Genesis 49: 22).

These are only exemplary instances among many which may be cited. In his translation of *Tell*, Bialik displays an outstanding poetic imagination, sensitivity for the sound of words and their onomatopoeic appeal, as well as for dramatic intensity. Here, finally, his translation of the storm:

> Raset, ihr Winde, flammt herab, ihr Blitze,
> Ihr Wolken berstet, gießt herunter, Ströme
> Des Himmels und ersäuft das Land! Zerstört
> Im Keim die ungeborenen Geschlechter! (IV.i.2129–2132)

Bialik translates as:

> תרעש, תגעש הסופה, תהלך אש ברקים ארצה!
> יתבקעו עבי שחקים ונשפכה חַשרת מֵי מַעל
> להציף ארץ ומלואה! יֵעקֵר מני שורש
> דור יבוא לבני אדם ואבד כל זֵכר לָמו!
> תחרַב תבל כולה ותֵהפֵך לתוהו ובוהו! (קיז)

When Shimon Rawidowicz heard that the Spanish Academy decided to honour Bialik for his translation of *Don Quixote*, he sent the poet a letter: 'The time has come for the German Academy of Art and Literature to accept you as a member: It would be a token of appreciation for your translation of *Tell*.'[27]

Bialik's version of *Wilhelm Tell*, which was first published in *Hatekufah* (vol. 13–17), appeared in 1923 as volume 4 of the bibliophile edition marking the poet's 50th birthday. Ironically, Bialik was not the only one keen on a Hebrew *Wilhelm Tell*. His friend and colleague Simcha Ben Zion was commissioned in August 1920 to translate *Wilhelm Tell* for Stibel Publishing House. 'Tell's time has come for the Jewish people,' Ben Zion maintained.[28] Indeed, he too read *Wilhelm Tell* with Zionist eyes.[29] It was not the individual hero who captured his interest, but the 'people and its homeland'. When he found out in April 1921 that Bialik too was preparing his translation of *Wilhelm Tell* for publication, he wrote humbly: 'When the sun is shining, one can hardly notice

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[27] Shimon Ravidovitsh, *Siḥotai ʿim Bialik*, ed. by Benjamin Ravid and Yehuda Friedländer (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1983), p. 116. The editor of the journal *Haʿolam*, Moshe Kleinmann, also praises Bialik's translation, see: Ḳoreʾ vatiḳ [pseudonym of Moshe Kleinmann]: 'Kitve Bialiḳ u-mivḥar tirgumav', *Haʿolam*, 24. April 1924, 339–340.

[28] See *Wilhelm Tell*, translated by S. Ben-Zion (Frankfurt/M.: Omanut Verlag, 1924), 18.

[29] Ben-Zion's comments appear on pages III–XIX, (esp. p. XVIII).

the stars.'[30] But Bialik was unperturbed. 'My translation of *Wilhelm Tell* would not have prevented me from printing your second translation. Let it be so: one Bible and two translations [ʾeḥad miḳraʾ veshnayim targum].'[31] Ben Zion's translation was finally published by Omanut in Frankfurt, in 1924, shortly after the publication of Bialik's *Wilhelm Tell* which included—following Bialik's own decision—woodcut illustrations taken from the first, so-called Basel edition of 1507.[32]

Parallel to the publication of Bialik's *Wilhelm Tell* in the Berlin edition of 1923, local spectators were offered a staging of the play at the Staatstheater, the premier theatrical address in the capital of the Weimar Republic. Gessler was played by the rising star Fritz Kortner, and the director of the production was the Jewish director (Intendant) of the theatre, Leopold Jessner. It is most unlikely that Bialik saw the production. 'Although I live here, I feel estranged from the city', he wrote in a letter.[33] Bialik showed no interest whatsoever in his environment, neither in the political life, nor in the exciting, modern culture of Berlin. Thirteen years later, in Tel Aviv in 1936, the ways of Bialik and Jessner would cross. By then, however, the national poet was no longer alive.

Finally then, I would like to address the question, what happened to Bialik's *Wilhelm Tell* when it came alive on the Habima stage? In other words, what happened when the printed, poetic text became a performative text?

Jessner's production in Tel Aviv was his fifth staging of the play, with yet another one to follow in his American exile in 1943. Far away from the Berlin theatre of which he had been in charge for over ten years, he kept to his directorial concept: 'here is an everlasting human idea'.[34] As in the past, the struggle for freedom was the basic motive (*Grundmotiv*) of the production. Jessner did not focus on Tell, but on his fellow countrymen who stood up against tyranny. As had been his

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[30] Danyah ʾAmiḥai-Miḥlin, *ʾAhavat ʾIsh: ʾAvraham Yosef Shtibel* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialiḳ, 2000), p. 163.

[31] Quoted by ʾAmiḥai-Miḥlin, *ʾAhavat ʾIsh*, 167. Dov Sadan compares the two translations in his above mentioned book *Bialiḳ*, pp. 396–410.

[32] For the artistic aspects of the 1923 edition, which is also known as the Budko-edition, see ʾAlek Mishori, *Letsayer be-ʿIvrit: Yosef Budḳo meʿatsev et Mahadurat yovel ha-ḥamishim shel Kitve Bialiḳ* (Tel Aviv: ʿAm ʿOved, 2006).

[33] Bialik, letter to Micha Yosef Berdyczewsky after Yom Kippur 1921, *ʾIgrot Bialiḳ*, vol. 2, p. 216.

[34] Leopold Yesner [Jessner], 'Mi-Siḥot ḥug Habimah ba-Noʿar', *Bamah*, 1–2 (1937), 76.

habit, he trimmed the dialogue, pruned the scenes, omitted figures and chose to dispense with Act V, concluding the performance with the death of the vicious Gessler and the joyful procession of the liberated people to the sound of Schiller's and Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'.[35] As in the past, Jessner rejected a saccharine Swiss backdrop: 'Switzerland is a minor matter in the play', he argued.[36]

Focusing on the idea of the play, Jessner abstained from defining the time and the place, and yet his audience looked for and found allusions to topical events. Watching the struggle for independence, some spectators were reminded of the Balfour Declaration, others recognized in the brown uniform of Gessler and his henchmen a reference to Hitler and his followers in Nazi Germany. Indeed, many understood the play as an appeal for a sovereign Jewish state, not least because Bialik's translation accentuated the national-Zionist moment, as I have tried to show. Nonetheless, Jessner insisted on the universal appeal of the play: 'Consider *Tell* to be the poetic call for freedom, a human manifesto against enslavement and tyranny', he declared following the première.

Jessner's staging concept, highlighting the collective struggle for freedom, put the emphasis on the acting of the company as a team.[37] Aharon Meskin played Tell, Shimon Finkel presented Gessler as a despot of 'Mephistophelean cruelty'. Hanna Rovina was the passionate Armgard, and Fania Lubitsch Walter, Tell's son. The audience at the première expressed their gratitude with 'tempestuous applause'. In the party which followed the same evening, speeches were made, Jessner thanked the company, and the participants kept a moment of silence in memory of Bialik.

Still, with the exception of one review, all write-ups were fairly critical. One critic maintained that the audience which had practically no

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[35] In charge of the music in Jessner's production was Fordhaus Ben-Zissi (1898–1981), who came from an orthodox-Jewish family and kept to the Chassidic tradition also after his immigration to Palestine. See: Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community in Palestine 1880–1948: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 93–96.

[36] The scenery was designed by Siegfried Shalom Sebba. For a description, see: Manfred Geis, 'Wilhelm Tell', *Mitteilungsblatt*, 25. August 1936. For the life and work of Sebba, see: Karlheinz Gabler, *Siegfried Shalom Sebba. Maler und Werkmann* (Kassel: Thiele und Schwarz, 1981).

[37] Yosef Heftman, 'Vilhelm Tel be-Habimah', *Haboḳer*, 31. Juli 1936, see also F.R.L., 'Wilhelm Tell in Tel Aviv: Eine Inszenierung von Leopold Jessner', *Pariser Tageszeitung* 21. August 1936, 6.

experience of watching classical drama in Hebrew translation, resented the elaborate poetic dialogue.[38] Some argued that the timing was not ideal for plays overloaded with ideas, still others alleged that the fiery speeches and intrigues of the patriots reminded them—unbelievable as it may sound to us—of 'the rhetoric of our adversaries'![39] Beside the political innuendoes, criticism was voiced against Habima for concentrating on plays from the canon of world literature. After all, Jessner's first production with the company was Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* which ended with a sensational 'public trial'.[40] Writing for the daily *Haboḳer*, the critic Joseph Heftman accused Habima of arrogance and snobbery. Instead of catering to the taste of the audience, Habima pursues the wrong cultural agenda, a kind of 'coquetry', he argued.[41]

Jessner never made a secret of his keen interest in and his commitment to the classical repertoire. However, in Tel Aviv he was working with actors who had little experience with the classics. Shimon Finkel, who had known Jessner from his stay in Berlin in the early 1920s, writes in his autobiography: 'During one of the rehearsals, Jessner said that many of us appeared to him like Swiss Chassidim. He asked me to talk to one of the actors. "Tell him, one cannot play Schiller this way".'[42] Yet the fault did not lie only with the company's lack of experience playing classical drama. 'It lay primarily with Bialik's translation, which was highly poetic and remote from everyday language, and which we actors did not dare to change', Finkel recalls, and he adds: 'Had Bialik been alive, he would have certainly helped us to accommodate and attune the language to our stage.'[43]

Truly, though they felt that Bialik's language was too elaborate, the actors treated the translation with the utmost respect. So too did the critics. Nearly all of them put the blame on the actors: their articulation was faulty, Bialik's 'masterpiece' was not clearly pronounced, one

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[38] E.F. [most probably Emil Feuerstein], 'Vilhelm Tel be-Habimah', *Davar*, 31. Juli 1936.

[39] See Joseph Heftman's review. Manfred Geis mentions this attitude in his own review 'Wilhelm Tell'.

[40] For the production and the public trial, see: Shelly Zer-Zion, 'Sheilok ʿoleh le-ʾErets Yisraʾel: Ha-Soḥer mi-Venetsiyah be-vimʾuyo shel Leopold Yesner bi-shenat 1936', *Ḳatedrah* 110 (2004), 73–100.

[41] Cf. Yosef Heftman, 'Vilhelm Tel be-Habimah'.

[42] Shimon Finkel, *Bamah u-ḳelaʾim: Ḥaye Saḥaḳan u-Maʾavaḳo le-ʿatsmuto* (Tel Aviv: ʿAm ʿOved, 1968), p. 172.

[43] Ibid.

could 'hardly hear the text, enjoy the poetry', wrote one of them.[44] The critic Joseph Heftman was the only one who made it clear that the fault was not only with the actors, but also with the translation: 'Despite the ingenious accomplishment and great beauty, Bialik's translation is suited for recitation more than for acting. I think one could make changes here and there and adapt the translation for the stage. For spectators, Bialik's language is too elaborate. One cannot expect them to come to the theatre with the text in their hands.'[45] Similarly ambivalent was Bialik's friend and colleague Yaakov Fikhman. He praised the translation and the 'amazing style',[46] but he could not hide his reservation: Bialik invested in the translation his utmost competence, yet—in parentheses!—'sometimes maybe too much'. This was his subtle hint at the highly poetic and pathos-ridden style. Interestingly, Fikhman concludes his commentary by defending the translator: Ultimately the fault does not lie with the translation, but with the actors, who did not live up to Bialik's verse.[47]

Jessner himself was unable to judge whose fault it was. Despite his love for the country and his hope to strike roots there and find an artistic home with the Habima company, his knowledge of Hebrew was minimal. His *Wilhelm Tell* in Bialik's translation found very few admirers, and the production was removed from the company's repertory after only twenty performances.[48]

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[44] Shmuʾeli, 'Vilhelm Tel', *Ha-ʾarets*, 31 July 1936.
[45] Yosef Heftman, 'Vilhelm Tel be-Habimah'.
[46] Yaʿaḳov Fikhman, 'ʾAl ha-teatron ha-klasi'.
[47] Ibid., 12.
[48] Naʾama Shefi maintains that one of the reasons lay in the seemingly excessive nationalism of Schiller, which was misused by the National-Socialists. See: Shefi, *Germanit be-ʿIvrit*, p. 202.

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BIALIK'S TRANSLATION OF *DON QUIXOTE* (1912/1923)

Marianna Prigozhina

In the early 1920s, when Soviet power took repressive forms, the majority of Hebrew intellectuals moved to Western Europe. Since all their attempts to create a secular Hebrew culture in Communist Russia had been in vain they exerted every effort to continue their activity in the diaspora. Ḥayim Naḥman Bialik, who came to Berlin in 1921, was one of the central figures of this cultural current.

Bialik left Russia when he was at the peak of his popularity, not only in the eyes of the Jewish but also in the eyes of the Russian reader. Thanks to the translations by Vladimir Jabotinsky, Bialik was acknowledged as one of the greatest poets of Russia. Maxim Gorky, Bialik's friend and admirer, was deeply moved when he read Bialik's poems for the first time in 1903. Gorky was convinced that Bialik's Hebrew poetry had great importance for the Russian people. He approached Lenin with the request to allow Hebrew writers to leave Russia in May 1921; Bialik and twelve other Hebrew writers were allowed to leave Russia together with their families. The phenomenon of a Hebrew literature in Western Europe was thus, to some extent at least, due to Bialik's poetry and its excellent translations.

In Berlin, Bialik continued his editorial activities; he emerged as the enterprising publisher of the Dvir publishing house, and produced a series of textbooks for Moriyah. From then on, Bialik's activity was not orientated towards Eastern Europe but towards the western diaspora. Bialik was convinced that the market for Hebrew books in the diaspora would grow strongly in the following years; therefore he re-printed those books of Hebrew literature which had already become popular and added new works. According to the Russian-Jewish publisher Shlomo ben David Zaltsman, who was working in Berlin during the same years, Bialik was one of the first editors of the 'serious Hebrew book'.[1] In 1922, Bialik published a complete edition of his own works: poems, prose, translations, and essays. In 1923, the first

[1] Shlomoh ben David Zaltsman, *Min he-ʿavar* (Tel Aviv, 1943), p. 223.

complete edition of Bialik's translation of *Don Quixote* was printed, in two volumes with a preface by the translator. The first volume had been edited by Bialik in his own publishing house, Turgeman, in Odessa in 1912.

Bialik conducted a tireless activity for the recreation of a Hebrew culture in the diaspora despite the fact that he regarded the diaspora as a temporary stage on the way to Erets Izrael. He was convinced that the true Jewish culture should not be created under diasporic conditions. For its formation a complete adaptation of the national language was necessary which would only be possible in Palestine. Nevertheless, he treated the diasporic period with the utmost seriousness because he saw in it an important period of transition towards a national culture. He described this period with the word *tirgum* ('translation') because he saw its fundamental task in the translation of the whole Jewish diasporic civilization from its various languages into Hebrew, from alien cultural forms into national forms. He believed that his generation was entrusted with the mission to translate itself and its inner world into Hebrew, and that this was a 'translation of return to the origin'.[2]

Bialik saw translation as a means to change the diasporic texture of the souls of the generation that had grown up outside the land of Israel. It had to become the basic method to nationalize the culture in Palestine as well. Bialik expected that the diasporic period would continue in Palestine for several generations born there:

> It would be appropriate to open here, in our land, a faculty for the art of translation and to educate translators into Hebrew for the course of a whole generation, because the process of translation of ourselves will last another two or three generations until the moment when we acknowledge that we have changed the texture of our soul. In opposition to the diaspora, in Israel this process can be called 'dressing' [*ha-ʿhitlabshut'*] [...] we have to put on our own garments.[3]

The understanding of translation as a process oriented towards the future of Jewish culture is closely connected to Bialik's broad project to translate all Jewish literature of national content which had been written in the various languages of the diaspora[4] and also to his project

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[2] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, *Devarim she-be'al-peh* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1935), vol. 2, p. 190.
[3] Ibid., p. 190.
[4] This project is set out by Bialik in his essay 'Ha-sefer ha-ʿivri', in *Kol kitvei Ḥ. N. Bialik* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1961/62), pp. 210–217.

to publish a library of translation of European classics for the benefit of the young. Bialik had begun the latter project in Odessa within the context of the publishing house Turgeman[5], a branch of Moriyah, in 1911. He later continued it in Berlin.

Translation was also one of the key topics in discussions about the future of Jewish culture at the beginning of the twentieth century.[6] The majority of Zionist intellectuals believed that the stagnation in Hebrew literature could only be overcome by a systematic programme of translation of European classics. It was widely believed that precise translation from European languages had to give the archaic Hebrew flexibility, widen its limits, and develop it to the level of other modern languages.

Bialik's view on the topic was a far cry from the opinion held by most of his contemporaries, and it was controversial indeed. Bialik elevated the classical Hebrew tradition over modern Hebrew literature and was directly attacked for this point of view by his opponents. He was strictly against foreign influences and often criticized his contemporaries for their attempts to adopt European aesthetic values instead of using the riches of the Jewish cultural heritage: 'Our poverty does not only consist of what we lack', he wrote, 'but also of the fact that we do not essentially use the property which we have.'[7]

The avoidance of any foreign influences in the formation of the national culture was for Bialik not synonymous with cultural isolation. Instead he regarded it, as he wrote in The Hebrew book (*Ha-sefer ha-ʿivri*), as 'absolutely necessary' to begin the work of translating European classics, 'without any boundaries and closed doors'.[8]

The absorption of foreign literatures, however, should not create the foundation for the future Hebrew culture. This foundation Bialik saw in the tradition of Jewish sources. Once grounded on a national base, Jewish culture could absorb foreign works without damage to itself. Accordingly, translation did not have to be a device for the

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[5] For Bialik's translation project Turgeman cf. ʾUriʾel ʾOfeḳ, *Gumot ḥen* (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv: Devir, 1984), pp. 65–77.

[6] For a detailed study of this polemic cf. Kenneth Moss, 'Not the Dybbuk but Don Quixote: Translation, Deparochialization, and Nationalism in Jewish Culture', in *Culture Front: Representing Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Benjamin Nathans and Gabriella Safran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 196–241.

[7] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, 'Tseirut o yaldut?', in *Kol kitvei Ḥ.N. Bialik* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1961/62), p. 219.

[8] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, 'Ha-sefer ha-ʿivri', p. 217.

creation of Modern Hebrew in analogy to European languages. Bialik was convinced that it was possible to transmit any meaning with the language of the Jewish sources alone. Translation merely provided the possibility to differentiate and to sharpen this language by adapting it to a new context. The use of Hebrew for the sake of copying foreign cultural contents would, in Bialik's opinion, cause the destruction of the language:

> If we tear Hebrew away from its early sources, from its ancient forms, if we banish from our language all the souls [...], which have been dwelling in it since the days of Abraham [...]; if we leave only dry bones, a corpse—we will lose a Jewish language.[9]

Bialik warned of the intrusion of foreign cultural content and literary styles into Hebrew literature by means of translation and insisted that the style of the Jewish original sources was of a superior aesthetic value:

> If we quote a sentence by Leonardo da Vinci or by Shakespeare, or by any other non-Jewish writer these are not sentences; but if we quote a sentence from the *Aggada* or from the Sages, these are sentences, indeed, because these are our own ideas, expressed in a very original style, which perhaps is more beautiful than the style of any foreign work.[10]

In order to produce an aesthetic and a cultural effect and not pollute Jewish culture with unnecessary influences, the translation had to be conducted in the language of the Jewish sources—'The language will "nationalize" everything that is given in it and everything that enters its bounds.'[11] Bialik therefore believed that the act of translation was far more sophisticated than the act of composition. In his letter to Shimon Gintsburg he wrote on March 2, 1909:

> A good translation is, to some extent, an artistic act more complicated than an act of composition [...], a good translator has to be first of all a complete artist; there are very few of such artists-translators and sometimes it seems to me that they do not exist at all.[12]

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[9] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, *Devarim she-be'al-peh* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1935), vol. 2, p. 129.
[10] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 72.
[11] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, 'Ha-sefer ha-'ivri', p. 217.
[12] *'Igrot Ḥayyim Naḥman Byalik* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–1939), vol. 2, pp. 79–80.

In Bialik's understanding of translation the translator becomes the co-author—and this is what happened in his translation of *Don Quixote*. In this book Bialik clearly exposed his technique and his conception of translation. He revealed how the adaptation of foreign cultures and the resistance against them can be related to each other. Bialik's *Don Quixote* seems to be a manual for artistic translation that the poet wrote for future Jewish translators.

Bialik's translation of *Don Quixote* raises many questions: Why did Bialik choose *Don Quixote*? Why is the text heavily abridged? Why did Bialik choose for his translation of *Don Quixote* the style of the Tanakh? Bialik did not intend to translate *Don Quixote*, just as he did not intend to translate Schiller's *William Tell* or An-sky's *Dibbuk*. According to Jacob Fikhman, the publishing house Moriyah had received a very bad translation of *Don Quixote*. Bialik, who edited all the submitted translations, started to correct it but soon understood that it was a hopeless task. He rejected the corrupted translation and translated the book himself, putting all his linguistic ability into this work.[13]

Though Bialik had not planned to translate *Don Quixote*, the choice of the book was by no means accidental. In 1911 the newly founded publishing house Turgeman announced that it 'had been founded with the idea to introduce by means of excellent translations into Hebrew all works of foreign literature, which are already acknowledged by all progressive nations as selected and classic books for the young reader, into our educational literature.'[14] The announcement also indicated that *Don Quixote*, along with such books as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, One Thousand and One Nights, Spartacus*, and selected stories by Jules Verne and Mayne Reid, was planned to be published during the first year of the publishing house's activity.

The seriousness with which Bialik approached the translation can be explained by a variety of reasons. First, Bialik was a man of the highest professional and ethical standards and an artist of his level could not allow himself not to make a piece of art out of everything he was working on. He first refused to translate An-sky's *Dibbuk* but when he finally gave in to David Frishman, who was then the editor of *Ha-Tekufah*, he turned a mediocre work into a masterpiece. *Don Quixote*

[13] Yaʿakov Fikhman, *Shirat Bialik* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1946), pp. 448–449.
[14] ʾUriʾel ʾOfeḳ, *Gumot ḥen*, pp. 66–67.

had become one of Bialik's favourite books when he had read it for the first time in 1892. He explained his reasons to translate *Don Quixote* into Hebrew to Avraham Ninio, the future Director of the Habimah National Theatre:

> I read this humorous masterpiece in Russian when I first came to Odessa as a teenage *yeshivah* boy while trying to become a poet. I was living in poverty in Odessa, and the book had enthralled me. To overcome my hunger, my fear, and my loneliness I read books. Dostoevsky made me weep and Cervantes made me laugh. I alternated between laughing and crying.[15]

A question which even today remains unanswered concerns the sources of Bialik's translation. In the preface to the translation which was printed for the first time in the 1923 edition, Bialik states that the Hebrew translation had been made on the basis of the new complete translation which has been published in the recent years and which, according to most scholars, is correct and cleared of all disfigurement and alien additions.[16] Bialik neither indicates the exact edition nor its language. Surprisingly, until today no scholar has tried to solve the question of which edition or editions Bialik used. Nevertheless, scholars unanimously repeat the presumption that Bialik worked with an abridged Russian and with a complete German edition. Nobody explains what this presumption is based on. Bialik himself has never mentioned any abridged sources of his translation. It is possible that Bialik's contemporaries remembered the fact that an abridged version was used but their information remains vague. Fikhman[17] writes that Bialik used an abridged German version made for children which contradicts Bialik's own statement. Ephraim Shmueli[18] does not mention any abridged editions and believes that Bialik himself abridged and changed the text.

Using the translations of *Don Quixote* which are accessible in Berlin and London I have established that Bialik, though he himself mentions only the complete edition, in fact did use one of the abridged Russian translations. This conclusion is based on an annoying mistake which I have found in Bialik's work and which he took over from

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[15] Sara Feinstein, *Sunshine, Blossoms and Blood: H. N. Bialik in His Time, a Literary Biography* (Lanham, MA: University Press of America, 2005), p. 262.

[16] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, *Don Ḳishot ʾish Lamanshah* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1935), p. 18.

[17] Yaʿakov Fikhman, *Shirat Bialik* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1946), p. 448.

[18] Efraim Shmuʾeli, *Servantes: Demuto ve-yetsirato* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1953), p. 147.

early Russian translators. In the beginning of the sixth chapter of the first book he writes that the wounded hero Baldovinos was abandoned by his light-hearted mistress Charlotta (Karlota). Cervantes had never mentioned any mistress with this name. In the original a man with the name Carloto wounds Baldovinos during the war and leaves him in the mountains. The same mistake can be found in two short Russian versions of *Don Quixote*: in the anonymous translation published by Sytin[19] (I used the edition of 1912) and in the translation which was produced by Karelin[20] and edited in 1873. Both versions, though—and this complicates the matter—are much shorter than Bialik's translation and can therefore not have been the only source Bialik used. It seems that Charlotta strolled through the works of various Russian translators, betraying all of them and proving that none of them had worked with the Spanish original.

I presume that Charlotta came to Russia in one of the numerous French adaptations from the late nineteenth century, as she does not appear in Jean-Pierre Claris Florian's translations, which served Vasily Zhukovsky[21] as a source for his Russian version of *Don Quixote*. I could not find this mistake in any of the available complete German or Russian versions.

The first complete Russian translation made from the Spanish original was the work of Mariia Vatson.[22] It was published in 1907, five years before the publication of the first part of Bialik's translation. When Bialik speaks about the edition he used he could have in mind this book which perfectly matches his description, and not a German edition. However, the mistake mentioned above indicates that Bialik used the complete version (in whichever language) only selectively and always had one of the shorter Russian versions on his desk.

Why did Bialik introduce so many substantial changes, such as paraphrase, additions, omissions, to the text, as well as changes of certain terms and of the style of narration? Bialik's intrusion into

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[19] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don-Kikhot Lamanchskii: Roman v dvuch chastiach; polnyi perevod s ispanskago* (Moscow: Sytin, 1912), p. 28.

[20] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Kikhot Lamanchskii*, trans. V. A. Karelin (St Petersburg, 1873), p. 16.

[21] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Kishot Lamanchskii: Perevod v shesti chastiakh*, trans. V. A. Zhukovskii, (Moscow: Platon Beketov, 1804–1806).

[22] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Ostroumnyi-izobretatel'nyi idal'go Don Kikhot Lamanchskii*, translated by M. V. Vatson (Moscow: Pavlenkov, 1907).

Cervantes's text was so deliberate and substantial that it has, to some extent, changed the meaning of the book.

The most significant change was achieved by abridgements of the text. Bialik reduced Cervantes's 750 pages to 300, the 52 chapters of the first book to 24 and the 74 chapters of the second book to 21. He divided the chapters in his own way, sometimes splitting one chapter into several Hebrew chapters, more often combining a great number of abridged chapters into one. The chapters received, of course, new titles. The tactics of translation changed in the course of the work. Until the sixth chapter the numbering and the titles follow the original, the text being cut to a third or less of the original length. From the sixth chapter onwards Bialik finds his own logic of division into chapters.

In the preface Bialik explains that his translation is intended for the young reader and therefore omits all episodes which are not immediately connected to the main plot and would only distract the reader's attention. This logic can, indeed, be traced in some of Bialik's abridgements. Bialik ignores all chapter introductions, which draw parallels to classical literature or contain explanations of the fictitious translator of the manuscript. He omits all poems as well as all chapters and passages dealing with relations between men and women, all long descriptions, and practically all Spanish names and toponyms. In those cases where chapters switch between the adventures of Sancho Panza and Don Quixote Bialik chooses only one of the parallel lines of the plot.

The preoccupation with the age of the reader, however, is not the only principle which guided Bialik in his abridgements. Bialik clearly felt a deep sympathy for Don Quixote, he possibly partly recognized himself in the hero. Describing the novel's hero in his introduction, Bialik gave the ideal picture of the 'man of the book', the aristocrat of the spirit, the dreamer, who is fighting for his ideals. He omitted all passages which could make the reader laugh at Don Quixote but included all those passages which awoke deep sorrow and sympathy in the reader's heart. In his translation Bialik minimized the satirical and the picaresque aspects of the book and thus transformed Don Quixote into a tragic hero. He changed the text for the sake of its hero, saving him from being ridiculed and doing everything to win for him the reader's respect and sympathy. He was so carried away by this task that he added some passages to the text; for example, in chapter twenty of the first book it is only in Hebrew that Don Quixote pours out his soul speaking to the mountains, rocks and valleys. Fishel

Lachower notes in his article on Bialik's *Don Quixote* that having translated the book into Hebrew Bialik had created 'another book'.[23]

If Bialik had abridged the book only for the needs of the young reader, how can the use of the language of Tanakh and Talmud be explained, a language which is hardly suitable for adventure novels to be read by children? Why would he then deprive Cervantes's book of its humour—the element he had loved it for in his childhood?

Bialik's main motivation for changing the text is to be found in the language of the translation. The language itself led Bialik to the changes. Bialik chose a mixture of the lexicon of the Midrash, the Mishnah, the Tanakh, prayer and medieval literature. Considering his views on translation, outlined above, the choice of this style becomes clear. In order to incorporate the work of Cervantes in the oasis of Jewish literature, Bialik had completely changed its structure and replaced its language and its style with the language and style of Jewish sources. A literal translation of the aesthetics of the original would have been—in Bialik's opinion—futile, even if this were the most thorough translation into modern Hebrew. For the loss of some features of the original, Jewish readers were compensated with a masterpiece of Jewish literature. We are, without doubt, dealing with an example of exquisite judaization of a foreign classic. The language, indeed, transformed a foreign book into a national book.

The style of the Tanakh which Bialik chose for his translation itself demanded that all long descriptions would be abridged in the text. It is the style of *sipur* ('story'), of movement. In his lecture on the *sipur* style of his own poem *The Fire Scroll* (*Megilat ha-ʾesh*) Bialik explained his vision of this style: 'In the *sipur* every phrase has to be a step forward, movement [...]. Even description would be a defect for the *sipur*, because every description is static.'[24]

The traditional Hebrew style also forces Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to speak in a Jewish way. Thus Sancho Panza promises to fulfil all of Don Quixote's commands as well as he observes the Shabbat. When Sancho Panza reflects on the dangers of getting into prison, he worries that they would sit there until the return of Eliyahu (Elias). Sancho swears not by the sun but by *elohim* (God). In the same way,

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[23] Yeruḥam Fishel Lahover, 'Ha-ʾabir ben demut yagon', *Moznayim: Yarhon le-sifrut* 14 (1941/1942), 282–287, (p. 285).

[24] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, 'Mashehu ʿal megilat ha-ʾesh', in *Devarim she-beʾal-peh* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1935), vol. 2, pp. 22–36 (p. 26).

one of the visitors of the governor Sancho Panza swears not by the cross but by *elohim*. Don Quixote swears by the holy Torah and not by the gospel.

The language of the Jewish sources induces Bialik to fill his book with the presence of *elohim* (God) who shields and accompanies both heroes on their way. Wherever fate turns in favour of both heroes, Bialik shows that this has happened by the will of God who is particularly benevolent towards the heroes. Bialik adds *braḥot* (blessings) for both heroes which cannot be found in the original and which lend the text and its heroes an aura of spiritual sublimity and kindness: 'and their hearts filled with joy for they saw that God wishes them well and leads them on the path of truth.'[25]

In his preface Bialik states that the Jewish reader will find in the book a particular spirituality and that in its literary form there is much of the spirit of the Bible, not only in its outer form. It is difficult to say which spirituality Bialik had in mind when he wrote this—that of Cervantes or his own. Bialik's book is certainly imbued with the spirit of the Tanakh.

It is possible that Bialik, following Mendele Mokher Seforim's Yiddish variation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* with the title *The Travels and Adventures of Benjamin the Third*, saw in Don Quixote a Jewish hero. But whereas Mendele chose for his adaptation the low folkloric and picaresque style as well as the jargon of the *shtetl*, Bialik raised his hero and the whole book to the peaks of Hebrew literature which is without doubt a compliment to Cervantes with whom Bialik competed in his translation and towards whose heights—Bialik regarded Cervantes to be a genius—he tried to raise his own text which was in every aspect a Jewish text.

Bialik's book is not a translation in the traditional sense. However, if we place it in the coordinate system developed by Bialik himself in which translation is not a copy but a congenial analogy made from the best materials of the national language, the book merits the description of translation.

[25] Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, *Don ḳishot 'ish Lamanshah*, p. 265.

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VOGEL AND THE CITY

Glenda Abramson

David Vogel presents us with many enigmas but perhaps the most curious is his choice of Hebrew through which to express elements of the modernist European aesthetic. Rather than being a Hebrew writer living in Europe he was, as Gershon Shaked suggested,[1] a European writer who wrote in Hebrew. He was also a Yiddish writer, having written, but not completed, a novel in Yiddish and he was certainly familiar with modernist Yiddish poetry, including that of U.Z. Greenberg. Robert Alter suggests that Vogel's choice of Hebrew was 'a calling card' that allowed him entry into modern European culture.[2] Certainly for Vogel Hebrew was less a badge of national identity than a marker of the *difference* he craved. Perhaps he realised that he would not achieve acceptance into the German language mainstream but writing in Hebrew would afford him recognition as a unique voice.

Vogel was born in Podolia in 1891. Little is known about his education, his family or his early interests. He arrived in Vilna in 1909 or 1910 and left there in 1912 after having been arrested for avoiding the army. On his release he moved to Lemberg and, in 1912, to Vienna. In 1914 he was imprisoned in Austria as an enemy alien. Thereafter he wandered through the European capitals, finally settling in Paris until his death at the hands of the Nazis in 1944.

A sense of social estrangement and displacement of identity is not Vogel's alone, but constituted part of the aesthetic baggage of his contemporary European artists during the Great War and the interwar period. Yet his lack of direct reference to any of the apocalyptic events of his time and of his own life in his poetry and fiction, apart from exploring his poverty and homelessness and noting his daughter's birth, placed his work outside the accepted modern Hebrew canon during

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[1] Aharon Ḳomem, *Ha'ofel vehapele: 'Iyunim biytsirato shel David Vogel* (Haifa: Haifa University Press; Tel-Aviv: Zemorah Bitan, 2001), p. 263.

[2] Robert Alter quoted in Hanna Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 161.

his lifetime. It was to be designated pejoratively as 'Vogelism' by his critics, referring to an aesthetic that was unique in Hebrew literature.

Vogel ignored Jewish history, the development of Zionism and the establishment of the *yishuv* in Palestine which was taking place during his most productive years. He contributed nothing to Jewish national aspirations or the struggle for self-determination, he referred only tangentially to Judaism or Jewish sources. According to Gershon Shaked, 'We might go so far as to say that Vogel produced an "anti-Eretz Israel" fiction, written as though Eretz Israel did not exist and as though the diaspora, despite the existence there of anti-Semitism, was where Jews had to conduct their lives.'[3] This tells us a great deal about the expectations for literature written in Hebrew, the resistance to creative autonomy, and the distorted perception of Jewish culture in the diaspora. Only infrequently in his poetry does Vogel relate to elements of Jewish tradition and even then it is generally as metaphor, for example, 'A pale Yom Kippur has already set out/ in the soul'[4] or through allusions to Jewish liturgy. His frequent references to the figure of a father in his verse may signify a nostalgia for tradition or guilt about his desertion of it, but there is nothing else in Vogel's poetry that might confirm this sense. It is possible that had he written in French or German he would have been counted among the mainstream symbolist, perhaps expressionist, poets of his day.

Whether or not Vogel was directly influenced by any of the writers and intellectuals of his time, particularly the exponents of symbolism and German Expressionism is uncertain, but there is no doubt that his poetics conformed in mood, theme and style with much of the writing of the period, particularly that of Georg Trakl and Georg Heym. It seems unlikely that he could entirely have escaped the influence of any of the European cultural movements or their representatives, given his long sojourns in the European centres, including his years in the Paris of post-symbolism. His debt to Baudelaire is obvious in many lines of his verse written in and about Paris. In the broadest terms the mood of his poetry reflects the negative European temper and the darkness of the annihilation of European humanism during two world wars.

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[3] Gershon Shaked, *Modern Hebrew Fiction* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 131.

[4] *Le'ever hademamah*, ed. and introduction by Aharon Ḳomem (Tel Aviv: Haḳibuts Hame'uḥad, 1983), p. 97.

Vogel himself recognized his identity as a child of Europe. In his diary, which ends before his arrival in Paris, he described himself as an impoverished Russian in Vienna. After his abortive experiment to settle in Palestine in 1929–1930 he returned to Paris with many excuses and, after being reprimanded by Zionist leader Leo Motzkin, retorted to a friend, 'Let *him* bear the *hamsins*. Me—my home is here. This is the only air I can breathe.'[5] The details of Vogel's sojourn in Palestine are vague; we know only that he was deeply unhappy there even though his only child, a daughter, was born in Tel Aviv during his stay and even though his masterpiece *Haye Nisuim* (Married Life) (1929) was published there. He disdained most of the Hebrew literature of his day, reserving his praise for the Hebrew writer Y.H. Brenner; despite his sympathy with Brenner's characters and hence with 'the Jewish tragedy', he refrained from any identifiable expression of that tragedy in his work. All this contributed to his alienness within the mainstream of modern Hebrew literature. This alienness resulted in his total obscurity until the 1960s when he was 'discovered' by the Israeli poets Dan Pagis and Natan Zach.

During the First World War Vogel was incarcerated as an enemy alien in three prison camps in Austria. The conditions were not severe; in fact for the first time since his arrival in Western Europe he consistently had food to eat and a roof over his head. Much of the poetry composed between 1916 and 1918 in the prisons and in Vienna after his release, and first published in the literary and cultural magazines of the time,[6] is devoted to visionary depictions of nature. He stresses in his diary the beauty of the landscape at Karlstein and Markl, the locations of the castles which served as prisons, so enchanting that he is inclined, with true Vogelian intensity, to throw himself into the valley in order to enjoy it.[7]

In his essay on Georg Trakl, Will Stone's comments about Trakl are eerily applicable to Vogel as well—or perhaps Vogel's debt to Trakl was more direct than has been remarked or admitted:

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[5] Dan Pagis, 'David Vogel: Ha-'ish veshirato', *Molad*, June–July 1964, 196.

[6] In *Hatsefirah*, in an anthology entitled *Gevulot* edited by Gershon Shoffman, in *Miklat* (New York) and others.

[7] *Taḥanot kavot*, ed. with an afterword by Menaḥem Peri (Tel Aviv: Hasifriyah haḥadasha/Haḳibuts Hame'uḥad, 1990), pp. 271–326 (entry 22.8.1914).

> Like Coleridge, Trakl employs the visionary image as the principal means to express himself but, unlike Coleridge and other romantics with a visionary capacity who interspersed their visions with a framing language to support their occasional images, there is no place in Trakl's work for such conscious construction in the traditional way a poem evolves. For Trakl the imagery has become the entire poem, or the world of Trakl is one long uninterrupted visionary image, cut and pasted into individual poems. All Trakl's essential concerns become an essential part of this new language and cannot be separated from it.
>
> Certain images often appear to have no connection to those that follow or precede them, so to some people reading Trakl for the first time it may appear to be a random display, seemingly incoherent, colours thrown in at will.[8]

Yet Vogel's poetry contains an inner coherence in that the image being the poem, it does not require a beginning, an end or an anchor in any world other than that of the poem itself. Within this consistency, nature is generally no more than a symbolic barometer of mood, its predominant colours, 'pale', 'grey', 'dark', being metaphors of the speaker's experienced solitude. Natan Zach, one of the Israeli admirers of Vogel and active in his 'rediscovery' explains,

> The totality of the situation in Vogel's poetry is derived from the totality of the relationship between the emotion and the image in the poem. Vogel has an uncanny talent for placing in the same lines […] a complete picture which contains the emotional content of his experience, or sometimes it is no more than an impressionistic observation of the landscape.[9]

However, Vogel's nature imagery most frequently embraces the dull hues generally attributed to a cityscape, rather than the rich colours of the countryside. Paradoxically much of his poetry is concerned with evocation of nature, at odds with his daily experience as a city dweller (from 1909). His real, experienced environments, apart from the short period of his Austrian incarceration, were almost exclusively urban, Vilna, Lemberg, Vienna, Berlin and Paris but his urban sensibility was often represented by indeterminate landscapes, for example, images of a river, forests and bare-branched trees, hilltops, juxtaposed with vignettes of city girls in the streets, wearing purple and blue hats and a sidewalk covered with autumn leaves. Whether these are observed,

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[8] Will Stone, 'A Visionary Infection: The Anatomy of Movement in Georg Trakl's Poetry', *Agenda*, 42, 3–4 (2007).

[9] Natan Zach 'Lailah kvar shokhen shaḥor', *Davar*, 11 December 1959, 7.

remembered, or fabricated settings, the words 'dull' (*ḳaheh*) and 'pale' (*ḥiver*) are the twin poles of Vogel's landscapes, *ḳaheh* in particular recurring with synaesthetic intensity: as an adjective, 'dull noise'; as an adverb, 'Dully I'll cling'; and as a noun that personifies the object, 'The dark [one], the solitary [one] (*hakehah, habodedah*, 93)'. This dullness and colourlessness suggest that he is not *describing* landscapes at all, but imagining a space upon which his self is being projected. It is this space that he peoples with solitary wanderers in a dream terrain that is superimposed upon the city streets that the wanderers walk.

In Vienna, after his release from imprisonment in 1916, Vogel's most customary landscape indicators in his lexicon of tropes, 'night', 'wasteland', 'mist', 'autumn', 'dark', 'dull', 'pale', are, characteristically, extended to the city. Houses, rooftops, sidewalks also figure in poetry whose locus is in fact ambiguous, neither countryside nor city, but a dark realm of mood whose 'strange, consumptive shadows' create a wasteland (*shemamah*) that 'will oppress me forever'.[10] It is true that wartime Vienna was no longer the *fin-de-siècle* playground it had been; 'the last of the lights went out', writes Vogel in 1916, during the war that had already changed the city forever (95). It is possible that Vogel's view of it as something akin to a photographic negative was an accurate portrayal of it in 1916. However, while the war was raging through Europe, while the city was in turmoil, the healthy young men gone, their places taken by thousands of refugees and the war wounded, Vogel was repeating his usual lexicon of autumn, shadows, greyness and isolation that transcends the actual city. Any shard of sunshine is soon subdued by the shadows:

> Top storey windows
> burn gold in the sunset.
> Dark shadows, fearful of longing
> slip heavily into the hearts. (94)

After the sunshine a 'pale dawn' rests on the grey city roofs, a 'heavy, painful sky' hangs over Vienna (94). The paleness extends to a love poem that uncharacteristically ends on a note of joy; still, the woman's breasts are 'like pale lilies' and the joy itself is tempered: 'And the heart *quietly* rejoices' (98, italics mine). The oxymoron in this line (*tsohel*, shout with joy, rejoice) exemplifies the poetry's intrinsic restraint

[10] David Fogel, *Le'ever Hademamah*, p. 95; hereafter page numbers in the text will refer to this edition.

of passion, just as its colours are confined to a colourless palette. When, in a poem, colour does intrude, when young women enjoy the city in spring, wearing hats of purple and blue, the speaker sits indoors watching them silently through his window (119–120). Generally wintry external and internal vistas, whether urban or rural, define Vogel's Vienna poetry, some decade and a half before the publication of his Viennese novel *Married Life* which features Vienna as a recognisable twentieth-century metropolis. Yet that modernist Vienna was written in Paris and possibly in Tel Aviv, long after Vogel had left the actual Austrian city behind.

Vogel reached Paris in 1925 or 1926 and immediately succumbed to its charms. Moshe Ben Menahem tells us that Vogel eagerly learned French and became familiar with the city, including its outskirts and its museums.[11] Vogel was a great walker and traversed the cities he lived in from one side to the other. In Paris his regular haunt, to which he went almost every day, was the La Coupole café in Montparnasse, opened in 1927. The twenties' émigrés were closely identified with the cafés and La Coupole, which is an historic monument today, was popular with writers and artists, many of them Jews. Vogel also frequented two other cafes popular with Jewish expatriates, Central and Herrenhof. Unfortunately we know too little about Vogel's life to know which museums he visited, whom he met, who his friends were, what he discussed. What is clear, however, is that despite his love of Paris it seems Paris did not love him: as in his Vienna sojourn, he was never able to find a means of sustenance and a secure home there, resulting in extreme poverty, homelessness and ill health. Nevertheless he wrote two novels *Babeit hamarpeh* (In the Sanatorium) in 1927, and *Lenokhaḥ hayam* (Facing the Sea), 1932, and at least part of *Haye Nisuim* in Paris, but none of his novels relieved his financial situation.[12] Vogel lived in Paris for three years and then left, returning in 1933, after wandering through Europe and enduring a year in Palestine. He wrote to Ben Menahem:

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[11] Pagis, p. 196.

[12] One of his friends was the Yiddish writer Meir Wiener who encouraged him with these words: 'You will write prose! A good one! Very good one! Don't fall in despair after the first unsuccessful attempts!', see Mikhail Krutikov, 'Yiddish between East and West: Expressionism, Revolution, and the Habsburg Myth in the Soviet Union', *TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften, no. 16 (2005)* (www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/06_6/krutikov16.htm).

> We have again been in Paris for about a month. We have had many moves and innumerable tribulations in the past two years. My return to Berlin was useless—no flour and no Torah. We escaped from there while we still could and travelled around Poland for two months. I was hoping to find some concrete advantage in all this, but even there I didn't succeed and left empty-handed. Now Paris […] In the difficulty of these times it seems that there is no place in the world for people like us.[13]

While the Hebrew writer Yeshurun Keshet was in Paris in the 1920s he came upon a small group of what he called *'anashim 'ivriyim* [Hebrew folk], including Vogel and the poet Zalman Shneour. He hoped that they were the vanguard 'for the nurturing of Hebrew culture in the Jewish community of Paris'[14] but discovered that no such thing was happening. While both Shneour and Vogel were actively writing while in Paris, they did not advance the notional cause of 'Hebrewness' within the Jewish and literary community. In his memoirs Shlomo Zemah, a Hebrew critic and scholar who spent three years in Paris at that time, noted only the presence of Jewish artists, but not of Hebrew writers.

Vogel made few friends for not only his odd personality but also his dreadful circumstances tended to estrange him from his contemporaries. Keshet, who took pity on him, describes an encounter with him in Paris in 1926:

> In the evenings I would often go to the Café de la Rotonde on Boulevard Montparnasse. This café was a meeting point for artists and writers, mainly from abroad, and Jewish writers from America and Palestine would meet there when they were in Paris. For example, the same evening I met David Vogel I found him sitting in the company of Shneur, Shalom Asch, Moshe Nadir and others. He and his wife sat there somewhat on the outside and took almost no part in the conversation. They both looked weak and tired and seemingly bewildered. Shalom Asch certainly had never met Vogel and had no idea of the identity of the pale, small man sitting hunched over into himself […] I…moved my chair to where Vogel and his wife were sitting and I began a conversation with them. I did this deliberately: I simply could not bear the sight of the isolation and sadness that enveloped them like a kind of fine mist, like a sort of transparent, vague imprint.[15]

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[13] Pagis, p. 12.

[14] Yehurun Keshet, 'Bizekhori 'et David Vogel', *Moznayim*, July, 1972, 165; see also 'Rishmei masa' be'eropa', *Hado'ar*, 13 Oct. 1967, 739.

[15] Keshet, p. 739; see also Glenda Abramson, *Hebrew Writing of the First World War* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 252.

It was not only Vogel's circumstances that alienated him from the Hebrew literary arbiters, but what I suppose could be called his disjunctive world view. At the time the Hebrew writers were participating in the romantic enterprise of creating an agrarian utopia in Palestine, Vogel was creating both a misty European landscape and an urban nightmare

Vogel remained in Paris from 1933 until his internment in the early 1940s in Hauteville and deportation by the Nazis in 1944. Few of these events are recounted factually in his poetry; the only mark they have left is a sense of personal poverty, despair and barrenness, evoked in the same repeated tropes and linguistic patterns that mirror the speaker's dark mood.

A manifestation of the European modernist spirit was an awareness of the city not only as a shaper of individual destinies, but as a symbol of sociopolitical crisis. Raymond Williams detected many themes common to writers reacting to the modern metropolis: the collapse of normal relationships and the loss of what Williams termed 'the ballast of familiar life'; crowding; loneliness and alienation; the diversity and mobility of the city.[16] Wordsworth had identified the same condition of urban mass society in 1800 (*The Prelude* VII) as did Baudelaire later. Georg Simmel, like Wordsworth, wrote of the valuelessness and baseness embedded in modern city life.[17] Until the 20th century western, especially English, literature incorporated an anti-urban bias; the movement from the land to the cities was, in a sense, a movement from pastoralism to modernism.[18]

Literary confrontation of the city assumes various forms, for example, the narrator outside the city observing it, the narrator or protagonist as part of the city, often demonstrating extreme subjectivity, and the city itself as text. Vogel's Paris poetry combines all these methods:

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[16] Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism* (London; New York: Verso, 1989), p. 41.

[17] Georg Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (Dresden: Zahn & Jaensch, 1903).

[18] The case of Israel is instructive. The pastoral, romantic phase of the new Israeli culture was associated closely with the Middle Eastern landscape, with childhood, the *moshavah*, Arab neighbourliness and the orchards and orange groves. This was the 'open' *Eretz Yisrael*, according to Ehud Ben Ezer, rather than the closed and besieged State of Israel with the awareness of the Arabs as the true heirs to the pastoral dream. A combination of sociopolitical events, among them the influx of urbanized European Jewish refugees, not all of whom were Zionists, overwhelmed the faith in the land and romantic utopianism. 'Eḥud Ben 'Ezer, 'Portsim unetsurim', *Keshet*, 3 (1968), 158.

to begin with, the spokesman is himself subservient to the city, as narrator or as protagonist, whether or not he is at the centre of the poetic vista. In common with expressionist poets, Vogel's speaker is a victim of the city, part of its flotsam, the 'human rejects', identified in his day by Baudelaire, stressed by the expressionists, and summarized by Vogel in a portrait of a black alley in which pass the child, the prostitute and the hangman. (175) Vogel's Paris poems of the mid-1920s reveal his extreme subjectivity, his texts providing more insight into his personality than into the period or the place. For example, his city contains few crowds, no bustle, no stores or arcades and few lights. Vogel's response to the city is in its sense of the speaker's isolation, either in the street or in his room, within the normative city tumult. Generally, the words 'ḥeder' (room) or 'ḥadarim' (rooms) recur, emphasising not only the isolation and fragmentation in the modern city but also as metonyms of the lives lived within them.

In addition to its other qualities, urban art was 'based on the principles of surprise and "shock", disruption and displacement of any assumption of a coherent "centre" to experience.'[19] Expressionist art emphasizes the disjunction of city crowds and the solitary viewer observing them. According to Benjamin, 'Fear, revulsion and horror were the emotions which the big city crowd aroused in those who first observed it.'[20] The urban shock that preoccupies him is produced by the tension between open spaces and crowded urban spaces, that is, between the country and the city. Vogel's largely unpeopled cityscapes engender no such tension. If he expresses the urban 'shock' at all, it is both associated with existential responses to the urban encounter, deriving from his own personality adrift in the cities of Europe, and political, reflecting the development of a sensitivity to the times culminating in his shocking intuition of what was to come. Even Vogel's solipsism could not withstand the ominous atmosphere:

> This city dwelling on the shores of nothingness
> Is sunken in eternal silence, humming evil—
> Its inhabitants lie defeated, their soul darkening
> Until they are sent to a land of no bread, no wine.

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[19] Christoper Prendergast, 'Framing the City: Two Parisian Windows', in *City Images: Perspectives from Literature, Philosophy, and Film*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1991), pp. 179–196 (p. 181).

[20] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 176. Benjamin quotes Valery: 'The inhabitant of the great urban centres [...] reverts to a state of savagery—that is, of isolation.'

A silent community, here the world has forgotten.
But at twilight fear overcomes it
And suddenly a girl's scream flares beside the living
Whose voices have faded in the distance.

Every evening and morning the sounds of bells erupt
Like black crows in encasing, pulpy fog
And on the people in bed they proclaim the order:
Today your neighbour went, tomorrow you'll go too. (223)

Yet this undated, but later, poem could reflect no more than Vogel's usual urban desperation and fear, even paranoia, his characters' enclosure within a mysterious city that exists out of time and space. For once, however, the speaker is not at the poem's centre, and perhaps some awareness of historical process intrudes upon his manufactured world. Even the language of this poem is less hermetic and concise.

The undertones of impending disaster were commonplace in expressionist verse: whether or not the poets had been affected by the First World War, they expressed an awareness of an evil embodied in some kind of massive force against which they could not prevail. The city becomes 'the emblem of an insoluble historical crisis'[21] symbolized by terror, madness and illness. Vogel writes of 'sick women/ in the depths of a strange night'; 'In the morning our children awaken filled with fear'; 'The great night approaches my door/ in the paleness of winter.' Altered circumstances infuse the city with menace:

When the sick person
gathers all the crumbs of his strength
to step in childish confusion
over the threshold of the leaden day
like someone who returns from afar
to see his dwelling changed,
he wonders at his day, himself
and the strangeness of the city. (228) [1938]

The force threatening the expressionist poets, precipitating their sense of calamity, was more than an undefined terror of technology, so well defined by Benjamin, or the city's corruption and oppression. Many of the poets lined their verse with a subtext of social protest, in keeping with their strong sense of political chaos of which the perceptive

[21] Edward Timms, 'Expressionists and Georgians', in *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art*, ed. Edward Timms and David Kelley (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985), p. 118.

artist was both the chronicler and the victim. Vogel, on the other hand, generally confined his urban awareness to *intimations* of devastation, unspecified and undescribed.

In an example of Vogel's poetry of the 1920s, which has startling similarities to that of Georg Heym, Vogel's view of Paris is vividly rendered without presenting an objective city topos:

> Life weighs heavily on you
> Until your streets go mad;
> People light a great flame—
> Your lights, Paris.
>
> The night sleeps lonely on the rooftops—
> You are awake and naked,
> My unkempt city.
> Desire forever exults from your rooms.
>
> Your sadness and fire
> Above humpbacked walls
> Are eternal streams
> Flowing to frightened hearts.
>
> Once I looked away from the stranger
> Who always walks behind me.
> Why does he await me at the gates
> And stealthily remain with me
> Throughout the night? (171) [1925]

The undisclosed urban 'other', a staple of expressionist art, is present throughout Vogel's poetry, often as a figment of menace. In the modern city, eye contact, which potentially increases the threat, is seldom made and when we do gaze, 'Sight introduces us to an unbearable shock. Reality when seen inspires horror.'[22] Terror, according to Jacques Elul, is always visual. In the graphic art of German Expressionism the observed urban vista is a savage panorama which physically and emotionally overwhelms the human beings.

The subject of this poem is not the speaker who stands on the side, narrating. Paris is the centre and focal point, unrelated to the observing man, except in the last stanza when he comes into focus as the

[22] Jacques Elul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, tr. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1985), p. 12. For a discussion of the passing stranger in the city, and the question of visual perception see William Chapman Sharpe, *Unreal Cities: Urban Figuration in Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Whitman, Eliot, and Williams*. Baltimore (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 39–68.

terrified urban dweller. Like his contemporary, Heym, Vogel depicts the depressing chaos of city life, by means of personifications of the city and particularly of its component parts. But the person-city is itself ill or mad. Its flame-imagery indicates its demonic force which Vogel elsewhere symbolizes as 'a city of black fire' (or 'a fiery black city', *ʿirʾ esh sheḥorah*). An unspecified threat lurks at the heart of these poems (Heym's *drohn*, a parasite), an oppressive power, represented by Vogel as a strange, shadowy figure. In fact his Paris poetry is filled with images of violence, knives, killing, fire, drowning. In one poem the Seine itself swallows Paris's evenings with a shudder.

All the themes characterising the Paris poetry are present in the second stanza of the poem, beginning with *bedad* (lonely). In fact, the themes closely relate to the personality of the speaker: his isolation within the urban environment, which is his projected interior landscape, and therefore 'unkempt'. The city is not only 'naked' (*ʿaromah*) but '*ʿeryah*' (nakedness) with its implications of sexuality, together with 'desire', reinforce the femaleness of the city entity. Vogel's urban fiction links cities and tortured love and desire. For example, in *Married Life* perversion, infidelity, sexual jealousy and despair are the narrative's inner lining, personified by the protagonist and his masochistic relationship with his wife.

In Vogel's Paris poetry, psychological and textual landscapes overshadow the accurately portrayed city. His delocalised, symbolic streets confirm the essential 'metaphoricity of the modern city'[23] that avoids the authentic cityscape of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens*, for example. It is clear that Vogel's Parisian topos is both an extension of himself, viewed through attributes rather than locations, and a female entity which he apostrophises by using the feminine singular pronoun. In his apostrophe he describes the city in a personal colloquy, as if 'she' were his lover. He paints Paris's portrait as he sees it: beautiful and ugly, erotic and tired, mysterious and threatening. His metaphorical effects closely link the man and the city: 'yearning' city squares, 'tired' alleys, a 'weary' day, 'unkempt' city. The city as inner narrative replaces a narrative about the city or the city itself as text.

The personification is ultimately reduced to only a few of the city's physical features, one being the alley or street. Paris is emblematised by

[23] See Sharpe, p. 10.

its allegorical alleys: in Vogel's poetry there are few interiors, gardens, buildings, only one or two cafés and squares. The word *simṭah* (alley) recurs in almost every one of Vogel's 'Paris' poems as 'dark', 'bowed', 'humble' or 'tired', a territory he consistently associates with the unconscious. Streets and alleys are the city's nerves, conducting impulses and sexual desire against which the poet-*flâneur* is helpless. They create a powerful metaphor for the erotic, associated with the speaker himself. At night the dark urban enclosure of impulse and instinct incarnates the 'city of black fire' (*'ir 'esh sheḥora*) which is kindled in the speaker. *Simtot* (alleys) occurs with images of 'innerness' (*tokhi, ḳirbi*): 'All your weary alleys/ turn toward the inside of me' 'It's cool and dark inside me' 'Inside me (*tokhi*) is paved/ a narrow tall alley/these thousand years.' These phrases link the external urban feature, the alley as a channel both of narrative and of impulse, with the speaker's inner landscape. In fiction the street or alley sometimes conducts the characters, together with the reader, to the core of the plot; but within short plotless structures such as Vogel's this is not possible and in any case, his exitless alleys, as symbols of inner disorder, do not lead him anywhere.

Vogel was capable of writing splendid love poetry but his view of love in the city is devoid of affection containing, rather, the unpleasant edge which expressionist painters, such as Otto Dix, for example, were adept at rendering. Vogel's Paris women are exclusively sexually motivated, as is the city itself: the speaker professes love for the 'slim daughters' of Paris; girls rush home after a night of love, women display their breasts from the windows, their eyes burn, prostitutes prowl the alleys. Vogel's speaker apostrophizes 'my modest (*'anavot*) whores'; Paris as a wanton feminine entity encloses clandestine (*balat*) love. Vogel's representation of his city as feminine may be considered ambiguous since *ir* is in any case feminine (as are *cité* and *stadt*) but it is clear from Vogel's poetry that the city 'the harlotized metropolis' to use William Sharpe's term,[24] is a female space by which to be seduced: 'awake and naked/ my unkempt city' whose rooms exude sexuality. The whore, a favoured persona of expressionist art, epitomizes the commodification of the human being in the modern city while *ner* and *esh*, the lighting of candles or fire, signifies the ritual beginning of love.

[24] Sharpe, p. 10

City lights are often linked to sexuality: in Vogel's poetry the light, including the candle, is exclusively allied to the erotic night. Day, by contrast, is 'pale', morning is 'withered' and 'tired' and night's 'thousand fires' of desire sleep all day.

The poetry links the urban environment with misery: a woman separated (*karut*, cut off) from her husband contemplates suicide. She has 'wallowed' in a foreign, or strange, city; the suggestion being the wantonness of a city that has destroyed a marriage. The verb *mitpaleshet* (wallows) has overtones of wallowing in misery, echoed, in the poem, by the yowling of 'rotting' cats. Whereas for Baudelaire a cat is a sensuous reminder of a woman, here both woman and cat suggest corruption. The speaker himself wallows to a certain extent: this is the 'song of my lost hope': he is far from the city and his metaphorical wine has run out; he contemplates inscribing his misery into his flesh.

> I survive but I have no-one.
> Far away no city will bring me joy.
> My storm has dampened the hearth
> All my wine has gone.
> Bring a knife!
> Tonight I'll engrave my flesh
> With the sorrows of yesterday and tomorrow. (164)

The vocabulary of the poem offers an objective correlative of urban corruption: 'broken', 'empty', 'rotten', 'wallowing', 'poison'.

Together with all his metaphoricity, Vogel occasionally unites city and text; he describes recognisable aspects of Paris, for the most part according to the expressionist technique of simultaneity, a synchronic portrait of the city, its inhabitants and the dissociated observer, in a series of declarative sentences:

> Solid with smoke and people,
> cafés have burst into the marketplaces
> A morning, not winter, has spread—
> but frost's signature lies on roof and lintel
> and on the faces of girls
> hurrying from a night of love
> to a steel machine. [1925] (173)

There is a hint here of factory chimneys spreading smoke and ash, of machinery and streams of workers, leading to one of the most graphic of Vogel's vignettes, his description of the modern city as portrayed in numerous paintings of interwar expressionism, as a sulphurous vista:

> Pillows of ash were spread for a sick sun
> To make softness for it
> A yellow tongue lengthens
> Facing the rippling Seine. [1925] (173)

This view of the city's smoky veil recalls Heym's prophetic 'A great city sunken in yellow smoke'. On the other hand, Paris's blurred outlines suggest its amorphous values and lack of virtue. The sun is always defeated by shadows, and in this poem the sun's sickness has infected the city which displays the metonymic 'yellow tongue' signifying the pollution of the human body no less than of the city and its masses. Still, the speaker occasionally finds beauty in it, conveyed in lines in which the language play, to which no translation can do justice, constitutes the poetic image:

> In your nights
> float a myriad colours of light,
> a reddish sky curving over them. (175)

These poems reveal not only the urban modernism of Vogel's aesthetic perspective. but also those factors in his life that were typical of the life of an East European Jewish intellectual at that time, predominantly his rootlessness, detachment and poverty. These characteristics were shared by other *talushim* (*déracinés*) passing through or settling in Paris, Vienna and Berlin after the Great War and the destruction of their East European communities. Many of them indulged in memories of the lost *shtetl*; Vogel, however, was devoid of nostalgia and his speaker, the *talush*, squarely faced the city.

> Turbulent streets
> destroyed my rooms
> and carried me with them. (161)

Vogel's bleakness, which well accorded with European interwar modernism, was perhaps less alien to his fellow Hebrew writers in Europe at the time than to the positive, masculine attitudes of the *yishuv*, to its ideologies and also to the severely demarcated thematics and styles prescribed by tradition, convention and the critics responsible for establishing the modern Hebrew canon. Vogel was disliked and misunderstood by most of the contemporary literary arbiters for his idiosyncratic introversion at a time that communalism was regarded as paramount.

Above all, his poetry revealed a disjunction between the language and the national aspirations its use encoded. Hebrew, so much a standard of the rebirth of the nation and a link to ancient autonomy, was used in all its biblical grandeur by a writer whose contents utterly undermined its connotations of idealism and hope.

Nonetheless, some years later Vogel summarized his own achievement: 'I haven't written much, but I'm thankful that there has never been any writing in Hebrew such as mine. I have something different in me. Is this not so?'[25] It was indeed so. This 'difference' that constituted Vogel's poetic sensibility was strange to the developing Hebrew literature both in Europe and in Palestine during the first two decades of the twentieth century. A number of other Hebrew writers, including S.Y. Agnon, Gershon Shoffman, M.Y. Berdyczewsky, Avraham Ben-Yitzhak, Saul Tchernichowsky and Y.H. Brenner, made their homes in Western Europe and England, either temporarily or permanently, yet, apart from Ben-Yitzhak, whose poetry exhibits many Vogelian fingerprints, and perhaps Shoffman, their writing remained true to the Hebrew spirit without creating a definable émigré Hebrew culture with specific markers. The question is whether Vogel succeeded in doing so, by blending his modernist European sensibility with the Hebrew language and its traditional resonances. Yet neither he nor similar Hebrew-European writers, such as U.N. Gnessin and Gershon Shoffman, established a 'group' or attracted followers who could have represented 'Hebrewness' of any kind in Western Europe. Moreover, few Hebrew writers settled in Paris for long, the majority residing in Berlin or Vienna but even there a 'centre' for European Hebrew literature did not emerge. As for exile, despite his frequent changes of location, Vogel seemed to be free of any nostalgia, and if there is evidence of a sense of exile, it is not from a place or a homeland but from some idealised state of being, never defined, from which he has been separated. He did not, as exiles do, inhabit one place while projecting the memories of another.

It is probably best to view him as an intermediary between European modernism and Hebrew literary modernism which, a little later in Israel, became receptive to his gloomy vision. When he was in Paris, the home of a large group of Russian-Jewish modernist artists, he might have discovered literary styles that he intuitively knew suited his 'new

[25] Pagis, p. 198.

garb' as a European writer.[26] It was in Paris that his modernist European sensibility was consolidated. Therefore, as a stylistic innovator he made an important contribution to Hebrew modernism through his encounters with—or at least his awareness of—the expatriate Jewish artistic community. It was not only his affinity with symbolism and expressionism that signal his distinctiveness—after all, U.Z. Greenberg was one of the initiators of Yiddish Expressionism—but Vogel's complete break with the aesthetic norms of Jewish and Hebrew creativity that was revealed with the composition of his novels and poetry in Paris. Shaked, who was perhaps not the greatest admirer of Vogel, offers him a rather back-handed compliment: 'Having produced in *Facing the Sea* (*Lanokhaḥ hayam* 1934) one of the most truly outstanding works of Hebrew fiction, Vogel may be considered the second most important non-mainstream writer in the tradition (after Gnessin).'[27]

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[26] In his notorious essay on Hebrew literature Vogel writes: 'We have already given ourselves in the great world to a new moulding, to European garb.' See *Moznayim* 3–4 (July–August, 1987), 23.

[27] Shaked, p. 131.

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MARGINALIA OF THE HEBREW RENAISSANCE: THE ENRICHMENT OF LITERARY HEBREW THROUGH CALQUES OF RUSSIAN PHRASES IN THE WORKS OF ELISHEVA AND LEAH GOLDBERG

Zoya Kopelman

The revival of Hebrew in the last quarter of the nineteenth and in the first quarter of the twentieth century can be imagined in the form of two principal processes: the creation of new words according to existing morphological models and the ascription of new meanings to words which were taken from classical Hebrew texts, i.e. from the Tanakh, the Mishnah, from medieval philosophy and from scientific literature. A classic example of the first case is the paradigm of nouns indicating illnesses (e.g. under the influence of European languages, the translation of influenza as 'shapaʿat', where the Hebrew root 'shafaʿ' has the meaning 'to pour').[1] A classic example for the second case is the adaptation of the word 'ḥashmal' (Ez. 1:4) which was taken from the mystic vision of God's carriage and which has received the meaning 'electricity' in modern Hebrew. It is well known that the first option particularly inspired Eliezer Ben-Yehudah, whereas Ḥ.N. Bialik acted as his opponent and favoured the second option. The adherents of Ben-Yehudah could be called innovators and the adherents of Bialik archaists. The archaists needed, as it seems, the bolder imagination.

Both Russian language and literature played a considerable role in the formation of Hebrew literature and of modern Hebrew. As the Israeli structuralist Itamar Even-Zohar wrote,

> when nineteenth-century Hebrew writers made use of Russian verbal conventions, they also necessarily adopted large portions of the Russian models [...]. Thus, the adoption of principles of characterization, scene construction and personal interaction coincided with the adoption of formal elements, either in their original form or via domestication procedures. In other words, together with the tools of description [...]

[1] Hebrew uses the same letter for the sounds *p* and *f*.

> the principles of description were accepted, i.e. those principles which determine what can be recognized as a legitimate model of the world.[2]

I will try to show that this process continued until well into the twentieth century. As material I chose the works of two female Hebrew writers with a Russian cultural background—Elisheva and Leah Goldberg. The choice is motivated by the similarity between their biographies and their literary œuvres.

Elisheva (Bykhovskaia, her maiden name was Elizaveta Ivanovna Zhirkova, 1888–1949; gentile), born in Moscow, and Leah Goldberg (1911–1970), born in Kovno, both wrote Hebrew verse and Hebrew prose. Their talents were unequal but their literary inclinations were similar: both admired Alexander Blok and loved Anna Akhmatova, and tried to imitate the latter in their early works. Elisheva was the first, as it seems, to write a longer essay on Akhmatova in Hebrew; Goldberg dedicated an article to Akhmatova some years later.[3] Both also wrote on Alexander Blok,[4] trying to understand the secret of his magic influence on their souls. Each of them wrote a novel which is centred around the *intelligentsiia*, including the Jewish *intelligentsiia*. As the settings of their novels they chose the largest European city of a fateful period: in Elisheva's novel *Alleys* (*Simta'ot*, 1929) it is Moscow at the end of the NEP period, in Leah Goldberg's *Losses* (*'Avedot*, written in the late 1930s and published from archival materials in 2010) it is the Berlin of 1932 and 1933. It should be noted, in addition, that Leah Goldberg was also a scholar of literature and from 1952 professor of Russian Literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her first critical note was a review of the second book of Hebrew verse by Elisheva with the title *Ḥaruzim* (*Verses* as well as *Prayer Beads*, 1928). As a literary critic, Elisheva published in journals and gave surveys of the new Hebrew writers and dedicated some of her essays to Russian writers.

The aim of the present article is to show how calques of Russian metaphors and of paradigmatic literary images have served Elisheva

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[2] Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Role of Russian and Yiddish in the Making of Modern Hebrew', *Poetics Today*, vol. 11. no 1 (spring 1990), 119.

[3] Elisheva, 'Anna Akhmatova', in *Kuvim*, 21, pp. 2–3, 22, pp. 2–3 (Jan. 14 and 21, 1927); Leah Goldberg, 'Al Anna Akhmatova', in *Al ha-Mishmar*, Oct. 11, 1961 (also in Leah Goldberg, *Mi-dor u-me-'ever* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Po'alim, 1977), pp. 259–266.

[4] Elisheva, *Meshorer ve-'adam* (Tel-Aviv: Tomer, 1929); Leah Goldberg, 'Aleksander Blok ve-ha-shirah ha-rusit ha-ḥadashah', in *Mi-dor u-me-'ever*, op. cit., pp. 242–259.

and Goldberg as a means to enrich the imagery of Hebrew prose and poetry. As Russian books influenced the thought and cultural concepts of both writers even during the later years of their lives and formed a considerable part of their reading, it is no surprise that they felt the poverty of Hebrew linguistic imagery on the one hand, and, on the other, the abundance of the same imagery in Russian literature. This awareness made them enrich the Hebrew of their own works with calques of Russian phrases, poetic lines and images.

In her novel *Losses*, Leah Goldberg refers twice to the dependence of her literary work upon her own reading. In the first case, she explains the choice of unusual metaphors to describe the hair of her heroine, a metaphor which becomes a leitmotiv throughout the whole novel. Antonia is introduced as 'A girl with copper hair—it was heavy copper, like the helmet on the head of a soldier, like the glimmering bowl which crowned the head of Don Quixote.'[5] The reference to Cervantes aims at neutralizing, it would seem, the strange epithet 'copper bowl' ('gigit ha-neḥoshet'). The second example is a metapoetical commentary on the description of the landscape: 'It was the morning and a boat was swimming in it, just like in an old Japanese poem.'[6] Goldberg stresses, as it were, that literary images move from one literature to another, and that this inevitable transplantation enriches—if it is successful—the receiving literature.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in Elisheva's novel *Alleys*: Liudmila Vibin and Valentin Kravtsov, a worker of the Narkompros, call the main hero, the Jew Daniel Roiter, 'Peter Shlemil', referring to Adelbert von Chamisso's novel: 'It is the same with you: you are wandering between us, as if you are looking for something but you do not find yourself a place'.[7] The narrator also compares the decadent Vitkovskii and the poetess Vibin to Pierrot and Columbine in Alexander Blok's *Little Fairground Booth* (*Balaganchik*).[8]

I will now turn to the examples, which I have divided into several groups. The first group presents calques of lingual metaphors and phraseology. Here, a combination of words which has become banal in Russian regains its original vividness in Hebrew. The process of translation achieves the 'defamiliarization' ('ostranenie') which Viktor

[5] Leah Goldberg, *ʾAvedot* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat poʿalim, 2010), p. 16.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 61, cf. also p. 278.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Shklovskii described in 1919. The phenomenon can be widely observed and includes some curious cases. The biblical word 'ḥermesh' designates a scythe, which became—under the influence of the context—in the Russian synodic translation a sickle ('kak poiavitsia serp na zhatve'; Gen. 16:9); it inspired Bialik to create the calque 'the sickle of the moon' ('ḥermesh ha-yareaḥ,' 'Mondsichel' in German).[9] The poet certainly knew that 'ḥermesh' in European iconography is an attribute of Death, it means a tool with a long handle, a scythe, but, it would seem, the euphony of the new expression was stronger than the literal sense of the tanakhic word. Elisheva took up this tradition and created her own image: 'a golden sickle on the silver field—rose the spring moon' ('ḥermesh zahav bi-sde ha-kesef—ʿalah yereaḥ ha-ʾaviv').[10]

Another, more fruitful, innovation by Bialik was the transfer of verbs from the semantic field 'pouring' onto the substance of light, i.e. the calque of lingual metaphors which already existed in Russian. Among Bialik's poetical metaphors are verb forms which are borrowed from the Bible and preserve the memory of their literal use referring to liquids, especially to water. In the psalms we read (I give a literal translation): 'I entered the depth of the waters and the maelstrom drowned me' ('baʾti be-maʾamaḳei mayim ve-shibolet shtafatni' (Ps. 68:3); Bialik writes: 'the light drowned me' ('shtafatni ha-ʾorah'). This poem, *The Morning Sprites* (*Tsafririm*)—the first of the poems written in Odessa in the summer of 1900—explains to the reader the turn to a new context: 'in the liquid light that emanated, flowing on my back' ('be-ʾorah nozelet ha-shofaʿat, shofaʿat ʿal-gabi'). Bialik paints the morning sunlight and nature in a positive tone, unlike religious tradition and educational literature;[11] the satanic devils ('tsafririm') of dawn ('tsfira') thus turned into lovely, playful spirits. Bialik sees their play in everything that sparkles and reflects the light and he calls upon them: 'Make me clean, wash me…'

Bialik develops the theme of magical creatures of light in the poem *Zohar* (translated by Vladimir Jabotinsky into Russian as *Zori* in February 1901); the title is identical with the title of the most important work

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[9] Ḥ.N. Bialik, 'Megilat ha-ʾEsh', in Idem, *Shirim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1990), vol. 2, p. 233.

[10] Elisheva, *Shirim* (Tel Aviv: ʿAdi, 1945), p. 103.

[11] On this particularity of the tradition he wrote in some detail in the poem *Ha-Masmid* (1893–1895); cf. Ḥ.N. Bialik, *Selected Poems*, translated by Maurice Samuel (New York: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972).

of Jewish mysticism. On creatures of light (which Jabotinsky translated as 'maliutki-luchi solnechnogo sveta', i.e. 'little rays of sunlight') the poet says: 'They passed by, swimming in sunlight on their way to the water and to the field.' The poem continues and expands the new use of the 'liquid verbs' and their derivatives in the description of light. Modern Hebrew, whose speakers had, to a great extent, a Russian linguistic background, adapted Bialik's innovations; the repeated use of these innovations made them soon lose their metaphorical tone, as is the case in Russian.

It is no surprise that Elisheva and Leah Goldberg use widely expressions which can be counted as calques from the Russian. The examples in Elisheva's novel *Alleys* are innumerable; the three following examples can be found within a few pages: 'flows of light broke out ('zirmei ha-ʾor partsu ha-ḥutsah'),[12] 'the lamp shed[13] a white light' ('ha-menorah yatsḳah ʾor lavan'),[14] 'a garden, that was drowned in sunrays' ('gan shetuf ḳarnei-shemesh').[15] More examples can be found in Elisheva's poems: 'the light of the rays / drowned everything' ('ʾor ḳarnayim / shataf ha-kol').[16] In the last two examples, Elisheva uses the same verb 'shataf', which in the psalm refers to water and which Bialik had used, for the first time, in reference to rays of light.

Calques of Lingual Metaphors and Phraseology

1. 'The seagull with white wings'—the Russian epithet 'belokrylaia' becomes in Elisheva's poem a poetic image: 'bat-sheḥafim tseḥorat-knafaim.'[17] Here the Russian compound adjective is replaced by two words, but the hyphen stresses their close connection.

2. The Russian phraseological cliché 'fear creeps into the soul'[18] suggested to Elisheva the metaphor 'the fears which [...] crept towards

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[12] Elisheva, *Simtaʾot* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1977), p. 35.

[13] From the word 'yatsaḳ' in Hebrew are created also the technical expressions 'the moulding of metals' and the word 'cast' ('mutsaḳ').

[14] Elisheva, *Simtaʾot*, p. 36.

[15] Elisheva, *Simtaʾot*, p. 69.

[16] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 40.

[17] Elisheva, *Yalḳuṭ Shirim* (Tel Aviv: Yahdav, 1970), p. 92.

[18] Cf. S.N. Bulgakov's article *Intelligentsiia i religiia* (1908): 'strakh zhizni, smeshannyi so strakhom smerti, zapolzaet v dushu'; S.N. Bulgakov, *Dva Grada: Issledovanie o prirode obshchestvennykh idealov* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1997), vol. 1, p. 259.

her from the darkness of the corners' ('ha-balahot ha-ʿatidot…lizeḥol ʿeleiha mi-ḥeshkat ha-pinot').[19]

3. The cliché 'the free wind' ('vol'nyi veter') is calqued by Elisheva many times and in many ways: a) 'ha-ruaḥ ha-ḥofshi,'[20] where she uses the noun 'wind,' like many other Hebrew writers with a Russian background, as a masculine whereas the norm demands the feminine; b) in a construction called in Hebrew 'smiḥut' (construct state): 'the wind of freedom over the waters' ('ruaḥ ḥofesh ʿal pnei ha-mayim').[21]

4. The Russian cliché 'mysli tesniatsia' ('the thoughts crowd') seems to be no more than just over one century old. The second edition of Dal''s dictionary (1880–1882) does not contain the reflexive form of the verb 'tesnit'', but in Vissarion Belinsky's article *A View on the Russian Literature of 1847* (*Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda*) we read: 'This moving novel, after the reading of which sad and important thoughts crowd into the mind' ('povest' trogatel'naia, po prochtenii kotoroi v golovu nevol'no tesniatsia mysli grustnye i vazhnye').[22] Elisheva calqued the expression (possibly changing the grammatical usage of the verb in terms of governing the noun which follows, to the one which is used today: she uses the prepositional 'v golove' instead of the accusative 'v golovu', though the difference is not visible in Hebrew): 'his thoughts which crowded tightly in his head and contradicted each other' ('maḥshevotav ha-nidḥaḳot be-roʾsho ve-ha-sotrot zo ʾet zo').[23] In modern Hebrew, the verb 'nidḥak' gained the meaning 'to suppress' and is used in psychology; therefore the modern reader who is not familiar with the Russian phrase will misunderstand Elisheva's sentence or not understand it at all.[24]

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[19] Elisheva, *Simta'ot*, p. 64.

[20] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 21.

[21] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 19.

[22] V.G. Belinskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v deviati tomakh*, vol. 8 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1940), p. 401.

[23] Elisheva, *Simta'ot*, p. 100.

[24] The incomprehensibility of some calqued images is confirmed by an interesting annotation by the Israeli professor Hillel Barzel, a very learned scholar born in Tsfat in 1925. Barzel comments on the phrase 'simtaʿ ʾarvit,' which in Elisheva's poem means 'evening lane', but in classical Hebrew needs to be read as 'Arabic lane', as follows: 'She has in mind a lane with an Eastern view, where Chinese and Armenians live and which has a particular atmosphere' (*Simta'ot*, p. 41). Having spent the first 30 years of my life close to the Armianskii pereulok in Moscow, I can bear witness that there is nothing oriental in the place. And there were, it seems, no Chinese inhabitants in Moscow in the 1920s.

5. Leah Goldberg uses the idiom 'the little sun-hare' ('solnechnyi zaichik'), i.e. 'a reflection of a sunbeam' and writes: 'the small she-sun-hare who was lying on the threshold was trodden by her broad boot' ('ʾarnevet ha-shemesh ha-ḳtanah, ha-naḥah al saf ha-delet, nidresah be-naʾalah ha-reḥavah').[25] This seems to be an unlucky calque because even with a rich imagination it is difficult to understand the meaning of the Hebrew phrase without knowing the Russian idiom.

6. Leah Goldberg introduced the idiom 'the stamp of poverty' ('pechat' bednosti'): 'the stamp of poverty which sticks forever' ('ḥotemet ha-ʿoni she-loʾ timaḥeḳ le-ʿolam').[26] Here it is not only the idiom which is calqued but also the related verb 'to wipe off what is written' ('stirat' napisannoe').

7. Goldberg uses the epithet 'angular' more than once for the description of thin teenage girls; this suggests that it was used in her family where Leah was called 'uglovataia' ('angular'). In Russian, the epithet contains a hint of the contours of a not yet formed stature (of a figure not rounded or smooth enough with sharp angles sticking out), as well as to a slight clumsiness. Goldberg creates the adjective 'mezuṿat' from the noun 'zaṿit' ('angle') and writes: 'Kron tried to imagine this tall person with the child on his angular hands ('be-zeroʾot mezuṿatot')[27] and her sharp, angular elbows' ('marpeḳeiha ha-ḥadim, ha-mezuṿatim').[28]

8. Goldberg calques the epithet 'restrained' ('sderzhannyi') referring to a human character and transforms it into the hardly understandable 'ha-ʾish ha-ʾotser,' meaning 'a restrained person'.[29] The word 'ʾotser' in Hebrew means 'to stop a movement'. The Russian verb is used in the expressions 'to restrain the horses' ('priderzhat' konei'), 'he did not hold the sledge and it slid' ('ne uderzhal sani, i oni pokatilis'), as well as in the phrase 'restrain your emotions' ('sderzhivai svoi emotsii'). In these expressions, the semantics of 'to stop a movement' is used in a direct and in a metaphorical sense (in the realm of emotions). If we try to understand the meaning of the Hebrew word from the Russian root 'derzhat'', the logic of Goldberg's expression becomes clear. It seems, though, that Hebrew did not adapt her calque 'to stop = to restrain'.

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[25] Leah Goldberg, *ʾAvedot*, p. 30.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

9. Goldberg transforms the expression 'a cloudless morning' ('bezoblachnoe utro') into the expression 'a morning of no clouds' ('boḳer lo ʿavot ʾaḥad')[30] which sounds somewhat awkward and is difficult to understand. This is one example for the difficulties which appear in connection with the lack of Hebrew equivalents for Russian words with the negative prefixes 'ne-' (as 'un-' in English) or 'bez-' (as '-less' in English). The morphological unity therefore has to be abandoned: 'neponiatnyi' becomes in Hebrew 'not possible for understanding' ('loʾ nitan le-havana'), 'bezoblachnoe,' becomes 'without clouds' ('lelo' 'ananim' or 'lelo' 'avot').

10. Goldberg calques the idiom 'bez piati minut' ('without five minutes') which means 'almost' and writes: 'He is almost a hero' ('bli ḥamishah regaʿim gibor').[31]

11. The geo-political terms in Goldberg's novel sound Russian: 'Near and Far East' ('ha-mizraḥ ha-ḳarov ve-ha-raḥoḳ'),[32] whereas in normative Hebrew the Western term 'the Middle East' is used ('ha-mizraḥ ha-tiḥon').

Calques of Paradigmatic Poetic Images

By paradigmatic poetic images I mean not fragments from Russian verse but such images which are a part of the speech of any Russian speaker since his school days, and also fragments of songs and romances (I refer here to the education in a Russian secondary school at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries).

1. Alexander Pushkin: 'Liubliu ia pyshnoe prirody uviadan'e, / v bagrets i zoloto odetye lesa'[33] ('I like the lavish withering of nature, / The gold and scarlet raiment of the woods') from the poem *Autumn* (*Osen'*, 1833). In one of Elisheva's stories we read: 'the groves in the surroundings of the city, in the extravagance of their best autumn dress, embroidered with gold and scarlet' ('ha-ḥurshot she-misaviv la-ʿir, kulan be-meitav malbushan ha-staṿi, meruḳam zahav ve-shani').[34]

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 158.
[33] A.S. Pushkin, *Izbrannye sochineniia v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1968), vol. 1, p. 166.
[34] Elisheva, Ha-Salshelet, *Ha-Do'ar* (New York, 1928), no 20, 313.

2. Alexander Pushkin's 'Moroznoi pyl'iu serebritsia / Ego bobrovyi vorotnik'[35] ('his fur collar looks silver under the frost powder'—*Eugene Onegin* I, 16), and the romance *Kalitka* (to words by A.N. Budishchev 1867–1916): 'And the silver rime of the bird cherries' ('I cheremukh serebrianyi inei…') have found an echo in one of Elisheva's stories: 'The alley of the boulevard, shining silver in a cover of frost' ('sderat ha-bulvar ha-makhṣifah be-ʿaṭifat ha-kfor').[36]

3. Alexander Pushkin's *Winter Road* (*Zimniaia doroga*, 1826): 'The moon makes its way / through the wavy fogs' ('Skvoz' volnistye tumany / Probiraetsia luna').[37] Elisheva writes: 'between the waves of the fogs where the sun has set' ('Bein galei ʿarfilim, / sham ha-shemesh shaḳʿa').[38]

4. In Alexander Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman* (*Mednyi vsadnik*, 1833) we read: 'I love the motionless air and the frost of your cruel winter' ('Liubliu zimy tvoei zhestokoi / Nedvizhnyi vozdukh i moroz').[39] Elisheva writes: 'The sun rises to the zenith, / and burns the motionless air' ('Taʿaleh ha-shemesh la-rom, / yelhaṭ ha-aẓir lelo'-ziz').[40] This example refers to the poem *My Beloved*, where the cruel winter frost turns into a cruel sweaty noon but this summer Hebrew image is integrated into a context overwhelmed by the feeling of love, just as the winter lines addressing St Petersburg in Pushkin's poem.

5. In Mikhail Lermontov's *I Walk out Alone on to the Road* (*Vykhozhu odin ia na dorogu*, 1841) we find the lines: 'I want to forget myself and everything and to fall asleep! / But not with this cold sleep of the grave…' ('Ia b khotel zabyt'sya i zasnut'! / No ne tem kholodnym snom mogily…').[41] Elisheva writes: 'to forget myself by means of other things' ('lehishtakeaḥ be-dvarim aḥerim');[42] she uses the same verb (the reflexive form of 'zabyt'', 'to forget') with the same case (the instrumental).

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[35] Pushkin, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 11.

[36] Elisheva, 'Malka le-ʿivrim', in *Malkat ha-ivrim* (Haifa: Sifron, 1930), p. 8.

[37] Pushkin, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 108.

[38] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 20; Pushkin's poem also contains the following lines: '[the moon] on the melancholy clearings / pouring melancholy light', an additional example of the liquidity of light in Russian.

[39] Pushkin, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 453.

[40] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 30.

[41] M.Iu. Lermontov, *Sobranie sochinenii v cheryrekh tomakh* (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1958), vol. 1, p. 543.

[42] Elisheva, *Simta'ot*, p. 64.

6. Alexander Blok writes: 'And the bottomless blue eyes' ('I ochi sinie bezdonnye,' *Neznakomka*, 1906),[43] where the epithet 'bottomless' has the same root as the word 'abyss' ('bezdna'), the etymology of which is connected with the word 'dno' ('bottom'): an abyss is something with no bottom. The connection between both words has become a part of the poetic memory through Lomonosov's expression from *A Morning Meditation on God's Greatness* (*Utrennee razmyshlenie o Bozhiem velichestve*…, 1743): 'the abyss has opened, full of stars, / the stars have no number, the abyss no bottom' ('Otkrylas' bezdna, zvezd polna; / Zvezdam net scheta, bezdne—dna').[44] The Hebrew word 'teḥom' ('abyss'), though, does not have anything in common with 'bottom'. The Hebrew Bible uses it for the state which precedes the act of Creation: 'and darkness was over the face of the deep' (Gen. 1:2), and the commentaries explain as 'an abyss filled with water'. Elisheva borrows from Blok and uses 'teḥom' as an epithet for eyes: 'Like a sign of sorrow in the abyss of eyes' ('Ke-ʾot ha-tsaʿar bi-teḥom ʿeinayim').[45]

7. Mikhail Lermontov's *Demon* (1941) contains the line: 'And on his high forehead / nothing was mirrored' ('I na chele ego vysokom / ne otrazilos' nichego')[46]. Leah Goldberg writes: 'And even in the depth of the pupils nothing was mirrored' ('ʿulam ʾafilu be-ʿomeḳ ʾishuneiha loʾ hishtaḳef davar').[47] Goldberg preserved the word order of the original phrase which describes the reaction of Lily, the novel's hero, to important news, just as in Lermontov's poem it describes the Demon's reaction to the sight of the work of Creation. The height of the Demon's forehead equates to the depth of Lily's pupils.

8. Alexander Pushkin writes in *Eugene Onegin*: '[Pelageia Nikolaevna still has] the same friend, Monsieur Finemouche, / and the same Pomeranian and the same husband' ('Vse tot zhe drug mos'e Finmush, / I tot zhe shpits i tot zhe muzh').[48] Goldberg uses the same syntactic construction and inserts it into direct speech, as it had been used in a dialogue of Onegin's predecessor, Alexander Chatskii (in Alexander Griboedov's *Woe From Wit*).[49] Her hero, Elḥanan Kron, revisits his

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[43] Aleksandr Blok, *Stikhotvoreniia* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1955), p. 257.
[44] V.M. Lomonosov, *Stikhotvoreniia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1981), p. 35.
[45] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 96.
[46] Lermontov, op. cit. tom 2, p. 506.
[47] Goldberg, *ʾAvedot*, p. 167.
[48] Pushkin, op. cit., tom 2, p. 135.
[49] 'Nu chto vash batiushka? Vse / angliiskogo kloba / Starinnyi, vernyi chlen do groba? […] A tetushka? vse devushkoi, Minervoi?'—A.S. Griboedov, *Gore ot uma* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), p. 20.

friends after a certain period of time and says: 'And you have, as I see, still the same landscape and the same song' ('ʾoto ha-nof ve-ʾoto ha-zemer').[50] Both Griboedov and Pushkin aimed to show the invariability and the stagnation of society life; the very same idea made Goldberg use the construction—even though she is speaking about the German cultural elite which ignored the changes that began to appear in Germany in 1932.

The Creation of New Images within the Frame of a Paradigm of the Poetic Russian Language

In her book *The Language of Images* (*Iazyk obrazov*) N.V. Pavlovich has collected common phrases for metaphorical categories used in Russian prose and poetry. She calls these categories 'paradigms of images'. I have used them and complemented them with the corresponding images which have been created by Elisheva and Goldberg in Hebrew.

1. The identification of time and water.[51]
   Elisheva: 'The evening like a stream of water in a quiet spring' ('Ha-ʿerev ke-zerem ha-mayim / be-maʿayan menuḥot').[52]
2. From the paradigm 'tissue → element':[53]
   Elisheva: 'The blanket of blue fog' ('Keṣut ʿedim keḥalḥalim').[54]
3. From the paradigm 'water → element':
   Elisheva: 'The silver cobweb floats in the air' ('Ḳurei kesef tsafim ba-ʾavir').[55] Here, the metaphor puts the air in relation to the element of water.
   Elisheva: 'Wisps of clouds swim in the heights' ('Be-marom shaṭim gizrei ʿananim').[56] The metaphor 'clouds fly' in Hebrew is still today an extremely poetic expression. This example illustrates the combination of paradigms (2) and (3) because the word 'wisps' implies the representation of clouds as tissue.

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[50] Goldberg, *ʾAvedot*, p. 72.
[51] N.V. Pavlovich, *Iazyk obrazov: Paradigmy obrazov v russkom poeticheskom iazyke* (Moscow: Azbukovnik, 2004), p. 43.
[52] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 34.
[53] For these and the following paradigms cf. Pavlovich, *Iazyk*, p. 413.
[54] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 33.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

4. From the paradigm 'sound → element':
   Elisheva: 'Carry me far away / on the waves of song' ('Tisaʿeni la-merḥaḳ / ʿAl galei ha-shirah').[57]
   Goldberg: 'The melody of the light of streetlamps' ('Manginat ʾorot ha-panaṣim').[58]

Calques on the Boundary between Phraseologism and Poetic Image

1. The metaphors 'the dawn blazes' ('polykhaet zaria'), 'the sunset burns' ('gorit zakat')[59] on the one hand, and, on the other, a line of Alexander Blok's poem *The Butterfly Orchid* (*Nochnaia fialka*, 1906)[60]—'there reddened the stripe of dawn' ('tam krasnela poloska zari')—are combined in a poem by Elisheva: 'a stripe of dawn burns in the twilight' ('Retsuʿat shaḥar boʿeret be-dimdumim').[61] It is remarkable that the poet used the word 'retsuʿa' ('stripe'), which today describes a belt for trousers as well as a 'v-belt' and which is used in the phrase 'the Gaza strip.'

2. The metaphor 'leaden clouds'

The linguistic metaphor 'leaden clouds' and Anna Akhmatova's image 'the grey-eyed king' ('seroglazyi korol''', in the poem of the same name of 1911)[62] merged into the opening metaphor of Elisheva's poem 'Leaden Eyes': 'The object of my love had leaden eyes—a heavy dark cloud above the day of my youth' ("Einei-ʿoferet hayu li-veḥir ʾahavati/ ʿanan kaved ve-ʾafel ʿal yom-neʿurai').[63] Here the combination of the words 'eyes' and 'lead' through a *smiḥut* construction stresses the similarity to Akhmatova's compound adjective 'seroglazyi'. This metaphorical image is further developed as a lyrical theme: 'Sometimes they ask me: why is autumn dear to you / with its leaden sky and the

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[58] Leah Goldberg, *Muḳdam u-meʾuḥar* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Poʿalim, [1961]), p. 9.
[59] Elisheva calques them as well, e.g.: 'in front of me the sunset burns' ('lefanai shekia boʿeret'), *Shirim*, p. 40.
[60] Blok, op. cit, p. 162 cf. Lermontov: 'Zakat gorit ognistoi polosoiu' (*Smert'*, 1830; Lermontov, op. cit., tom 1, p. 179) and Anton Chekhov: 'Blednaia, sovsem uzhe potukhavshaia poloska zari' (*Strakhi*, 1886), in A.P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30-ti tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974–1982), tom 5, p. 187.
[61] Elisheva, *Ḥaruzim* (Tel Aviv: Tomer, 1928), p. 23.
[62] A.A. Akhmatova, *Beg vremeni* (Moscow and Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), p. 37.
[63] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 27.

sorrow of its winds? / And they do not know, do not know, that the voice of the wind is the voice of my beloved. / A clouded welkin, for me, is always his eyes.'

3. The idiom 'time flies' has been unfolded in Lermontov's poem *The Captive Knight* (*Plennyi rytsar'*, 1840). Lermontov represents the hero with knightly accoutrements and time is transformed into a loyal horse that flies under the rider.

> Time is my horse that stays always my own,
> A helmet's mask-visor—the grate on a hole,
> The walls are my armor that's made of the stone,
> My permanent shield is the door's iron fold.
> Time! I desire to speed your hooves' rattle!
> My stony armor is heavy to rise on![64]

> Быстрое время—мой конь неизменный,
> Шлема забрало—решетка бойницы,
> Каменный панцирь—высокие стены,
> Щит мой—чугунные двери темницы.
> Мчись же быстрее, летучее время!
> Душно под новой бронею мне стало![65]

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the medieval Hebrew word *maʿuf* gained the new meaning 'flight', usually referring to the flight of a bird. Bialik, for example, wrote: 'They raise their eyes and follow the flight of the last of the stork caravans' ('Yisʾu ʿeinam ha-nohah ʾaḥrei meʿuf ha-ʾaḥrona / be-shayarot ha-ḥasidot')[66]. At the same time, the phrase 'from the bird's flight' ('mi-meʿuf ha-tsipor') appeared which is equivalent to the Russian phrase 's vysoty ptich'ego poleta' ('from the height of a bird's flight'). The same literal meaning of the word 'flight' can be found in one of Goldberg's early poems: 'From the flight of rings of smoke' ('mi-meʿuf tabʿot ha-ʿashan').[67] In contemporary Hebrew, the metaphorical element of the phrase 'time flies' is lost, but little more than hundred years ago the phrase was perceived as a poetic image. When Elisheva writes 'The flight of the hours is light' ('kal maʿof ha-shaʿot'),[68] she combines the epithet 'light'

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[64] English translation by Evgenii Bonver, http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/lermontov/captive_knight.html.

[65] Lermontov, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 487.

[66] Ḥ.N. Bialiḳ, 'Ha-ḳayits goyeʿa', in Idem, *Shirim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1990), vol. 2, p. 236.

[67] Goldberg, *Muḳdam u-meʾuḥar*, p. 7.

[68] Elisheva, *Shirim*, p. 98.

which has a long tradition in Hebrew[69] with the relatively recent word 'flight' and creates her poetic image. It is possible that, at the time when the poem was written, i.e. in 1928, the novelty of the phrase 'flight of hours' was increased by the relative novelty of airplanes and the romanticism of flight. As far as I can see, this image, logical as it is, has not been included into Hebrew and remained a poetic finding.

4. In Vladimir Dal''s dictionary the adjective 'devstvennyi' ('virgin') is explained as follows: 'complete, clean, untainted'.[70] In Ozhegov's dictionary the word gains an additional metaphorical meaning: 'untouched, uncultivated'; he gives the example 'devstvennaia pochva'.[71] A calque of this phrase was used by Abraham Shlonsky for the translation of the title of Sholokhov's novel *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podniataia Tselina*): 'Ḳarḳaʿ beṭulah'.

In Goldberg's poem, which is dedicated to an autumnal mood and begins with the words 'These days have a smell of foul fruit,' we find the line: 'And the pencil is drawn to the virgin paper / to write a poem on oblivion' ('Ve-ʿel beṭulei-neyar nimshakh ha-ʿiparon / likhtov tefilat shikheḥah . . .').[72] The semantic unity of the poetic image 'beṭulei-neyar' (literaly: 'the virginity of the paper') is created by the combination of two nouns which are connected by a hyphen. The above-quoted Hebrew lines seem to have been created as an amalgam of the widely used Russian expression 'devstvenno chistyi list bumagi' and Pushkin's words on poetic inspiration in the famous poem *Autumn* (*Osen'*): 'And the thoughts in my head are excited in courage, / and light rhymes come to meet them, / and my fingers ask for the pen, the pen for paper, / a minute, and verses flow freely' ('I mysli v golove volnuiutsia v otvage, / I rifmy legkie navstrechu im begut, / I pal'tsy prosiatsia k peru, pero k bumage, / Minuta—i stikhi svobodno potekut').[73]

These examples do not exhaust the possibilities of the texts mentioned above. Nevertheless, they clearly show that an interesting cultural phenomenon appeared in Hebrew prose and poetry of the 1920s and

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[69] Cf. 'Flight shall perish from the swift' (Am. 2:15), 'the race is not to the swift' (Eccl. 9:11) as well as in many other, later texts, e.g. in the Talmud.

[70] Vladimir Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' v chetyrekh tomakh* (Moscow: Gosgiz slovarei, 1956), vol. 1, p. 508.

[71] S. I. Ozhegov, *Slovar' russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: Russkii iazyk, 1956), p. 139.

[72] Goldberg, *Muḳdam u-meʾuḥar*, p. 15.

[73] Pushkin, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 167.

1930s. This happened within a certain circle of authors who wrote, as Leah Goldberg said, 'in Hebrew, and not in the holy tongue'.[74] This opposition was inherited from the times of the Haskala. For Leah Goldberg, the Hebrew language was not the language of divine revelation but one of the human languages and as such subject to the rules of grammar and to historical development. The lack of a substantial knowledge of the classical Hebrew sources stimulated Elisheva's and Goldberg's linguistic creativity. Both poets felt sharply the lack of imagery in the reborn Hebrew language; their cultural consciousness, though, was drawn towards a poetization of their medium, in prose as well as in poetry. As they did not master the treasures of the traditional Hebrew education, they aimed—and it is difficult to decide whether this happened consciously—to enrich their works with images which were adapted from spoken or written Russian. Elisheva was extremely successful whereas many of Leah Goldberg's calques remained incomprehensible or are perceived as awkward. This might be the reason—besides the decline of her adolescent enthusiasm for Russian symbolism and the symbolist poetry of Abraham Shlonsky—why, in the 1940s, Leah Goldberg began to create her own poetic and thoroughly individual language of poetic images; in this period, the Russian subtext becomes increasingly rare.

On the basis of the examples from Elisheva's and Goldberg's works, we can conclude that the Hebrew of their poetry and prose became something like a textual diaspora for Russian poetic images.[75] This state of diaspora caused Russian idioms and paradigmatic poetic lines to be dressed in a Hebrew gown. In many cases not only did they survive in an antiquated Hebrew style but also received a new life. The inhabitants of Erets Israel began to use them in written and oral speech, especially those who were familiar with Russian and therefore sensitive to the coincidence of images. Though it is difficult today to point out the first appearance of many Hebrew calques and images

[74] Goldberg, *ʾAvedot*, p. 130.

[75] A similar phenomenon occurred during the Middle Ages when the Hebrew poets of the so-called Mauritanian school adapted canonical metaphors from Arabic verse, and, translating them into Hebrew, introduced them into their poems which were not meant for prayer. Cf. Ieguda Galevi [Yehuda Halevi], *Pesni Siona*, translated by Sh. Krol, afterword by Zoya Kopelman (Moscow: Ladomir, 2011).

there can be no doubt about the relevance of the phenomenon for the development of modern Hebrew.

[translated by Jörg Schulte]

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PART TWO

INTERPRETATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT OF JEWISH CULTURE

RUSSIAN-JEWISH IDEAS IN GERMAN DRESS: ELIAS BICKERMAN ON THE HELLENIZING REFORMERS OF JEWISH ANTIQUITY*

Albert I. Baumgarten

Elias J. Bickerman (1897–1981), one of the twentieth century's outstanding historians of Judaism in antiquity, was born in Kishinev, and educated in St Petersburg. He and his family escaped Russia for Berlin in 1922, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution. He completed his education in Germany and was appointed Privat-Dozent at the Institut für Altertumskunde[1] at the University of Berlin in 1930, passing Habilitation on his second attempt.[2] This initial appointment held the promise of a professorship in due time, if all went well, but then the Nazis came to power, and Bickerman left for Paris by the end of 1933. He fled France for the USA in 1942,[3] and was appointed

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* This article is based in part on my biography of Bickerman, now published as Albert I. Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman as a Historian of the Jews: A Twentieth Century Tale* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). To the fullest extent possible and to avoid repetitions, reference to archival materials in this article will be restricted to the minimum necessary to sustain the argument and will follow the same format as *ibid.*, pp. 325–332. I will also make frequent reference to points argued more thoroughly in the full fledged biography. In preparing the final version of this paper I have had the benefit of extremely helpful comments from Profs. Daniel Schwartz and Ezra Mendelsohn of the Hebrew University. However, responsibility for the contents, arguments, and conclusions, as always, remains mine. One further point needs to be stated explicitly at the outset. Indicating a historian's sources of inspiration neither detracts from nor adds to the plausibility of the interpretation proposed by that historian. These remain two entirely separate issues.

[1] It was on their letterhead that Bickerman wrote to Rostovtzeff, in 1933, in the letter published and translated by Hanna Geremek, 'Deux lettres adressées à M. Rostovtseff en 1933', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 18.2 (1992), 20–25. For the significance of this institute and of the comprehensive approach to the ancient past, uniting philology, history, and archaeology, it was intended to promote, see Robert M. Fowler, 'Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf', in *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, ed. by Ward W. Briggs and William M. Calder III (New York & London: Garland Press, 1990), p. 501.

[2] For a full account of Bickerman's attempts at Habilitation see Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 86–117.

[3] The story of Bickerman's escape from France, from the fall of Paris in 1940 to the end of June 1942, when he and his wife left Marseille for Casablanca, en route to Baltimore, MD, where they arrived on July 29, 1942, is so engaging that if it were

Professor of Ancient History at Columbia University in 1952, retiring from Columbia in 1967. Throughout the American phase of his career, he had a close association with the Jewish Theological Seminary and many friends among its faculty.[4] He died in Tel Aviv, on August 31, 1981, while spending his summer vacation in Israel, just after having delivered a paper at the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies on August 19, 1981. He was buried in Jerusalem.[5]

In his scholarship, original insights were combined with profound learning that enabled him to transform the understanding of significant aspects of ancient Jewish history. He was the paradigmatic champion of an imaginative 'horizontal' reading (across the contemporary Mediterranean world, rather than 'vertical', connecting to the Jewish past or future) of ancient Jewish sources. He insisted that Second Temple Jewish history was best understood when seen from the universal (cosmopolitan) perspective of a Hellenist,[6] a stance for which he was sometimes criticized harshly.[7] Nevertheless, as a Hellenist, Bickerman

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not true it would be the stuff of adventure fiction. See further Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 130–142.

[4] See Morton Smith, 'Elias J. Bickerman', in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Part Three* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. xi–xiii.

[5] For a fuller account of Bickerman's basic biography see Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 18–25.

[6] Elias Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. ix.

[7] Bezalel Bar Kochva, 'E. Bickermann's Research of the Second Temple Period', *Cathedra*, 23 (1982), 3, 7, and 8 [Hebrew], opens his article by calling Bickerman a cosmopolitan, and repeats that characterization towards the end. These comments all lead to Bar Kochva's conclusion (*ibid.*, 9), that Bickerman's contributions would have been greater had he settled in Israel, and lived and worked in the context of the reborn Jewish state. See also the harsh review of *Der Gott der Makkabäer* by Solomon Zeitlin, 'The Maccabean Struggle', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 31 (1940/41), 199–204. Zeitlin concluded that: 'Bickerman's book is a typical work of those scholars who believe that with the knowledge of Greek and Latin alone they can write a history of the Jewish people of the Second Commonwealth, either ignoring or being ignorant of the Jewish sources' (204). These comments need to be read in the context of Bickerman's critique of Zeitlin's studies of ancient Jewish History, in which Bickerman accused Zeitlin of ignorance of the history of the larger ancient world. See Elias Bickerman, 'Review, Zeitlin (Solomon), "The History of the Second Jewish Commonwealth"', *Revue des Études Juives*, 98 (1934), 138–139. Zeitlin then replied in Solomon Zeitlin, 'Correspondance, A Note on the Review of my Book, "A History of the Second Jewish Commonwealth"', *Revue des Études Juives*, 99 (1935), 173–174. As the author of the original review, Bickerman had the last word on that occasion, Elias Bickerman, 'Correspondance, Reply to Solomon Zeitlin', *Revue des Études Juives*, 99 (1935), 174–175. He concluded his rejoinder with the remark that he did not know Zeitlin personally and had nothing against him, as long as he did not study ancient chronology or Greco-Roman antiquities. Zeitlin's review of Bickerman's *Gott der Makkabäer*, several years later, cited above, was Zeitlin's parting shot.

built on thorough mastery of documents produced in antiquity, with a special emphasis on the contributions of inscriptions and papyri, the new sources that entered scholarly discourse in his day. In explaining the ancient Jewish past, Bickerman also took advantage of wide-ranging knowledge of historical experience over the ages. As a result of this combination of sources of insight, Bickerman reached many conclusions that have since become standard. His work was acknowledged virtually immediately as constituting numerous turning points in the inquiry into the Jewish past of the Greco-Roman era.[8] In the opinion of Arnaldo Momigliano (1908–1987), as reported by both Louis Finkelstein (1895–1991) and Hayim Tadmor (1923–2005), Bickerman was the foremost historian of antiquity—both Jewish and general—of his generation.[9]

I

The material I will discuss in this article may be different from that of other presentations in this collection. I will not focus on an actual translation of some Russian source into another language, or vice versa. My subject is Bickerman's writing about the Maccabees, in German, in *Die Makkabäer* in 1935,[10] and *Der Gott der Makkabäer*, 1937.[11] Of these two books, special stress will be on *Die Makkabäer.* This was a popular book, with no footnotes and no scholarly apparatus. Based on my experience

[8] In emphasizing the combination of learning, originality, and imagination in Bickerman's scholarly work that enabled him to write studies that transformed the way the Jewish past was understood, I am repeating themes in evaluations of Bickerman's scholarship that can be found as early as the letters of recommendation solicited by the New School prior to appointing him with Rockefeller Foundation support in 1940. These same qualities were stressed by friends and colleagues in memorial notices written after his death. For one example among many see Smith, 'Elias J. Bickerman', p. xiii.

[9] Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, p. 3.

[10] This work appeared in English as Elias Bickerman, *The Maccabees*, translated by Moses Hadas (New York: Schocken, 1947). It was later included as part two of Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York: Schocken, 1962). I will cite pages in both these editions in the notes that follow.

[11] This work appeared in English as Elias Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees, Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt*, translated by Horst Moehring (Leiden: Brill, 1979). It was later included in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, A New English Edition including The God of the Maccabees*, introduced by Martin Hengel, ed. by Amram Tropper, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2007). I will cite pages in both these editions in the notes that follow.

studying this work, as a popular book addressed to a general audience, it is an especially good place to find the ideological commitments of the author. When writing for a general audience, an author must engage them meaningfully by speaking more explicitly to the issues of the day. Without the elaborate camouflage of a scholarly apparatus—footnotes, references to the works of other scholars, and bibliography, and without the need to hedge conclusions in deference to other views—the ideological points will also be more clearly stated.

The thesis of this article is that although Elias Bickerman was writing in German and responding in part to the circumstances of the Jews in the twentieth century—both in Bolshevik Russia and Hitler's Germany—the conceptual framework behind his analysis, the template on which he was constructing his understanding of what happened in the second century BCE, was both Russian and Jewish. This is a case of Russian and Jewish ideas, experience, and perspective applied to antiquity, and then written in German for an audience of European Jews. This was Bickerman's way of engaging European culture as a member of the Russian Jewish diaspora, and of contributing to the creation of a usable Russian-Jewish past.

II

To make this case, two aspects of Bickerman's personality and experience need to be presented by way of introduction. First, from the time he left St Petersburg through all the years of different exiles—Berlin, Paris, and New York—Bickerman's culture was and remained Russian. He never fully mastered any of the languages of these countries, and always needed help writing them properly.[12] He never appreciated the contribution life in these cultural capitals made to his development as a scholar (one possible exception were the years in Berlin, as discussed below), while he considered the years in the USA—which had saved him from the murderous anti-Semitism of Europe—as a catastrophe. New York was 'this horrible place', which he escaped for six months every year in order to wander around Europe and the Middle East.[13] He was one of those refugee scholars who withdrew

[12] See Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 148–150.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 159–163.

from the American scene, 'with disdain and contempt into islands of their own'.[14]

A key figure in establishing and maintaining Bickerman's Russian identity over the years was his St Petersburg teacher and fellow émigré, Michael Rostovtzeff (1870–1952).[15] Rostovtzeff was in Berlin in July 1929 and probably intervened with Bickerman's Berlin mentors to insure that Bickerman was given a second chance at Habilitation after he failed on his first attempt.[16] Rostovtzeff definitely played a key role in securing Rockefeller funding for Bickerman's position in Paris when he lost his Berlin appointment due to Nazi race laws in September 1933. Finally, Rostovtzeff was active and worked endlessly to ensure Bickerman's appointment at the New School (again, with Rockefeller funding) and to obtain a visa for the Bickerman family (Elias and Anita Suzanne Bickerman married in July 1936; they never had any children) to reach the USA in July 1942.[17] It was no accident that Bickerman was one of the principal speakers at the all-Russian memorial meeting held in New York in December 1952 to commemorate Rostovtzeff's passing.[18]

As a Professor at Yale, Rostovtzeff was one of the stars in the world of the Russian diaspora. His commitment to his Russian heritage was explicit in his association over many years with émigré organizations, especially his role as Honorary President of the Friends of the St Sergius Russian Orthodox Theological Academy in Paris, the principal

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[14] Louis Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and their Experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 12. Coser's conclusions are based, in part, on the work of Franz L. Neumann, *The Cultural Migration* (New York: Barnes, 1961). See also Anton de Baets, 'Exile and Acculturation: Refugee Historians Since the Second World War', *The International History Review*, 28:2 (2006), 316–349. Nevertheless, as I analyzed Bickerman's life and work, the American years, his connection with the Jewish Theological Seminary in particular, added much to Bickerman's intellectual horizons and scholarly output. See Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 298–300.

[15] On Rostovtzeff, in addition to the works cited in the notes that follow, see Marinus A. Wes, *Michael Rostovtzeff, Historian in Exile: Russian Roots in an American Context* (*Historia*, Einzelschriften: Heft 65) (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990); Brent Shaw, 'Under Russian Eyes', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 82 (1992), 216–228.

[16] See above, n. 2.

[17] Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 122–141.

[18] Rostovtzeff Memorial Invitation, The Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian & East European Culture, located in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University, New York, NY, Vernadsky Collection, Box 7, Rostovtsev, Mikhail Ivanovitch, v.p. 1940–43. I found no trace of Bickerman's remarks on that occasion in the latter's papers in the Bickerman Archive, ARC 19, at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, NY.

sponsor of the memorial meeting noted above. In academic terms, Rostovtzeff long displayed interest in the fringes of the ancient Mediterranean world, the Black Sea, Scythians, Egypt, and Dura Europus. He was certain that the periphery had much to teach about the center. He stressed the importance of the connection with German scholarship, as the most advanced and practiced at the highest level anywhere in the world at his time. As a token of mutual esteem, he was elected a corresponding member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1914, even before his major works appeared.[19] He must have been very proud of the reception in his honor at the Prussian Academy, hosted by Eduard Norden (1868–1941), when Rostovtzeff visited Berlin in 1929, at which not only his distinguished colleagues in Classics and Ancient History, such as Eduard Meyer (1855–1930), Ulrich Wilcken (1862–1944), and Werner Jaeger (1888–1961) were present, but also two of the greatest scientists of the time, Albert Einstein (1879–1955) and Max Planck (1858–1947).[20] In his work, Rostovtzeff asked questions about major historical changes, with the answers he proposed inspired at least in part, for better or worse, by the changes through which he himself lived.[21] In sum, after his exile from Russia to Great Britain and eventually to the USA and a prestigious appointment at Yale, Rostovtzeff was a cultural intermediary. Despite his critique of some of Rostovtzeff's publications (see the previous note), Momigliano's overall evaluation of Rostovtzeff's life and work was that: 'the crisis of the exile gave new impetus to his mind. It is safe to assume that exile made Rostovtzeff the great man he was.'[22]

Much the same was true of the academic endeavors of Elias Bickerman. His interest in the fringes centered on Jews and Christians in

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[19] See Arnaldo Marcone, 'Pietroburgo-Roma-Berlino: L'incontro di M.I. Rostovtzeff con l'altertumswissenschaft tedesca', *Historia*, 41 (1992), 1–13; also Gerald Kreucher, 'Neue Briefe über das Verhältnis Michael Rostovtzeffs und der deutschen Wissenschaft', *Historia*, 52 (2003), 95–121.

[20] Bernhard Kytzler, Kurt Rudolph, and Jorg Rüpke (eds), *Eduard Norden, ein deutscher gelehrter jüdischer Herkunft* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994), Plate 6.

[21] See, for example, Arnaldo D. Momigliano, 'M. I. Rostovtzeff', in *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, ed. by Glen W. Bowersock and Tim J. Cornell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 40–41, whose evaluation of Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* was devastating. The book was not well thought out, written in haste, and emotionally disturbed by Rostovtzeff's experience of the Russian Revolution, to mention but a few of the criticisms. See also Glen W. Bowersock, 'Rostovtzeff's Birth of the Roman Empire, St Petersburg (Petrograd) 1918', *Mediterraneo Antico*, 6 (2003), 613–624.

[22] Momigliano, 'M.I. Rostovtzeff', 33.

the ancient world. Our understanding of ancient Jews and Christians was incomplete, according to Bickerman, if they were not set in their ancient Mediterranean context; conversely, the picture of the ancient world was missing an important component if Jews and Christians were not included. For Bickerman, as a self-declared 'Hellenist', Jerusalem should be placed in Athens, that is viewed from the perspective of the larger Greco-Roman world.[23] Again, like Rostovtzeff, Bickerman recognized the importance of German scholarship and of the special opportunity he was given to study in Berlin during the glory years of the German academy, as noted in his speech planned on reception of the Lucas Prize in Tübingen, in 1977, never delivered, but sent to Martin Hengel (1920–2009), who saved it among his papers.[24] Or, as he wrote to Hengel:

> *thinking of my teachers, Wilcken and Norden*, I see my limitations. As a matter of fact, my only advantage is longevity. By some chance, I survived while better ones disappeared: for instance Hans Lewy. On the other hand, I still had the chance to learn from Rostovtzeff *and at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin before 1933* (emphases mine).[25]

Like Rostovtzeff, Bickerman intended to ask the 'big questions' about historical change; in his case, in particular, about the rise of Hellenistic Judaism, as he understood it. Bickerman's comprehensive answers to these questions were ultimately published posthumously in his *The Jews in the Greek Age*. He insisted that his contributions were objective history. Unlike others, he did not intend to make a point about the modern world through the analysis of the past. Nevertheless, like his teacher Rostovtzeff, Bickerman's understanding of the ancient Jews—in particular his portrait of their encounter with the larger world culture of their time, Hellenism—was fashioned as a result of his own personal engagement with European civilization. As I have argued at length, his goal was to create a usable Jewish past, to determine which ancient Jews had correctly figured out how to relate to Hellenism and which had 'gotten it wrong'.[26]

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[23] See above, and also Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, p. 238.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 314–316.
[25] Bickerman to Hengel, November 14, 1976, Hengel Files.
[26] Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 240–293.

Yet, through all this, again like Rostovtzeff, Bickerman remained a Russian. He loved the poetry of Anna Akhmatova,[27] and would have gladly applied to himself her lines:

> No, it was not under a strange sky,
> Not strange wings that gave me shelter—
> I was in the midst of my people
> There, where in their misfortune, my people were.[28]

He maintained an interest in Pushkin throughout his life, writing to his friend and colleague from Leningrad, Mohammed Dandamayev,

> I am worried that you suffer from insomnia. There may be some psychological factor that worries you. Try to isolate and to analyze it. It is an old receipt (*sic*) not to worry about the past because it is useless nor about the future because it may not arrive. But to read Pushkin every occasion is appropriate.[29]

He insisted on remaining a Russian in Berlin, even when offered the opportunity of German citizenship (a real asset for someone stateless, who only traveled with the protection of a virtually worthless Nansen passport), and even when his refusal might have earned him the ire of Eduard Meyer, who had previously promoted his career. As Bickerman recounted in his Lucas Prize speech (see above, n. 24),

> Ich kannte nicht Ed Meyer, ich habe nicht seine Vorlesungen gehoert. Wie Sie wissen, war Ed Meyer ein unnachgiebiger Deutsch-Nationale, Feind der Weimar Republik, der eine Revanche fuer den verlorenen Ersten Weltkrieg ersehnte. Er war gewiss kein Judenfreund. Lesen Sie nur sein Buch ueber die Entstehung des Christentums. Trotzdem, nachdem er meine Inaugural-Dissertation gelesen hatte, verschaffte er mir, ohne mein Wissen, ein Stipendium und, durch Vermittlung von Wilhelm Schubart, legte mir nahe die deutsche Staatsangehoerigkeit zu erwerben, und dafuer seine Hilfe versprach. Meine Antwort an Schubart war: 'Fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung' (Mt. 6:13). Ich war and blieb ein Russe.

Bickerman's second key character trait was provocative daring. He loved to astound and confound. From among many examples, I note three. First, as Glen Bowersock wrote to me concerning Bickerman,

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[28] Anna Akhmatova, *Poem without a Hero and Selected Poems*, translated by Lenore Mayhew and William McNaughton (Oberlin: Oberlin College Press, 1989), p. 77.

[29] Bickerman to Dandamayev, 8 X 78. Dandamayev Files.

> I first met him at the Fondation Hardt in Geneva for the Entretien on the Culte des Souverains in 1972,[30] when he electrified the company in his opening talk by claiming that the subject we had gathered to discuss did not really exist. (The published paper does not reflect this.)[31]

Second, at the New School and the École Libre des Hautes Études, the French 'University in Exile', on arriving in New York in 1942, Bickerman proposed a course on contemporary history that included the lecture 'The illusion of French strength and its origins; France defeated in the first World War'. This offended some. Was this the way a faculty member at the École Libre des Hautes Études—where virtually everyone was a veteran and survivor of the killing fields of WWI—was expected to speak of the French past? Bickerman was forced to elaborate and defend his choice of topic. As he wrote to Jacques Maritain, head of the École Libre, because of its victory in WWI France seemed invincible at the start of WWII. Yet, French losses in WWI had been so high that France was actually very weak. France was victorious on the battlefields of WWI, but had been so drained by that victory that one could say that France was 'defeated' in WWI. This defeat, Bickerman argued, helped explain the results in 1940 (called a 'strange defeat' by Marc Bloch). Bickerman claimed that there was nothing offensive to France or the French in these views. They were widely held in France, particularly among ardent nationalists. Nevertheless, in order not to be incorrectly understood, Bickerman modified the provocative lecture title.[32]

One final indication of this character trait is the panel proposed by Bickerman to the annual conference of the American Historical Association in 1969. As recalled by William M. Calder III, then Bickerman's colleague at Columbia, the topic of the panel was 'The Beneficial Effects of Colonialism'. Not surprisingly, the panel was refused.[33]

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[30] An annual gathering of a select group of distinguished scholars to discuss a specific topic concerning Greco-Roman antiquity. For a picture of the group assembled in 1972 see Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, p. 319, Plate 6.

[31] Glen Bowersock, letter of August 30, 2004. The printed version of this talk appeared as Elias Bickerman, 'Consecratio', in *Le Culte des souverains dans l'empire romain…Entretiens préparés et présidés par Willem den Boer. Vandœuvres-Genève, 28 août–2 septembre 1972*, ed. by Willem den Boer (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1973), pp. 3–25.

[32] Bickerman to Maritain, October 5, 1942, Maritain Archive, Notre Dame University. In any case, so far as I was able to determine, there was insufficient interest in the course and it was cancelled, so the lecture was never delivered.

[33] William M. Calder III, 'Review of Karl Christ, *Geschichte und Existenz* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1991)', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 03.03.06.

III

The discussion below will consider Bickerman's controversial analysis of the actions of the Hellenizing reformers and their role in the persecutions of Antiochus IV in the 160s BCE as an excellent example of provocative daring combined with Russian identity, presented in translation, in German. This thesis was argued first in Bickerman's semi-popular work, *Die Makkabäer* (1935), and then later in more elaborate scholarly form in his *Der Gott der Makkabäer* (1937). Most scholars agreed that these hellenizers collaborated with the persecutions of Antiochus IV as part of their zealous desire to reform Jewish society. Bickerman went further. He contended that the extreme hellenizers were the real initiators of the king's decrees. Thus, in Bickerman's view, Antiochus' attacks on the traditional Jewish religion were enacted at the behest of 'reform' Jews. Antiochus IV was no longer the evil king; the real villains of the piece were the ancient extreme Hellenizing Jews. For Bickerman, this made better sense than any other alternative, since ancient empires rarely if ever persecuted the religion of their subjects. On the other hand, the ancient Jewish hellenizers, who ruled Jerusalem, would have had good reason to take advantage of their status in the eyes of the Seleucid administration to help impose this change on their fellow 'backward' Jews.[34]

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[34] Perhaps the most perceptive and fundamental critique of Bickerman's thesis was one of the earliest: Isaac Heinemann, 'Wer veranlasste den Glaubenszwang der Makkabäerzeit?', *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 82 (1938), 145–172. In writing and conversation, Bickerman always insisted that this review was required reading for anyone interested in his thesis. The alternative explanation of these events offered by Avigdor Tcherikover (1894–1958), Bickerman's fellow Russian émigré student in Berlin, has shaped the outlook of a generation of historians trained in Israel. See Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, translated by S. Applebaum (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959), pp. 152–174.

For more recent critiques of Bickerman's thesis on the role of the extreme Hellenizers see Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 106–112; Klaus Bringmann, 'Die Verfolgung der jüdischen Religion durch Antiochus IV. Ein Konflikt zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus?', *Antike und Abendland*, 26 (1980), 176–190; Erich Gruen, 'Hellenism and Persecution: Antiochus IV and the Jews', in *Hellenistic History and Culture*, ed. by Peter Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 238–264; Martha Himmelfarb, 'Elias Bickerman and Judaism and Hellenism', in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, ed. by David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 199–211; Nigel Kennell, 'New Light on 2 Maccabees 4:7–15', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 56 (2005), 10–24 Klaus Bringmann, 'Elias Bickermann und der "Gott der Makkabäer"', *Trumah*, 17 (2007), 1–18. For an indication of the despair some scholars have felt at the inability to adequately explain the events in Jerusalem in the 160s BCE see Steven Weitzman, 'Plotting Antiochus's Persecution', *Journal of*

As Bickerman himself noted explicitly, in stating this thesis he was thinking of the reform Jews of Germany in the nineteenth century, such as Gabriel Riesser (1806–1863), Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), and Ignaz Einhorn.[35] As I have argued elsewhere,[36] Bickerman was also probably inspired by his hatred of Jewish communists, whom his father, Joseph Bikerman (1867–1942),[37] saw as the most detestable enemies of the Jewish people as a whole.[38] Elias Bickerman would have been glad to tar the Jewish communists of his day with the brush of the ancient hellenizers, who were doomed to be rejected in any case, since they lost to the Maccabees.

In addition, for a Russian Jew, I suggest, the circumstances Bickerman proposed for explaining the events of the 160s BCE in Jerusalem would remind one of well-known incidents in the mid-nineteenth century, during the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855). Enlightened Jews,

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Biblical Literature, 123 (2004), 219–234. See now Dov Gera, 'Heliodoros, Olympiodoros, and the Temples of Koilê Syria and Phoinikê', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (ZPE)*, 169 (2009), 125–155. The full implications of the Heliodorus inscription (top and bottom now published) for Bickerman's thesis concerning events during the reign of Antiochus IV remain uncertain and need to be fully worked out. My colleague, Prof. Daniel Schwartz, is currently investigating the contemporary motivations of Isaac Heineman's critique of Bickerman's *Gott der Makkabäer* in the world of Jewish Germany of the late 1930s. However, neither Bickerman's contemporary motivations, for which I am arguing, nor Heinemann's proposed by Schwartz, invalidate Bickerman's thesis or Heinemann's critique. As noted above, p. 73, n. *, these remain independent judgements to be made on the merits of the respective arguments.

[35] *God of the Maccabees*, p. 87 = *Studies…A New English Edition*, ii, p. 1121.

[36] Albert Baumgarten, 'Elias Bickerman on the Hellenizing Reformers: A Case Study of an Unconvincing Case', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 97 (2007), 149–179; Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 240–269.

[37] Like many Russians who came to the west, Elias Bickerman and his family spelled their last name at least three different ways over the course of their lives. Elias was Bickermann during his German years, Bikerman in Paris, and Bickerman in the USA. His father and brother, Joseph and Jacob, also experimented with various spellings, but eventually settled on Bikerman.

[38] See Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 64–65. Prior to the revolution, Joseph Bikerman took an independent stand between the Constitutional Democrats and the more leftist Socialist Revolutionaries; he belonged fully to neither and was critical of both. As he said, 'the wisdom of a child of two consisted in recognizing right and left': Joseph Bikerman, *Two Bikermans: Autobiographies by Joseph and Jacob J. Bikerman* (New York: Vantage, 1975), p. 36. After the revolution, in exile in Berlin, Joseph Bikerman's supreme task was to fight the Bolsheviks, and to deal with the supposed responsibility of the Jews for communism—what I learned from Zvi Gitelman to call the 'kommikike conspiracy'—see Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 56–62, and also now Jonathan Frankel, 'The "Non-Jewish Jews" Revisited: Solzhenitsyn and the Issue of National Guilt', in *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen, Jonathan Frankel & Stefani Hoffman (Oxford: Littman Press, 2010), pp. 166–187.

too weak to be effective on their own in the Jewish community, pressed for a 'royal alliance' with the government that would help eliminate Jewish obscurantism.[39] These hopes seemed to be realized when the imperial government planned a thorough reform of Jewish education in 1840, led by Uvarov, the Minister of Education. Uvarov believed in the 'splendid imaginativeness' of the Jews, who had nevertheless remained backwards because they were misled by the 'mystical gibberish of their rabbis' and therefore 'lacked judicious guidance'.[40] Uvarov was determined to provide that guidance, with the help of Jewish *maskilim*.

The proposed imperial changes to the Jewish system of education would minimize the power, stature, and influence of hasidic rabbis, whom enlightened Jews saw as bearing the principal responsibility for the miserable state of Russian Jewry, since they could neither represent the Russian Jewish community properly before the government nor run communal affairs according to the principles of truth and understanding.[41] As a longer-term result, enlightened Jews hoped that hasidic rabbis and their courts—a stubborn illness from which enlightened Jews thought that the Jews needed to recover[42]—would also decline. In practical terms, enlightened Jews hoped that these goals would be achieved through the establishment of a new rabbinical seminary, which would train a new type of rabbi; but until native Russian rabbis of this sort would be ready to serve, the gap would be filled by German rabbis, who also had secular doctorates.[43]

At the same time, some enlightened Jews, particularly the younger and more extreme ones, charted a radical modification of the life of the Russian Jewish community, with authority now in the hands of a new body, modeled on the French consistory, composed of enlightened rabbis and laymen. This new institution would replace the traditional *kahal*, and have exclusive authority to direct religious life, culture, and education. Instead of the traditional *heder* there would be modern schools, in which foreign languages and science would be taught. The consistory would repress opponents of change, especially

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[39] Imanuel Etkes, 'Compulsory Enlightenment as a Crossroads in the History of the Haskalah Movement in Russia', *Zion*, 43 (1978), 273 [Hebrew].

[40] Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews: The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia 1825–1855* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983), p. 63.

[41] Etkes, 'Compulsory Enlightenment', 275.

[42] Steven Zipperstein, *Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794–1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 104–105.

[43] Etkes, 'Compulsory Enlightenment', 276.

the Hasidim, by means of governmental decrees and force them to change their way of life. These reforms would also solve the economic hardship of enlightened Jews, as they would open opportunities for employment in the new government-sponsored institutions. The government's assistance would enable a small minority to impose its will on the vast majority. This inspired great confidence and optimism, with enlightened Jews now daring to say, hope, and plan as they had never done before.[44]

In 1841, the Imperial government sent the German rabbi, Max Lilienthal, to help implement the new policy, and Lilienthal's efforts have been the subject of much scholarly discussion and debate as to how effective these moves were and why Lilienthal elected to leave Russia.[45] However one decides these questions, the Russian Jewish reformers did not give up. Under government auspices, a new compulsory textbook was published in 1850. It was an edited and censored version of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, with parallel pages in Hebrew and German created by the leading 'court-Jew', Leon Mandelstamm. The goals of this new version of Maimonides can be teased out by a careful comparison with the original, of the Hebrew to the German. Mandelstamm aimed to create a moderate, rationalist, and statist recasting of Judaism, which would turn the Jews into loyal citizens of the empire and help lead them out of obscurity into the larger world. Like the *maskilim* in Russia at the time of enforced educational reform, Mandelstamm hoped to take advantage of the government's backing to achieve those ends. Most of Russia's Jews, however, were uninterested, and it may well be that those *melamdim* who were forced to buy the new book never used it. In this case, however, the actions of the *maskilim* did not arouse opposition so much as they were met with indifference.[46]

The efforts of the *maskilim* penetrated all aspects of Jewish life in Russia, not only education. Throughout the reign of Nicholas I and

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[44] *Ibid.*, 276–278. It is important to note that what was new here was governmental support for modernized schools. Such schools existed before the reforms of the 1840s, but under private auspices, Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, p. 58.

[45] Etkes, 'Compulsory Enlightenment', 280–299; Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, pp. 69–96. See also Marcus Silver, 'R. Max Lilienthal: From 'Compulsory Education' to the Separation of Religion and State', *Zion*, 71 (2006), 343–372 [Hebrew].

[46] On this episode see Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, pp. 102–103. See in greater detail, Michael Stanislawski, 'The Tsarist Mishneh Torah: A Study in the Cultural Politics of the Russian Haskalah', *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*, 50 (1983), 165–183. Stanislawski, *ibid.*, 183, suggests that even if the *melamdim* received the book gratis they probably did not bother to cut its pages open.

his successors, *maskilim* were petitioning the government to outlaw Jewish dress. As set out in detail in a petition of the *maskilim* of Vilna from July 1843, government support was essential for the success of the endeavor, since benighted and hypocritical Jews would do everything in their power to foil this beneficial measure that would eliminate differences between people and spur greater tolerance. Fear of these dark forces was so great that the authors of the petition requested that their names be kept secret, lest they be attacked by obscurantist Jews. In the name of humanity and enlightenment, the authors of the petition requested the assistance of the government to protect them against ignorance and to allow the Jews to be reborn into a new life, dressed like all other human beings.[47] In the end, traditional Jewish dress was outlawed in May 1850. However this decree was never enforced in full, and the issue continued to be discussed until later in the nineteenth century.[48]

In a similar vein, on the advice of the best-educated Jews, in 1844 the government abolished the communal structure that governed organized Jewish life, the *kahal*. This had significant consequences for the social structure and authority relationships in the Jewish community:[49] Jewish life was further destabilized and existing patterns of authority disrupted. It became easier for younger and more radical members to pick and choose which commandments they would dis/obey. Some were openly anti-nomian, eating non-kosher food, smoking on Shabbat, and shaving their beards. Some students in the Vilna Rabbinical seminary spent Tisha b'Av in a public house, drinking and eating. There were now extreme reformers.[50]

In the final analysis, however, as was recognized most clearly by Russian *maskilim*, who understood the local situation best, reforms from above and outside, imposed by governmental decree, even if they enjoyed the support of some Russian *maskilim*, could achieve only limited success.[51] Change was best achieved through the efforts of Russian

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[47] See Israel Kloizner, 'The Decree on Jewish Dress 1844–1850', *Gilad*, 6 (1982), 11–26 [Hebrew]. As Kloizner points out, *ibid.*, 11–12, the issue of Jewish dress went back to the end of the 18th century, even before the reign of Nicholas I. Note especially the attempt to force Jewish women not to shave their hair and not to wear wigs, *ibid.*, 18–19. For the text of the 1843 Vilna petition see *ibid.*, 22–24.

[48] Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, p. 183.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 123–127, 158.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 113–114

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 94. See also below. At n. 62.

Jews themselves, working to reform life in accordance with their own vision of what needed transformation.[52]

Furthermore, for Bickerman, the significance of what happened at the time of Nicholas I was framed by Russian liberals, such as Alexander Herzen (1812–1870), from the nineteenth century onwards, who viewed Nicholas I and Uvarov with total contempt.[53] If that were not enough, in the eyes of almost all Jews of the Tsarist era, Nicholas was tainted by conscription policies that doomed numerous Jewish boys to death, abuse, and conversion in the Tsarist army. Herzen's account of the awful condition of these unfortunate children, whom he encountered when in exile —ill-clad, and dying like flies on the road—is well known.[54] This was a fate Jews tried to avoid and evade by almost any means possible.[55] Cooperation with a government that kidnapped Jewish children to die young or to convert to Christianity in its army, while hoping to reform Jewish life with that government's support, could not be a good thing, as almost all Jews saw things.

If, by some chance, the disastrous consequences of the royal alliance were still not evident at the time of Nicholas I, later experience confirmed the point. The pogroms of 1881–82 were followed by the decree of Alexander III, in May 1882, forbidding new Jewish settlement in rural areas within the Pale. Later, limitations were placed on the access of Jews to the Civil Service and to education, higher education in particular.[56] The regime also encouraged German authorities to treat Russian Jews, who had moved abroad in the hope of better

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[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 97–108.

[53] Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts, The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, translated by Constance Garnett, abridged with a Preface and Notes by Dwight MacDonald (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 291

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 169–170.

[55] Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Responses to Modernity: New Voices in America and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), p. 65. Cf. however, Olga Litvak, *Conscription and the Search for Modern Russian Jewry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[56] See Daniel S. Pasmanik, 'The Condition of the Russian Jews before and after the Revolution', in *Ten Years of Bolshevic Domination: A Compilation of Articles edited by Joseph Bickermann*, ed. by J. Bikerman (Berlin: S. Scholem, 1928), pp. 146–148. As Pasmanik noted, in some ways, the restrictions on access to education were the most painful, onerous and resented of the measures. Sholom Aleichem's story, 'Gy-Ma-Na-Si-A', tells the tale of a mother who tried every path possible and used all means available in order to overcome the obstacles and have her son benefit from a *gymnasia* education. However, when he was finally enrolled, the boy went out on strike and talked the language of revolution, of a new world coming in which all would be equal. There would be 'no rich, no poor; no master, no slave; no lamb, no shears; no cats, no mice'.

lives, ever more stringently. The Russian government seemed to have protested mainly when the Prussian authorities were perceived as acting too leniently and not expelling some individuals.[57]

After several decades of hope and disappointment, any dream that the Russian regime would be the source of the solution of the Jewish problem—at the initiative of enlightened Jews, cooperating with them, or on its own—was shattered. As many Jews now saw things, the regime was the essence of the problem. The 'royal alliance', was a badly misplaced hope,[58] whose failure was now apparent, even to many of those whose intellectual and ideological predecessors had been its active proponents.[59] S.M. Dubnow (1860–1941) was one example of a Jew who changed his mind. If, in his youth, he hoped for government action to extirpate Hassidic and other superstitions,[60] later on he wrote in scathing terms of the *maskilim* who cooperated with the attempts of Joseph II of Austria to impose a state school system on Jewish subjects. Comments of the older generation of historians on the Jews who cooperated with Nicholas I were no kinder.[61] For some Jews, the only alternative to the failure of the 'royal alliance' was reform from within, with the cooperation of the government, such as that promoted by the Society for Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews

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See Sholom Aleichem, *Collected Stories of Sholom Aleichem, Tevye's Daughters*, translated by Frances Butwin (New York: Robert V. Waife, 1999), pp. 225–238.

[57] Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 71. These expulsions continued into the Weimar era, *ibid.*, p. 60.

[58] On the blessings and curses of the connection with the government over the course of Jewish History see Richard I. Cohen, 'Jews and the State: The Historical Context', in *Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege* (*Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 19) ed. by Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3–16.

[59] Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Later Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 195.

[60] See the following description of Dubnow's early beliefs, Richard Seltzer, 'Coming Home: The Personal Basis of Simon Dubnow's Ideology', *AJS Review*, 1 (1976), 292: 'The Russian government would soon realize that it *must* emancipate the Jews. Russian Jewry could best prepare for citizenship by undertaking a program of thorough religious and cultural reform, including the extirpation (with the government's help) of Hasidic and other superstitions.'

[61] Jonathan Frankel, 'Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?', in *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 9.

of Russia (OPE),[62] in which Joseph Bikerman was active, from his time in Odessa onwards.[63] For others, the solution was radicalization that led to revolution,[64] but that brought the specter of the charge of the 'kommikike conspiracy', a charge against which Joseph Bikerman and his fellows in the 'Patriotic Union' in émigré Berlin struggled (below, n. 108).

I propose that enlightened Jews who cooperated with Nicholas I and Uvarov suggested to Bickerman an analogy for understanding the ancient Hellenizers. In fact, the actions of the enlightened Jews who believed in the royal alliance, who sought the cooperation of the imperial authorities to impose a change on Jewish life, provide the closest analogy for the actions of the ancient extreme Hellenizers, as Bickerman described them. I suggest that Bickerman understood the ancient Hellenizers and Antiochus IV according to the paradigm of enlightened Jews and Nicholas I, and that his dim view of the extreme Hellenizers, seeing them as the villains of the piece at the time of Antiochus IV, has at least one of its roots in the memory of the initiative of extreme *maskilim* for government enforced reform at the time of Nicholas I.

IV

Two difficulties with this interpretation must be addressed before continuing. The heroes of Bickerman's narrative were the Maccabees, at least initially the defenders of Jewish separatism, yet Bickerman was raised as the son of an integrationist, as a believer in the 'Pushkin faith'.[65] His level of personal Jewish observance was minimal, and primarily a product of his American years, especially his friendships with colleagues at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He attended services

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[62] See Brian Horowitz, 'The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia and the Evolution of the St. Petersburg Russian Jewish Intelligentsia, 1893–1905', in *Jews and the State*, ed. by Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 195–213.

[63] Joseph Bikerman, *Two Bikermans*, p. 27.

[64] Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[65] Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 127. Elias Bickerman's first published article, at the age of seventeen, was on Pushkin.

on the High Holidays and on Purim, fasted on Yom Kippur, and was a guest at the home of his friends for the Passover Seder. But that was about it.[66] Why should someone like that make the obscurantist Maccabees his heroes? It would make much more sense for him to idolize the hellenizers.[67] However, the picture of Bickerman's Jewish identity summarized above is incomplete. Bickerman regularly wrote reading notes or drafts of works in progress on the backs of letters. These were usually form letters, often requests for donations from different organizations. Thus the typescript of *The Jews in the Greek Age* is on the backs of letters from Beth Jacob Teachers Seminary (Brooklyn), Shaarei Tzedek Hospital (Jerusalem), Yeshiva Torah Vodaath (Brooklyn), Bikur Cholim Hospital (Jerusalem), Al-Tidom (an organization based in New York founded to promote religious life among Russian Jews), and Notzer Chesed (under the sponsorship of Hassidic Rabbis and halachic eminences, devoted to easing the burden of poor religious families in Israel by selling them food and other groceries below cost).[68] The preponderance of religious (ultra-orthodox) Jewish organizations in this material is overwhelming.

Nor is this surprising or unusual. Many Russian intellectuals responded to the Communist victory—and the new adamantly secular Communist regime—with a heightened appreciation of religion. As summarized by Figes:

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[66] See Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 166–169.

[67] Compare Fausto Parente, 'Arnaldo Momigliano e il Giudaismo: Tra storia e autobiografia', *Storia della storiografica*, 16 (1989), 68. Parente argued that Bickerman analyzed the role of the hellenizers of antiquity 'definitely' thinking of his father, who since youth had worked hard to learn Russian and acquire a European education, writing in favor of a total integration of Jews in the larger world. This conclusion makes Bickerman's reconstruction into some sort of Oedipal revenge against his father, which I find implausible: Elias Bickerman was a loyal son. Furthermore, on any reading of the Maccabean story, the extreme Hellenizers were the villains of the piece, and Bickerman should have wanted to keep this blame as far as possible from his father.

[68] Only one secular charity is represented, the American Red Cross. Not surprisingly, given his conservative political leanings, Bickerman also donated to the Republican party. Bickerman expressed some doubt about these ultra-orthodox Jewish organizations to which he donated. He asked Judah Goldin, then in Israel (Bickerman to Goldin, May 22, 1981, Judah Goldin Files): 'How is life in Israel? And prives (prices) expressed in $$. I now get numerous appeals from all kind of welfare organizations in Israel denading (demanding) help for children, Talmudic sages etc.—and always referring to 130% inflation, forgetting to say that by giving every three months 'adjustements' to everybody, even to professors, they make inflation self-perpetating (self-perpetuating)'.

> Russians who before the revolution had assumed foreign ways, or had never gone to church, now, as exiles, clung to their native customs and orthodox beliefs. There was a revival of Russian faith abroad, with much talk among the émigrés of how the revolution has been brought about by European secular beliefs, and a level of religious observance which they had never shown before 1917.[69]

None of this is to say that these Russians became traditional believers or practitioners of their faiths in a conventional sense. Rather, having been rationalist agnostics or even further from religion, the experience of atheistic communism made them more sympathetic to traditional outlooks and opposed to many forms of progressive thought. Rostovtzeff, for example, became the honorary president of the Society of Friends of St. Sergius Russian Orthodox Theological Academy in Paris, founded in 1925 to guarantee the continuity of Russian-Orthodox faith among the youth of the Russian diaspora.[70]

The association of atheism with communism impacted the scholarship of Russians as well. Rostovtzeff changed his evaluation of the Roman civil wars and of the role of religion in the Augustan reform. The rationalists were now the villains of the piece. The turmoil of revolutions (Roman and Russian) had shown that their views were baneful and destructive.[71]

I think it plausible to suggest that Elias Bickerman's experience of revolution was like that of his teacher. Bickerman was neither particularly learned nor observant in a conventional or traditional Jewish sense. Nevertheless, Bickerman also had an appreciation for Jewish tradition that was enhanced by events of his life, from his escape from Russia to his arrival in the United States in 1942, and this appreciation was reflected in his scholarship. Accordingly, despite Bickerman's youthful adherence to the 'Pushkin faith,' his favorable view of the Maccabees is not surprising or problematic.

The second difficulty cannot be resolved with the same degree of certainty. What did Bickerman know about the actions of Jewish *maskilim* in 19th-century Russia that could have served as the template I proposed for his understanding of the extreme hellenizers of antiquity? There is no place in Bickerman's writing where he indicates any familiarity with the episodes in the 19th century at the time of Nicholas I and thereafter discussed above.

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[69] O. Figes, *Natasha's Dance* (New York: Picador, 2002), p. 538.
[70] Wes, *Rostovtzeff*, p. 91.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 59–74.

However, there is a good deal of circumstantial evidence. First, Elias Bickerman wrote his first published works on Pushkin, remained interested in Pushkin throughout his life, and was very proud of the fact that Pushkinists continued to take his youthful contributions seriously.[72] His extensive familiarity with the other literature and events of the era of Nicholas I was on clear display in his article on Pushkin and slavery. Bickerman began by referring to the fire lit in Russia by the French Revolution, citing Alexander Radishchev (1749–1802), author of *Voyage from Petersburg to Moscow*, the first revolutionary book to appear in Russia, only two years after the revolution in France. He then mentioned Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–1765), the polymath scientist and poet, the historian and political thinker Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821), and concluded by paying special attention to the insights of Alexander Herzen (1812–1870).[73]

The circles of his father, Joseph Bikerman, bring us closer to specific knowledge of major Jewish events of the era. For example, Mikhail Morgulis (1837–1912), who was Joseph Bikerman's 'friend until death',[74] wrote a monograph on the history of Jewish education in Russia under the reign of the Tsars, in which there was explicit discussion, frequently cited, of the attempt at government-enforced reform of Jewish education in the 1840s.[75] The 'old assimilation policy of Nicholas I' was mentioned as a matter of simple, well-known fact, by Joseph Bikerman's collaborator, Daniel S. Pasmanik, in the latter's essay in the collective English volume edited by Joseph Bikerman, *Ten Years of Bolshevic Domination*.[76] Joseph Bikerman himself wrote on Jews in the grain and fish trade.[77] Accordingly, the likelihood that Joseph Bikerman was unaware of the royal alliance invoked by Russian *maskilim* during the 19th century is nil.

What Joseph Bikerman knew is important because, as Arnaldo Momigliano (Bickerman's colleague and friend for more than fifty

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[72] Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, p. 78.

[73] Elias Bickerman, 'Pouchkine, Marx et l'Internationale esclavagiste', *La Nouvelle Clio*, 1/2 (1949), 416–417. On De Maistre see Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (London: Penguin, 1994 Reprint), 57–81; On Herzen, according to Berlin, 'the most arresting political writer in the nineteenth century,' see *ibid.*, 186–209.

[74] Joseph Bikerman, *Two Bikermans*, p. 27.

[75] Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, p. 201, n.52.

[76] Pasmanik, 'The Condition of the Russian Jews Before and After the Revolution', p. 151.

[77] S. P(osener), 'Bikermann, Josef', *Encyclopedia Judaica* 14 (1929), col. 787.

years) explained, Elias Bickerman was his father's loyal disciple: the father and his two sons lived together as a real family and shared long-term political and religious beliefs.[78] Finally, there is one tantalizing hint in the record that Joseph Bikerman and his son Elias collaborated in working out ideas concerning the Maccabees. On December 12, 1929, in honor of Chanukkah, Joseph Bikerman gave a talk on a topic far outside the usual range of his intellectual interests or public activity in Berlin—the Maccabees.[79] This material was obviously fully in the area of Elias' academic focus. His Pauly-Wissowa article on Maccabees 1–3 appeared in 1928.[80] Therefore, even if Elias Bickerman's principal publications on the Maccabees first appeared in print in the following decade, he was already thinking about the Maccabees before the time of his father's lecture. Unfortunately, the text of the talk does not exist, nor was there a report in the press, only an announcement. One is left wondering: where would Joseph Bikerman have learned the details of that ancient period if not from his historian son, an expert in the material, with whom he lived at the time? Therefore, to what extent is Elias Bickerman's explanation of the events in Jerusalem a result of conversations with his father, about whom one can be certain that he knew of the events at the time of Nicholas I?

V

The fly in the ointment remains. There is only circumstantial evidence and no 'smoking gun' for one key point in my argument for a Russian paradigm supplying the model for Bickerman's analysis of the ancient

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[78] Arnaldo Momigliano, 'The Absence of the Third Bickerman', *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism*, edited with an Introduction by Silvia Berti, translated by Maura Masella-Gayley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 218–219. For example, both Joseph Bikerman and Elias Bickerman spoke in Berlin at anniversaries of the founding of the White Army, Joseph on the fifth anniversary in 1922, and Elias on the eighth in 1925. Joseph Bikerman's appearance on that occasion aroused much opposition in the émigré Jewish community, as the White Army was considered responsible for the worst atrocities against Jews Russia had ever seen. Later in life, Elias Bickerman claimed to have served as an officer in the White Army during the Civil War (in fact, as his father's autobiography is explicit on the point, he was in the Red Army). See Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 39–41, 62.

[79] See Karl Schlögel et al., *Chronik russischen Lebens in Deutschland 1918–1941* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), #6421.

[80] Elias Bickerman, 'Makkabäerbücher I–III', in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 14 (1928), cols. 779–800.

extreme Hellenizers. Therefore, in further support of the interpretation of his work that I have offered, I note a revealing anachronistic slip of the pen made by Bickerman in his popular book on the Maccabees. He argued that King Antiochus' decrees against the Jews were motivated by the desire of Hellenizers, Jason and Menelaos, to:

> remove everything which smacked of separation, of the 'ghetto': Sabbath observance, *beards* (emphasis mine), circumcision, and that namelessness of God which was otherwise to be met with only among the most primitive peoples.[81]

When one compares this summary of Antiochus' actions with the account of the persecutions in Daniel, 1 and 2 Macc, and Josephus, an interesting difference is notable. Sabbath, circumcision, and the nameless God appear in the ancient sources, but nowhere in the ancient evidence were beards forbidden to Jews as a consequence of the decrees of Antiochus IV. In fact, almost every man, Jews as well as non-Jews, was bearded in the Hellenistic era.[82]

So, why this mention of Antiochus IV prohibiting beards at the instigation of Jason and Menelaos? Beards, full long beards in particular, were a key aspect of a traditional Jewish lifestyle in Europe and Russia. And beards were one of the main cultural markers of Jewish distinctiveness discarded by those Jews who wished to move towards more modern ways in Western Europe during the nineteenth century.

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[81] *Die Makkabäer*, pp. 20–21=*The Maccabees*, pp. 28–29=*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, p. 109. 'Beards' is not an error in the English translation. In fact, at least two references meaningful only to a German audience in 1935 were dropped from the English translation that appeared in 1947. Bickerman's comment on Mommsen's contribution to the von Treitschke controversy of 1881 (See Jürgen Malitz, '"Auch ein Wort über unser Judenthum": Theodor Mommsen und der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit', in *Theodor Mommsen: Gelehrter, Politiker und Literat*, ed. by Joseph Wiesehofer, unter Mitarbeit von Henning Börn (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), pp. 139–164), *Die Makkabäer*, pp. 19–20, was eliminated from *The Maccabees*, pp. 28–29. Likewise, the observation that the issues of the generation of Mattathias were as meaningless to the days of John Hyrcanus as August 1914 was removed from the youth of 1935, *Die Makkabäer*, p. 50, was dropped from *The Maccabees*, p. 78. Bickerman and/or Moses Hadas, the translator of *The Maccabees*, went over the original, but 'beards' was retained.

[82] Several centuries later, the long unkempt hair and the scruffy beard were essential parts of the philosopher's image. When Domitian punished Apollonius of Tyana, he began by cutting off his hair and shaving his beard, Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, 7.34. See further Glen Bowersock, 'Philosophy in the Second Sophistic', in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin*, ed. by Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 157–70.

In the Ashkenazic world, beards were not a simple or one-sided matter. Some Jewish communities fined Jews who removed their beards, while some European monarchs wanted Jewish married males to be bearded, in order to distinguish them from their Christian counterparts. At the same time, being beardless was quite acceptable in other Jewish communities.[83] In Russia, governmental regulations on Jewish clothing sometimes included decrees against side-locks and beards: Jews were sometimes abused in public by having their side-locks cut off.[84] Traditional Russian Jews supposedly responded in shock when Sir Moses Montefiore visited Vilna in 1846 and he was clean- shaven. What kind of an observant man was he?[85]

For Jews in Russia, the issue of beards was as deeply charged within Russian culture as in Jewish terms. In 1698, Peter the Great decreed that his courtiers westernize their appearance and shave their beards. Several years later, in 1705, the royal decree was extended to all servitors, merchants, and townsmen. Those who insisted on keeping their beards and moustaches were taxed.[86] Elite Russians who wanted to identify with the common people defied the ban on beards. It was an act of great symbolic significance when the officers who served in the War of 1812 against Napoleon defied the Petrine ban and grew beards.[87] Beards were especially important as markers of the identity of the '*starovery*', the 'old believers', who refused to accept the reform

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[83] See further Elliott Horowitz, 'The Early Eighteenth Century Confronts the Beard: Kabbalah and Jewish Self-Fashioning', *Jewish History*, 8 (1994), 95–115. See also the discussion by Elliot Horowitz, 'Beards,' *Yivo Encyclopedia of the Jews in Eastern Europe*, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/printarticle.aspx?id=2536. In the latter entry, Horowitz cites Peretz Smolenskin, *Symchas Chaneiff* [*The Joy of the Godless*] (Warsaw: S. Katznellenbogen, 1905), p. 47 [Hebrew], concerning a woman who recited the prayers out loud on the holidays so that other women could repeat them after her, called the 'women's cantor', but whose goal (nevertheless) was to teach her daughter French and who spent vast sums on teachers who might enlighten her heart, so that she might marry a *maskil*, one of the new generation, with all its customs and practices. She was only willing to find a match for her daughter with one of the 'shaven ones', who were considered a community apart, viewed as an abomination by the Hassidim, but honored by the enemies of the Hassidim.

[84] Kloizner, 'The Decree on Jewish Dress', 17, notes several incidents in the 1840s. He discusses similar incidents in the 1880s, *ibid.*, 19

[85] Etkes, 'Compulsory Enlightenment', 302–303. As Etkes notes, *ibid.*, 303, n. 154, beards were not yet such a symbolic issue at the time of Moses Montefiore's visit to Russia in 1846, and the horror that his being unshaven supposedly aroused may be an anachronistic reflex in later sources reflecting the situation at a later point in time.

[86] Horowitz, 'The Early Eighteenth Century', 108. Orthodox Russians saw the beard as a sign of holiness. See also Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, p. 43.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

of the Russian church in the mid-seventeenth century, promulgated by the Patriarch Nikon to make Russian practice conform to then contemporary Greek Orthodox standards.[88] A full beard was therefore perceived as a sign of direct contact with the deepest roots of the Russian past, untouched by modernity. For many Russians, down to the twentieth century, a bearded man was someone who was inherently trustworthy. As Richard Pipes wrote of Peter Struve and other liberals of the era of the revolution, quoting Solzhenitsyn, 'the photographer's lens will never again find these trustful beards, these friendly eyes, these unhurried unegotistical expressions'.[89] Much the same was true among Lubavitch Hasidim, down to our own times. Menahem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994) saw one sign of success of his message as the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe when his listeners dropped the trappings of cosmopolitanism, and 'the hair of their beards began to grow'.[90] A long untrimmed beard became a symbol of Lubavitch identity, an integral and essential part of the uniform.[91]

The symbolic significance of beards was not lost on Elias Bickerman's family. Joseph Bikerman wrote the following about his uncle, the youngest of his grandfather's three sons:

> This uncle was tempted by the new, i.e. European, knowledge and also dressed more in the city style. He wore starched shirts: he did not dare to trim his beard but he folded it to achieve a regular shape. This deviation from tradition naturally disturbed grandfather, and once I had a disputation with him on this problem.[92]

This was a common experience in many families. It would have been remarkable if Joseph Bikerman and his sons had not been aware of

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[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 305–307.

[89] Richard Pipes, *Struve, Liberal on the Right* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. ii.

[90] Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, *The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 103. The deep Russian roots of the Lubavitch movement are well known.

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[92] Joseph Bikerman, *Two Bikermans*, p. 5. To turn once more to the fictional creations of Sholom Aleichem for corroboration, in his story 'The Happiest Man in Kodno' the narrator tells of the rich Jews of the place, who speak Yiddish and support local poor Jews, but who are not that scrupulous in observing the commandments. Among other things, they send their sons to school in St Petersburg, are not careful in keeping the Sabbath, do not cover their heads, eat chicken cooked in butter, and *trim their beards*. See Sholom Aleichem, *Collected Stories, Tevye's Daughters*, p. 72, but correcting the translation of the key phrase to 'trim their beards', to accurately reflect the original.

the importance of Russian and Jewish beards as a marker of identity, as a symbol of tradition as opposed to modernity.

Elias Bickerman's anachronistic slip concerning beards at the time of Antiochus IV is vindication and confirmation of the thesis of this paper—the extent to which Bickerman was thinking in Jewish Russian terms when writing in German (and later English) to the Jews of the twentieth century about the ancient Jewish past.

The gross anachronism concerning beards suggests the value of searching for other remarks in *The Maccabees* indicating the resonance of past and present with important ideological overtones. And all this, despite Elias Bickerman's proclamation in the Preface to *The Maccabees*, that he was working as a historian, intent on restoring 'the figures of the past, as they lived and worked in their own environment': his goal was not to judge the Maccabees 'as if they were our contemporaries', but to 'endeavor to be theirs'.[93]

Nevertheless, Bickerman remarked comparing Hellenic culture with modern European secular culture. These remarks show, quite explicitly, that past and present, Russia, Germany, and European Jewish experience in the twentieth century were resonating with each other in Elias Bickerman's understanding of the ancient evidence. He wrote that ancient 'Greek culture, like modern European culture, was based on education. A man became a "Hellene" without at the same time forsaking his gods, but merely by adopting Hellenic culture'.[94] A page later, he noted that:

> The nations of the ancient world were confronted by the same problem that confronts the oriental peoples in the modern world from Tokyo to Cairo, whether to adopt the supranational and therefore superior European culture or else accept inferior status, become fellaheen.[95]

However, Bickerman also recognized that 'Hellenism was a supranational culture based upon reason and faith in reason. Hence its immediate effect upon all peoples whom it embraced was everywhere to disrupt tradition'.[96] And yet, 'Hellenism continued to be a universal

[93] *The Maccabees*, p. 8.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 23=*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, p. 103.
[95] *The Maccabees*, p. 24=*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, p. 104.
[96] *The Maccabees*, p. 113=*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, p. 178.

spiritual power, like Western civilization in the modern world—no people could isolate itself from it if it wished to live and assert itself'.[97]

This necessity was as true for the Jews of antiquity facing Hellenism as it was for Bickerman himself and his fellow Jews facing the problems of Jewish identity in European culture, intensified at the time he was writing by Nazi persecution. Bickerman's answer to these dilemmas, in its most extreme form, was put at the end of *Der Gott der Makkabäer*:

> Through the blood witness of the martyrs, through the service in the rededicated temple, the one truth was saved which for mankind during its wanderings of a thousand years, it has found unchangeable and eternal. Man has been deceived and disappointed by innumerable alleged truths[98]—but never by the one truth of the uniqueness of God. Thus, those men and women and children who sacrificed their lives during the persecutions under Epiphanes in order to remain faithful to the Eternal One, remain forever and for all peoples examples of true heroism. 'May men learn from them to die for the *truth*', says Augustine (P.L. 38, 1379).[99]

Written in 1937, this conclusion was practically a call to action: modern German Jews should be prepared to become martyrs for the sake of Judaism, joining the line of Jewish heroes going back to the Maccabees, if and when necessary. In order to be certain that all readers got the point, the passage from Augustine was translated and Bickerman gave the reference. Normally, he left quotations of this sort untranslated and with no reference.[100] Making his point on the Maccabees and their message for the Nazi era via a citation from Augustine also helped Bickerman evade Nazi censorship. The Schocken Verlag (publishers of the book) had ever increasing troubles with Nazi censors.[101]

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[97] *The Maccabees*, p. 115=*From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, p. 180.

[98] I suggest that this was an allusion to Jews who had been seduced by Bolshevism. See above, at n. 38.

[99] *God of the Maccabees*, p. 92=*Studies…A New English Edition*, ii, p. 1126.

[100] See, for example, the quotation from Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* 6.5.2, that concludes *The Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 305.

[101] See Anthony David, *The Patron: A Life of Salman Schocken, 1877–1959* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), pp. 274–275.

VI

What was gained as a result of the processes for which I have argued? What was gained in translation? At the simplest level, a provocative thesis about the ancient Jewish past that continues to be the subject of scholarly discussion, even more than seventy years after it was first proposed. At yet the next level, Bickerman provided an outstanding example of the contextual way in which one should study the Jews of the ancient past.

As a message to Jews of Europe in the 1930s, Bickerman offered an answer to what may have proven to be the most troubling aspect of the persecutions of that time. As formulated by Stefan Zweig, Jews who had experienced persecution and death in the past at least knew why they suffered—for their faith and for their law. But too many modern Jews, threatened by Hitler simply for being Jewish, believed themselves guiltless and their suffering pointless. They had no community, no common faith, or way of life, no sense of mission; they had striven for integration in the national states in which they had lived, to the point where they did not speak each others' language and were divided by place of origin, ideology, social, and economic class. They had placed their faith in *Bildung*, a world of individual culture beyond religion and nationality.[102] They were now displaced, persecuted, and threatened with death because they were Jews, but that seemed senseless: it made their tragedy the greatest of all. What did all this mean? Even Freud, the 'clearest seeing mind' among those with whom Zweig discussed the dilemma, was baffled and could make no sense out of the nonsense.[103] As Bickerman himself noted, in the preface to the English translation to *Der Gott der Makkabäer* published some forty years after the original, he was pleased that his writings on the Maccabees provided some measure of consolation to the Jews who faced these troubles.[104]

By doing all this in German, rather than Russian, Bickerman also gained a much wider audience for his ideas. Few scholars and even

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[102] Zweig was characterized as someone who 'knew no nations, only individuals—that his interest focused on humanity as a whole'. This allegiance to humanity meant transcending all the so-called artificial barriers of nation and religion, until pure friendship reigned. See George Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 19, 56.

[103] Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (New York: Viking Books, 1943), pp. 427–429.

[104] *God of the Maccabees*, p. xii = *Studies…A New English Edition*, ii, p. 1030.

fewer Western European Jews read Russian. As Rostovtzeff once lamented, '*Rossica sunt, non leguntur*'.[105] Indeed, so far as I have been able to determine, Bickerman never published an original piece in Russian for the rest of his life after leaving St Petersburg for Berlin in 1921. He spoke in Russian at the memorial meeting held in New York in 1952 (above) to honor the passing of his St Petersburg teacher, Michael Rostovtzeff. He lectured in Russian on trips to Russia between 1970 and his death in 1981. According to those who knew and heard him speak Russian, Bickerman's Russian was apparently a thing of wonder, a throwback to an older time and place, 'Imperial Russian'. However, he wrote in German, later in French, especially after 1933 when he moved from Berlin to Paris, and after that in English, after his arrival in the USA in July 1942. In this sense, for almost all of his active career as a scholar, until his death in 1981, Bickerman's reflections on Russian Jewish experience as expressed in his scholarship on the Jews of antiquity were 'in translation'.

VII

Indirectly, however, even more was at stake at the time for people like Elias Bickerman. This paper began by noting Bickerman's combination of being Russian and being daring. Appreciation of the Russian Jewish background of his thesis on the Hellenizing reformers, as presented above, shows just how ambitious and far-reaching Bickerman dared to be.

Bickerman had been raised as a believer in the 'Pushkin faith', very well educated in Russian literature and the classics, but virtually free of any knowledge of Hebrew and the Jewish tradition. Note the way his brother Jacob recounted the Jewish education they had received (when Elias was already seventeen years old!):

> In 1914 another relative often visited us. He was supposed to teach the two sons Hebrew. Unfortunately, the story of Eden was enacted again. Our garden had many apple trees, and the fruit was ripening when

[105] Michael Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), ii, p. 587, n. 19.

> study hours came. The boys were tempted by the apples and could not concentrate on work.[106]

But just what was Elias Bickerman: a Russian Jew, a russified Jew, a member of an independent national group within the Russian State, similar to other ethnic minorities, such as Poles, Ukranians and Latvians? Was the hybrid identity 'Russian Jew' really possible? As Stanislawski put the matter,

> The notion that there could be Russians of the Mosaic persuasion comparable to Russians of the Christian persuasion seemed preposterous—indeed, semantically unfeasible—to virtually all subjects of the Tsar, gentile or Jew; the national and religious integrity of each group was so palpable and inescapable a reality.[107]

For Joseph Bikerman, Elias' father, however, the answer was clear: he was a Russian Jew. It was no accident that he called the organization he founded in émigré Berlin the 'Patriotic Union of *Russian Jews* (emphasis mine) Abroad'.[108] His account of the Russian Jewish past was as idealized and imaginary, in its own way, as the fictional portrait of the *shtetl*.[109] As Joseph Bikerman wrote,

> Denn das Element, das uns umgab, war ja einheitlich: uns umgab ein, trotz der vielen fremdstämmigen Elemente, die in seiner Mitte wohnten, homogenes Volk, eine Sprache und eine Kultur.Wir passten uns diesem homogenen Milieu an, wir sogen diese einheitliche Kultur auf dem ganzen Territorium des Reiches in uns ein. In Minsk und in Odessa, in Poltawa und in Irkutsk lernte das jüdische Kind in der Schule dieselben Verse Puschkins, lieh sich das jüdische Mädchen aus der Bibliothek dieselben russischen Klassiker, hörte der Jude dieselbe russische Sprache auf dem Markt, auf der Strasse, im Theater, in der Kaserne. Im Norden wie im Süden verband der Jude zwei Elemente in sich: das angestammte nationale Element und das russische Element, das gleichfalls zu seinem

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[106] Jacob Bikerman, *Two Bikermans: Autobiographies by Joseph and Jacob J. Bikerman* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 99.

[107] Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*, p. 140.

[108] For further discussion of the career of Joseph Bikerman see Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 50–76.

[109] According to Gabriella Safran, *Rewriting the Jew: Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 202, n. 10, by 1900 about 20% of Jewish children were getting *some instruction* (emphasis mine) in Russian, and by 1910 it reached 30%. This is far from the situation portrayed by Joseph Bikerman.

> eigenen geworden war; überall in Russland blieb er ein *russischer Jude* (emphasis in original).[110]

However, 'Russian Jew' was a relatively new term on the horizon, that first entered popular discourse in the second half of the nineteenth century, probably first used in 1856.[111] In light of the problematic status of Jews in Tsarist Russia, it is not surprising that doubts were raised on all sides. Chaim Weizmann's experience as a student in Darmstadt in 1892 is telling on this point. When he explained to one of his teachers that he was a Russian Jew,

> the teacher went off into gales of laughter. He had never heard of such a thing. A German, Yes. A Russian, Yes. Judaism, Yes. But a Russian Jew! That was to him the height of the ridiculous.[112]

By the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Horowitz, even a majority of OPE members 'appeared to repudiate the identity of "Russian Jew" (*russkii evrei*) and no longer imagined themselves, or hoped to become, members of the Russian nation'.[113]

Even Joseph Bikerman's collaborators in the very small group of the 'Patriotic Union' in Berlin recognized that the status of 'Russian Jew' was still a work in progress, a goal to be achieved, at best, still far from completion at the time of their activity in Berlin. Thus, D.O. Linski[114] wrote that he was certain of the resurrection of the White Army and its ultimate victory over the Bolsheviks. He hoped Russian Jews would take an active part in that campaign, because when numerous Russian Jews spilled their blood for the sake of the homeland this would make it clear to all that they were *Russian Jews*. Indeed, according to Linski,

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[110] Joseph Bickermann, 'Russland und das russische Judentum', in *Die Umwälzung in Russland und das Schicksal der russischen Juden, Ein Sammelwerk*, aus dem Russischen übertragen, ed. by Joseph M. Bickermann (Berlin: Osnowa-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1925), pp. 88–89.

[111] Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, pp. 334–339.

[112] Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 2 vols (London: Hamilton, 1949), ii, p. 32.

[113] Horowitz, 'Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment', 207.

[114] Unlike some of Joseph Bikerman's other allies in the 'Patriotic Union', such as D.S. Pasmanik (1869–1930) or Grigory Landau (1877–1940), little is known of Linski. My German colleague, Dr. Markus Wolf of the Viadrina University in Frankfurt an der Oder, who is dedicating intense efforts to the study of the 'Patriotic Union,' suspects that Linski may be a pseudonym. In any case, comments in his essay in the collaborative Russian-German volume indicate that Linski and his brother served in the White Army, and his brother died in combat. See D.O. Linski, 'Ueber das nationale Bewusstsein des russischen Juden', in *Die Umwälzung in Russland*, ed. by Bickermann, pp. 148, 152–156.

the defeat of the Bolsheviks would occur even faster if more and more Russian Jews recognized that they were Russian. Linski was certain that Jewish participation in the decisive campaigns against the Bolsheviks would have an enormous impact: it would prove their loyalty to Russia and eliminate mistrust on both sides. Yet, this happy outcome was a hope for the future, and far from reality, as Linski experienced and analyzed it.[115]

In the end, Linski's analysis was correct for its time and place. Looking back on his life, even Joseph Bikerman realized the futility of the positions he took in émigré Berlin. It may be no accident that his autobiography is an outstanding story of success in St Petersburg, of which many provincials dreamed, but ends with his arrival in Berlin. I have argued that Elias Bickerman himself came to adopt a 'post-integrationist' approach to Jewish life after WWII.[116] It may well be that the hybrid Russian-Jewish identity so significant to the Bi(c)kerman(n)s in St Petersburg and Berlin first emerged and flourished in the Soviet era, under the auspices of the communists whom they hated.[117]

However, all this was in the future when Elias Bickerman was writing on the Maccabees. At that time, according to Momigliano, Elias Bickerman was his father's loyal disciple: as noted above, the father and his two sons lived together as a real family and shared long-term political and religious beliefs. In Berlin, in particular, Elias Bickerman took an active role in the work of the 'Patriotic Union'.[118] For him, at that stage of his life, his status as a 'Russian Jew' would have been a matter of intense and important conviction.

I see the Russian-Jewish background of Bickerman's thesis on the persecutions of Antiochus IV, as presented above, as part of that effort

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[115] *Ibid.*, pp. 141–144, 150–151, 161–162.

[116] Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman*, pp. 224–226, 270–292, 293.

[117] Dimitri Shumsky, 'Soviet Jewish Historiography as a "No-Man's-Land": Reflections on "The Jewish Century"', *Zion*, 72 (2007), 457–470 [Hebrew].

[118] For example, in addition to speaking at the anniversary of the White Army (see note 78), Elias Bickerman wrote an article in the Berlin newspaper *Der Tag* of February 18, 1925, a copy of which he saved and brought to New York, now in the Bickerman Archive, ARC 19 at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library. In that article, he summarized talks given in Berlin by Prof. B.R. Strojeff of St. Petersburg, in which the speaker outlined the sad state of education in the Soviet Union. Strojeff stressed the need for training the younger generation, as educated people were greatly lacking in Russia, and numerous opportunities would open up after the defeat of the Bolsheviks. As an expression of the same hope that Berlin was just an interlude on the way back to Russia, Elias Bickerman signed his earliest German articles as someone who lived in St. Petersburg, but who was currently, *z. Zt.*, in Berlin.

and as the most daring aspect of Bickerman's ideas concerning the ancient Jewish past. It was his implicit answer to one of the 'biggest' questions (personal and collective) of his time. It was his proof to himself and to the audiences of doubters—Jews and non-Jews, Russians and other nationalities alike—that there was a genuine Russian-Jewish hybrid culture.

One of the marks of a culture is that it claims to depend on a past and generates its own perspective on that past.[119] For that reason, the best evidence Bickerman could offer for the existence of the disputed Russian-Jewish hybrid was that it could be the basis for an innovative, challenging, enlightening, and uniquely Russian-Jewish understanding of the Jewish past and present. I conclude that proof of this sort was the ultimate goal of Elias Bickerman's writings on the Maccabees.

VIII

Shaye Cohen was correct in his assessment of Bickerman:

> Bickerman was one of the very few scholars whose works are always worth reading, always stimulating, always important. The world which produced him and shaped him no longer exists. Born in Kishinev to a secular Jewish family, reared in St. Petersburg, educated in Berlin by the last generation of great German classicists, and fully at home in the literature of Russia, Germany, France, Italy, and England, he was one of the last remaining links to a humanistic ideal which now eludes us.[120]

Yet, in the end, I would argue, the daring Russian Jew, speaking to the larger world in German from that special point of reference, remained the core.

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[119] See Elias Bickerman and Morton Smith, *The Ancient History of Western Civilization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 1–9.

[120] Shaye J.D. Cohen, 'Elias J. Bickerman: An Appreciation', *Ancient Studies in Memory of Elias Bickerman, The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*, 16–17 (1964–1985), 3.

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NAHUM SLOUSCHZ (1871–1966) AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEBREW RENAISSANCE

Jörg Schulte

Nahum Davidovich Slouschz was born in Smorgan near Vilna in 1871, the son of David Solomon Slouschz, a rabbi, maskil and early Zionist. When he was four years old, his father settled in Kherson; a few years later the family moved to Odessa. Nahum Slouschz was two years the senior of H. N. Bialik, three years older than Joseph Klausner, and four years older than Saul Tchernichowsky.[1] He belonged to their circle of friends in Odessa which became the cradle for the revival of Hebrew literature. When Nahum Slouschz died in Jerusalem at the age of 94 in 1966 he left a printed œuvre in five languages (Hebrew, French, Russian, English, and Yiddish), for which no-one has yet even attempted to produce a bibliography. There is, furthermore, a literary and scholarly estate of fifty boxes of manuscripts which have only partly been catalogued.[2] If we had to determine one characteristic trait

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[1] Cf. Nahum Slouschz's memoirs on Tchernichowsky: Naḥum Slushts, 'Raḥshe ḥaver neʿorim' [Whispering of a Childhood Friend], *Ha-ʾarets*, 8 July 1932, 5; Idem, 'Leneshmat Shaʾul ben Toviyah Ṭsherniḥovsḳi: Mebaser ha-teḥiyah', *ʿAm va-sefer*, October 1944, 3–4; Idem: Shiḥrur ha-ʾadam vehaʾezraḥ: Lehofʿato haḳeruv shel ha-kerekh ha-ʿashiri vehaʾaḥron shel kol kitve Shaʾul Ṭsherniḥovsḳi', *Ha-Tsiyoni haklali*, gilyon 8; Yosif Kloyzner, *Darke li-kerat ha-teḥiyah veha-geʾulah*: *ʾAvtobiyografyah* 1874–1944 (Tel Aviv: Masadah, 1955).

[2] The Slouschz papers are located in the Gnazim Archive in Tel Aviv. To my knowledge there is only one English article dealing with some aspects of Slouschz's œuvre: Harvey E. Goldberg, 'The Oriental and the Orientalist: The Meeting of Mordecai Ha-Cohen and Nahum Slouschz', *Jewish Culture and History*, 7, 3 (2004), 1–30. Cf. Yaʿakov Ḥurgin, *Naḥum Slushts: La-yovel ha-shivʿim ve-ḥamesh* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat rishonim, 1947); Yisraʾel Kahan, 'Ha-ḥoker veha-ḥofer ha-romanti: ʿAl prof. Naḥum Slushts', *Moznayim* 24 (1967), 424–429; Barukh Ḳaroʾ, 'Prof Naḥum Slushts: Semel meʾah shanot yahadut Rusyah', *He-ʿavar* 14 (1966/67), 281–282; Yisraʾel Kohen, 'Naḥum Slushts', in *Aspaḳlaryot* (Ramat-Gan: Agudat ha-sofrim ha-ʿIvriyim be-Yisraʾel le-yad hotsaʾat Masadah, 1968), pp. 149–159; A.R. Malakhi, 'Naḥum Slushts', *Jewish Book Annual*, Hebrew section, 2 (1943), 30–33; Zalman Shniʾur, 'Ha-profesor Naḥum Slushts', in *David Frishman vehaʾaḥerim* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1959), pp. 82–91; David Smilenski, *ʿIm bne ʾartsi veʿiri* (Tel Aviv: Hoʿed ha-tsiburi lehotsʾat kitvav shel David Smilenski, 1958), passim; ʾAvtobiyografyah shel Naḥum Slushts, *Genazim* 3 (1969), 40–44.

of his different works it would be his role as an intermediary between the European and the Hebrew worlds—not only because he made them more easily accessible to each other, but more so because he was searching for the unknown ancient connections between them.

In Odessa, Nahum Slouschz was one of the founders of the 'Saftenu ʾitnu' society.[3] In 1888, at seventeen years of age, he wrote the entry 'Odessa' in the Hebrew encyclopedia *Eshkol*.[4] He was the first of the circle of Hebrew-speaking friends, mentioned above, to see Erets Israel with his own eyes when he visited Palestine in 1891 on behalf of the Odessa Palestine committee with the mission to establish a new settlement. There he became a close friend of the family of Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (whom he had already known and heard speaking in the Sephardic accent in Odessa) and spent many hours in the house of the first Hebrew-speaking child (Itamar Ben-Avi, who was then nine years old).[5] Back in Odessa in 1892, Slouschz published a Russian self-instruction book on mnemotechnics (*Mnemotekhnika ili iskusstvo ukrepliat' pamiat'*) as well as one on bookkeeping (*Bukhgalteriia prostaia i dvoinaia v vosem' dnei, po novoi metode*). In 1893, he translated Paolo Mantegazza's *L'arte di essere felici* (1886) via French and published it in Jerusalem under the title *Ha-ʾushar meʾayin yimtsaʾ*. The brief preface of the translator reveals that he took great pleasure in providing the Hebrew language with new terms from all disciplines. In 1896, Slouschz embarked on a journey to Italy and Egypt from where he went on to his second visit to Palestine. In 1897, he edited a Russian-Jewish paper, *Odesskaia Gazeta*, which today belongs to the bibliographical rarities of Russian Jewish Culture. At the same time he published in Ben-Yehudah's journal *Ha-Hashkafah* his first travel writings *Masaʿ be Litah* (*Journey to Lithuania*) and, under the titles *ʾArets ḥam* and *Masaʿ be-Mitsrayim*, observations from his first journey to Egypt. He also published regularly in *Ha-Tsefirah*, *Ha-melits*, *Ha-magid*, *Ha-pisgah*, *Ha-ʿolam*, *Ha-mizraḥ*, *Ha-toren*, *Ha-ḥavatselet*, as well as in the almanach *Luaḥ ʾerets Yisrael*.

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[3] A.R. Malakhi reports an oath taken by Saul Tchernichowsky, Joseph Klausner and Nahum Slouschz to dedicate their lives to the renaissance of the people, the land, the language and the culture. See A.R. Malakhi, 'Naḥum Slushts', *Jewish Book Annual*, Hebrew section, 2 (1943), 30–33.

[4] *Ha-Eshkol*, the first general encyclopedia in Hebrew was begun by Isaac Goldmann in Warsaw in 1888; only six parts were published, and even the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet was not completed.

[5] David Smilenski, *ʿIm bne ʾartsi veʿiri* (Tel Aviv: Hoʿed ha-tsiburi lehotsʾat kitvav shel David Smilenski, 1958), pp. 93–96.

Before becoming a scholar, he was known as a traveller[6]—to the extent that an Israeli novelist could describe his hero as venturing 'across deserts of sand and ice like Marco Polo, Sven Hedin, Captain Scott, and Nachum Sluszcz'.[7] The ice, as we shall see in a moment, does not apply to Slouschz, but the sand most certainly does. His travels produced not only the English volume *Travels in North Africa*, but also the Hebrew *Masiʿot ba-ʾerets Luv* and a report on the past and present of the marranos in Portugal with the title *Ha-ʾanusim be-Portugal*.[8] Yiddish versions appeared in *Heint* and *Unser Leben*. Wherever Nachum Slouschz went, he undertook ethnological and historical studies of the Jewish communities of the region.[9]

Slouschz began his academic studies in 1898. From the Second Zionist Congress in Basle he went straight to Geneva to study French literature and Semitic languages. In the following year he moved on to Paris to continue his studies of Semitic languages under Philippe Berger (1846–1912) at the École pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) and French literature at the Sorbonne. He defended his thèse de doctorat with the title *La Renaissance de la Littérature Hébraïque (1743–1885)* at the Sorbonne in 1902. The work was published in French in the following year; a Hebrew version (published by Tushiyah in Warsaw) followed in 1906, an English translation (via the French) in 1909. In one of the numerous reviews Max Nordau, a close friend of Slouschz at the time, described the defence of his thesis as a 'remarkable spectacle'.[10] The European members of the panel declared with

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[6] One of the first skills which Slouschz acquired on his journeys was the art of disguise:

> 'Cet important voyage, facilité par la présence d'un soldat turc, a été effectué sous divers costumes. M. Slousch était tantôt en rabbin juif, tantôt en effendi turc, avec un fez sur la tête, ou même en simple Européen, suivant l'état du pays', N. Slousch, 'Les Senoussiya en Tripolitaine', *Revue du monde musulman*, 1, 1906, 169–182 (170).

[7] Hanokh Bartov, *Whose little boy are you? A Novel* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), p. 273.

[8] Naḥum Slushts, *Ha-ʾanusim be-Porṭugal* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1932).

[9] In 1905 Slouschz visited Morocco, on the first of a series of exploratory journeys on behalf of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in order to study Phoenician and Greek inscriptions. In the following year he travelled through all of Northern Africa, and in 1910 he went to Carthage; the winter of 1911/12 he spent lecturing in North America, in 1912 he went to Morocco again and stopped on the way for his first visit in Lisbon; in 1913 he visited the Atlas Mountains.

[10] The review was first published in the German Jewish journal *Die Welt* on 24 April 1903, 12–13; Cf. Naḥum Slushts, 'Nordau ve-ʾAḥad Haʿam', *Ha-toren* 9 (1923), no. 12, 18–22.

the humility of true scholars that in Slouschz's field they had nothing to teach but everything to learn. They congratulated the author that he had revealed facts to western European scholars, of which they had no knowledge whatsoever. They questioned him for hours about problems which Slouschz had not touched upon because they would have been obvious for the Jewish reader. It was only the fifth member of the panel, a Jewish professor of Hebrew language, who adopted a cold, critical and dismissive tone. He explained to his Christian colleagues that there was no such thing as a Jewish nationality, that the Hebrew language did not live a real but merely an artificial life, and that Zionism, of which the free Jews of the West had no, or merely a low opinion, was only a vague fancy of Eastern Jewry. It is safe to assume that the defense (which Ben-Yehudah, in *Ha-Tsevi*, called a special day for the Hebrew language) was something of an initiation for Nachum Slouschz who, from then on, increased his activity of making secular Hebrew literature known to a non-Hebrew-speaking audience. His work came close to what the sociologist Zvi Voyislavski would call an 'outward translation' a few years later.[11] Slouschz recollects that in Paris he found answers to the deep problems connected to the fate of Israel in the *galut* [diaspora], for which the only remedy, in his view, was a Hebrew State that was to be built on the spirit of the Tanakh which had become petrified and no longer spread its influence and its splendour to the people of the world.[12]

The preface of the 1903 French edition of *La Renaissance de la Littérature Hebraïque* starts from the perspective of a goyish librarian. Classifying all Hebrew books together with theological and Rabbinical treatises he is overcome with astonishment at the sight of a Hebrew translation of a modern author. This naive perspective of the non-Jewish reader also characterizes parts of his presentation of Hebrew literature from Moses Hayyim Luzzato to Perets Smolenskin.[13] We

[11] Tsevi Voyislavski, *Ḥavli tarbut* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1946), p. 122.

[12] Nahum Slouschz: 'Across unknown Jewish Africa', *The Jewish World*, 15 March 1907, 229.

[13] In Moses Hayyim Luzzato's poetry Slouschz recognized the first work which introduced Hebrew humanism and marked the return to the style and the manner of the Bible—in the same way as the European humanists had followed the paths marked out by the classical languages. The last paragraph of the book shows again that for Slouschz Hebrew literature was not only a Jewish affair: 'The expansion of the language of the prophets which is taking place under our eyes is a fact that cannot but fascinate every mind interested in the mysterious evolution of the destinies of mankind

have to bear in mind that he wrote this work at a time when Joseph Klausner's history of Hebrew literature existed only as a sketch in Russian (the first Hebrew edition was to be published in 1920).

Slouschz was rewarded with a newly-founded chair of Hebrew literature at the Sorbonne[14] (the first of its kind) in 1904; he also taught at the École normale orientale of the Alliance israélite universelle from 1903 to 1918 until he settled in Palestine in 1919. He published a continuation of his thesis with the title *La Poésie lyrique hébraïque contemporaine (1882–1910)* in 1911. The volume announces three further studies which were never published: *Le roman et le conte hébraiques contemporains (1867–1910)*, *La poésie hébraïque en Afrique d'après des sources inédites (XVIe–XIXe siècles)*[15] and *L'évolution des idées et des genres littéraires en hébreu.*[16] In the first volume of the journal *Ha-ibri* edited in Berlin and again in the second volume of *Ha-deror* (published in 1912) he wrote very critical estimations of Jewish culture in France which, in his eyes, was practically the only country which had not yet seen a Jewish national and civil awakening. In 1913 Slouschz started the publication of the *Revue hebraïque*, the first periodical dedicated to modern Hebrew in a language other than Hebrew.[17] Only two issues were printed,[18] possibly

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in the direction of the ideal.' The future of Hebrew literature lies, he continues, in an immersion into the beauty of its ancient classicism. Nahum Slouschz, *La poésie lyrique hébraïque contemporaine, 1882–1910* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), p. 228.

[14] In his inaugural lecture Slouschz stresses the continuity of Hebrew studies in the West, and especially at the Sorbonne, focussing on those scholars who like himself were interested in the poetical and literary originality of the Hebrew Bible, such as Herder and Bishop Lowth:

> 'La Bible, la langue hébraïque, les écrités hébraïques du moyen-âge furent cultivés avec honneur en France et, particulièrement à la Sorbonne, pendant les derniers siècles du moyen-âge. Ce n'est qu'au romantisme curieux du passé et essayant de la restaurer sur une base plus humaine, qu'est échue la mission de rendre à la Bible en intérêt littéraire et historique ce qu'elle avait perdu en autorité religieuse. Herder en Allemagne et peut-être Lowth en Angleterre, Herder surtout dans *La poésie des anciens Hébreux*, a su traiter pour la première fois la Bible du point de vue littéraire et esthétique, révélant ainsi à l'humanité éclairée [...] la puissance lyrique, le sentiment intime des humbles, toute l'originalité littéraire des auteurs de l'Ancien Testament.' Nahum Slouschz, *La langue et la littérature hébraïques depuis la bible jusqu'à nos jours. Leçon d'ouverture à la Sorbonne le 3 mars 1904* (Paris: E. Sansot, 1904), p. 9.

[15] Both works are announced as 'pour paraître'.

[16] Announced as 'en préparation'.

[17] The new periodical was welcomed by a warm review in *Ha-Tsefirah* which Slouschz translated into French for the second volume.

[18] To the first volume of the *Revista de estudos hebráicos* Slouschz contributed a French translation of the Hebrew poetry of Leone Ebreo. Nahum Slousch, 'Poésies hébraïques

because the journal was—not unlike Jabotinsky's Russian *Razsvet*—the work of one author (who wrote under his own and at least one pen name and whose books appeared under the heading *livres reçus*). To the first volume Slouschz contributed an introduction to the history of Hebrew literature and an article on the writer and translator David Frischman, while his friend Max Nordau wrote a brief text with the title *Le rôle littéraire et pratique de l'hébreu* where he expresses Slouschz's own idea: 'It is important to fight a very particular snobbism and to show the educated Jew that it is no merit not to know Hebrew, that this language is classical in the same way as Greek and Latin'.[19] Slouschz's vision of a synthesis of Greek and Hebrew can be found already in an article on the sculptor Mark Matveevich Antokolskii (1843–1902) published in *Ha-Hashkafah* in 1897, in which he writes: 'The day will come that the spirit of Israel will blend into the spirit of Greece and absorb it. Then the good and the useful will reign over beauty and aesthetics. Without the latter losing its worth because the two will be twins.'[20] I am not aware of any other scholar who advocated the knowledge of Hebrew in the diaspora as strongly as Nahum Slouschz; it seems that Joseph Klausner later adopted from him the formula 'to create a Hebrew air in the *Galut*'.[21]

For the Hebrew readers of his history of Hebrew literature Slouschz wrote a completely new preface, beginning with an apology for the French edition: the difficult material conditions of Hebrew literature, he says, 'have produced thinkers [anashim hogi daʾut] like Ahad Ha-am and Harnak (i.e. Rabbi Nahman Krochmal) but no Shakespeare, Goethe or Ibsen'. Therefore he did not want 'to frighten the spirit of the readers who are experts in the beauty of Japhet [i.e. his Western readers] with the artistic creation of our literature' but rather 'to show to all those who are standing outside of the life of the ghetto the positive side of our literature [...], its high value from the point of view of national psychology [...] and its importance as an echo

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de Jehuda Abrabanel (Messer Leone Ebreo)', *Revista de estudos hebráicos*, 1 (1928), 192–240.

[19] It is notable that the renaissance of Hebrew as a classical language was advocated by Eastern European Jewish scholars with a classical education (the same approach can be found in Joseph Klausner's history of Hebrew literature).

[20] Naḥum Slushts, 'Mikhtavim mi-Rusiyah', *Hashkafah* 18 (1897), 8–10 (10).

[21] Yosef Kloyzner, 'Darkhah veyesodotehah shel ha-brit ha-ʿivrit ha-ʿolamit', *ʿAm ve-sefer*, October 1952, 14–18 (16).

of every part of Jewish life'.[22] He explains to his Hebrew readers the special purpose of the French edition:

> Among the writers of all nations I asked, within [...] the heartwarming harmony of the new international life, for a right of existence also for our Hebrew literature as a collective echo of our people [...], in which past and present embrace, in which feelings of religious fervour and the uniqueness of an ancient people come together; this literature is special because its language is the language of the holy scriptures, the memory of which awakens holy feelings of hundreds of millions of men among the most enlightened nations.

The French edition had described Hebrew literature as a struggle between humanism and rabbinism lasting for more than two centuries. In the Hebrew edition Slouschz takes special care to explain to the Hebrew reader his view of Hebrew humanism. Secular literature, i.e. the literature of the Haskala, is defined by two interrelating qualities: first, the humanist quality (*khunah humanit*; Slouschz adds the French *humanisme* in brackets), i.e. the desire to be fond of our literature and to show to the 'people and to the princes' (*ha-ʿamim v ha-sharim*, a quotation from the Esther scroll 1.11 where Queen Vashti is brought before the king to show her beauty) and also 'to the Jews who are grazing on other fields the beauties of Hebrew literature and the taste which it contains'. This tendency, Slouschz adds, occurred in many languages at the beginning of the development of their literature, i.e. during the European Renaissance.[23] The second quality is the *tekhunah humanitarit ʾo ḥovevet ʾadam* (and he adds in brackets the French *humanitariste*) which began in the days of Mendelson 'who aspired to bring the light of Haskalah [...] to the neighbourhood of the ghetto, [the quality] which Ranahu [i.e. Rabbi Naftali Herz Wessely or Weisele] called *Torat ha-adam*'.[24]

This humanist idea guided Nachum Slouschz's own scholarly work over many decades. It is to be found most clearly in Slouschz's second sphere of interest (besides modern Hebrew letters): the Phoenician inscriptions of Carthage. Slouschz started collecting Phoenician

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[22] Naḥum Slushts, *Ḳorot ha-sifrut ha-ʿivrit haḥadashah* (Warsaw: Tushiyah, 1906), vol. I, p. 8.

[23] Ibidem, vol. I, p. 9.

[24] These lines are all the more remarkable if they are read in the context of the still prevailing prejudice which held that Judaism and Humanism are almost mutually exclusive; cf. Friedrich Niewöhner, 'Anmerkungen zum Begriff eines jüdischen Humanismus', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 34, 1991, 214–224.

inscriptions systematically in 1910, fascinated by the idea of a Hebrew-speaking Carthage which laid bare the ancient roots for a new Hebrew identity. Slouschz's vision of the ancient Hebrew civilization included the Phoenicians and their offspring, Punic Carthage. With his discoveries Slouschz presented something like an unfulfilled possibility of European history:

> Might it not be said that there was a time when this beautiful Canaanite language[25] ruled in Carthage, the rival of Greek and Latin even in an epoch when Greek had already conquered the Orient? And, as we have already intimated, if Rome had failed to crush Carthage, neither Latin nor Roman Law would have been the heritage of the Mediterranean, but the language of David and Hannibal, and the law of Moses and of Hiram.[26]

It does not seem far-fetched to read Slouschz's foundation myth against the background of humanist European historiography: European humanists from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment had been looking out for the names of ancient people known to Greek and Roman authors in order to create a national epic and a national culture in the vernacular.[27] And few of them had, historically, better cases than Nachum Slouschz.

For a foundation myth for the new Hebrew nation that continued the heritage of the Tanakh, Slouschz needed, of course, a reference to Carthage in the Tanakh. He found it in the prophet Isaiah, who had written: 'Cross over to Tarshish; wail, o inhabitants of the coast, is this your exultant city (*ha-z'ot lakhem ʿalizah*) whose origin is from days of old, whose feet carried her to settle far away?' (Is. 23.6–7). Whereas the translators of the Septuagint had rendered the word 'tarshish' as Καρχηδόνα (the Greek name for Carthage), Slouschz identifies the same city in the word *ʿalizah*, in which he recognizes the name

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[25] Slouschz leaves no doubt about the identity of the language spoken in Carthage and Hebrew: 'And we Hebrew writers, we who write and feel in our biblical tongue, have recognized at once that this so-called Phoenician language is nothing more nor less than Hebrew—a pure Hebrew dialect, nearly the same as was spoken in the country of Israel […] Language and script show us that this Phoenician is for us Hebraists nothing but Hebrew.' Nahum Slouschz, *Travels in North Africa* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1927), p. 228.

[26] Slouschz, *Travels*, 241.

[27] Yisraʾel Kahan remembers that Slouschz dreamed about Carthage as a child when he believed that its Hebrew name was Kokhav. See Yisraʾel Kahan, 'Ha-ḥoker veha-ḥofer ha-romanti: ʾAl prof. Naḥum Slushts', *Moznayim* 24 (1967), 424–429 (426).

of Elissa, the Phoenician princess, founder of Carthage and unhappy lover of Aeneas, more commonly known as Dido.[28]

Slouschz published his discoveries on the inscriptions of ancient pagan and Jewish history in Northern Africa in the *Revue Tunisienne*, in the *Revue du Monde Musulman* and in *Archives Marocaines*. For his magnum opus in this field, the *Thesaurus of Phoenician inscriptions* (*ʾOtsar ha-ketuvot ha-finikiyot*) published in 1942, he received the Bialik prize of the same year.[29] Its merits and shortcomings can be assessed only by an orientalist, but it is not difficult to observe that the volume is modelled on the Thesauri of Greek and Latin inscriptions and thus on the tradition of Western antiquarianism. It is written entirely in Hebrew and preceded by a detailed survey of relevant scholarship in the West from the late sixteenth century to the present, reminiscent of Tchernichowsky's introduction to the Hebrew *Odyssey*.[30] As witnesses for the close relation between the Hebrew and the Phoenician languages Slouschz quotes, among many others, St Augustine of Hippo,[31] who had called the language of the Old Testament 'familiarissima',[32] and Shmuel David Luzzato[33] who had said, upon seeing a publication of Phoenician inscription, that the Phoenicians did not use any language but Hebrew. In the article *La civilisation hébraïque et phénicienne à Carthage*, published in the *Revue tunisienne*, Slouschz evokes as his latest witness Gustave Flaubert, who had seen in the society of Carthage the same race and the same milieu which he had studied for his *Hérodias*

[28] Naḥum Slushts, "Al ḥarvut Ḳatargah', *Ha-mitspeh* (Cracow), gilyon gimel, 20 January 1911, pp. 5–6.

[29] Though Slouschz was acknowledged and admired by many of his fellow scholars he did not find a follower in the field of Phoenician studies. His discoveries were quoted only very selectively, e.g. in Georg Rosen, *Juden und Phönizier* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929), pp. 123, 153, 165, 169–170, 176.

[30] In the preface to the *Thesaurus* Slouschz reminds us that Homer did not know the word 'Canaan' but called the people 'Phoenicians' (φοίνικες) or 'Sidonians' (Σιδόνες). The translators of the Septuagint translated Canaan as Phoenicia; the same translation is suggested by Stephanos from Byzantium. Saul Tchernichowsky inverted this translation when he rendered, in his translation of the *Odyssey*, the Phoenicians or Sidonians as *Knaʿanim* or *ʾanshei Knaʿan*. Cf. ʿAminadav Diḳman, 'Homeros shel Tshernihovski', in *Shaʾul Ṭshernihovski: Meḥḳarim u-teʿudot*, ed. Boʿaz ʿArpali (Jerusalem: Mosad Byaliḳ, 1994), pp. 420–471.

[31] Naḥum Slushts, *ʾOtsar ha-ketovot ha-Finiḳiyot: ʾOsef shire sifrut Kenaʿan* (Tel Aviv: Mosad Byaliḳ, 1942), p. 27.

[32] Augustine of Hippo, *Locutiones de Genesi*, I, 89 ('hebraeam puto, quia et punicae linguae familiarissima est, in qua multa invenimus hebraeis verbis consonantia').

[33] Slushts, *ʾOtsar*, p. 28.

(set on the eastern side of the Dead Sea).[34] Eleven years later, in 1922, Slouschz' own Hebrew translation of *Salammbô* was published in Warsaw.[35] The translation is not only a rare combination of the translatorial and scholarly skills but also a very good example of Slouschz's attempts to establish a link between the pre-rabbinical past and the Renaissance of Hebrew literature in his own time. The Carthaginian princess, her noblemen and mercenaries were—60 years after the first publication of the novel—relieved of the burden of speaking a most elegant French and began to speak in their very own language. In the annotations, the translator did not fail to mention that the language of Karth Hadash was indeed Hebrew, explaining among linguistic details that the goddess Astarte had been called *harabt* or *rabatenu*, as he had himself found in the inscriptions.

The search for the remnants of the ancient Mediterranean Hebrew civilization was much more than a work of scholarship. In his travel memoirs Slouschz noted: 'No man can look without emotion on the ruins of Carthage. To the Jew their appeal is a thousand-fold stronger than to any other traveller. […] They represent an epoch when the Hebrews dominated the history of the Jews and the Phoenicians, when the two people spoke the same language, lived under the same civilization, and used the same script'.[36] In a speech given (in French) at the Institut de Carthage Slouschz goes one step further:

> Gentlemen, I do not wish to calumniate, I do not want to blame anybody. I am only aiming at the revision of a process. I am well aware that the Rome of the Emperors has exerted upon this part of the globe a work of reparation (*une œuvre de haute réparation*),[37] that under their

[34] N. Slousch, 'La civilisation hébraïque et phénicienne à Carthage', *Revue tunisienne* 18 (1911), 213–239 (215). Cf. Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, tome IV (Paris: Charpentier, 1910), p. 244.

[35] Gustave Flaubert, *Salambo*, translated by Naḥum Slushts (Warsaw: A.Y. Shtibl, 1922). The translation was later highly praised by Leah Goldberg: Le'ah Goldberg, *Sifrut yafah 'olamit be-targumeha le-'Ivrit: Hartsa'ot be-ḳurs le-safranim* (Tel Aviv: Ha-merkaz le-tarbut, 1951), p. 91.

[36] For a recent study of the problem see: Reinhard G. Lehmann, *Who needs Phoenician? Vom Nutzen des Phönizischen für das Verständnis der Sprache des Antiken Israel*, in *Israeliten und Phönizier: Ihre Beziehungen im Spiegel der Archäologie und der Literatur des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*, ed. Markus Witte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), pp. 39–94.

[37] It is notable that this rather unusual French expression was taken from a description of Caesar's rebuilding of Carthage. Amédée Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire romain depuis la fondation de Rome jusqu'à la fin du gouvernement impérial en occident* (Paris: Didier, 1865), p. 66.

> dominion this country has known a period of glorious prosperity. And yet, beneath this welfare an injustice has been done, a work of destruction committed; the ruin of a whole civilization which presents itself to us in a form more attractive than we were made to believe; it is maybe this primal injustice which has to be considered as the principal reason for the social dissolution of the admirable Punico-Roman community, which was so original—a dissolution which the benefits of the Roman peace did not compensate for.[38]

Nahum Slouschz stood up in front of the French scholarly community and confronted—with the gesture of Brutus—the descendants and heirs of Roman civilization with their original sin: the destruction of Hebrew-speaking Carthage. This speech makes us aware of Slouschz's double role, on the one hand the French scholar or, as he describes himself in a letter to Bialik in 1928,[39] the 'only *finokolog* [Phoenician scholar] in the world, pupil and heir of Philippe Berger (1846–1912) who was the pupil of Renan', on the other hand the Zionist Hebrew writer and translator.

It should be added that Slouschz developped the Canaanite foundation myth long before Adayah Gur Khoron (Adolph Gurevitch), Yonatan Ratosh and the other members of the so called Canaanite movement which without Slouschz would certainly never have existed.[40] Slouschz himself never claimed the authorship of their ideas or associated himself with the movement in any way, but Zalman Shnoeur makes it quite clear in his memoirs that he believed that Slouschz's ideas had been stolen.

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[38] 'Messieurs, je ne médis pas, je ne veux incriminer personne; c'est plutôt la revision d'un procès que je entreprends; je sais bien que la Rome des Césars avait accompli sur ce point du globe une œuvre de haute réparation, que c'est sous sa domination que ce pays avait connu une période de prospérité glorieuse. Cependant, dans le fond de ce bien-être, il y avait une injustice commise, une œuvre destructrice accomplie, cette runie de toute un civilisation qui se présente devant nous sous des aspects plus attrayants qu'on n'a voulu nous faire croire, et c'est peut-être cette injustice originelle qui doit être considérée comme la cause principale de la dissolution sociale de cette admirable société punico-romaine si originale, dissolution que les bienfaits de la paix romaine se montrèrent impuissants à enrayer.' N. Slousch, 'La civilisation hébraïque et phénicienne à Carthage', p. 239.

[39] 'Ḥalifat mikhtavim me-Naḥum Slushts ve-Ḥ.N. Bialik', *Gnazim: Ḳovets le-toldot ha-sifrut ha-ʿivrit bedorot ha-aḥronim*, vol. 3 (1969), pp. 261–282 (p. 273).

[40] In the Russian context it is notable that Vladimir Jabotinsky was the first to print Adaya Gurevitz's articles under the pseudonym 'El-Raid' (Arab. 'The pioneer') in the journal *Razsvet* between 1931 and 1932 (15 and 22 February 1931, 1 and 15 March 1931, 20 and 27 December 1931, 3 and 17 January 1932, and 14 February 1932).

Slouschz's scholarly work and political activities intersected in 1908 when he visited (on a mission initiated by Zangwill) the region of Tripoli-Cyrenaica to investigate the possibilities of a Jewish settlement. In his confidential report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organization he praises the great advantages of Libya and does not forget to mention its Jewish past. He strongly recommends a settlement in the territory which was inhabited only by nomadic tribes; it was fertile and had a climate milder than Sicily with temperatures rarely rising beyond 25 or 27 degrees Celsius even in July.[41] I suspect that he did not so much share the pragmatic approach of the territorialist movement (the affinities to which cost him many sympathies in Zionist circles) as sense the sudden opportunity to transform his scholarly discoveries of a Hebrew past in Northern Africa into reality.[42] More evidence for the mutual influence of the traveller, the scholar and the Zionist activist can be found in Slouschz's Hebrew travel writings:

> Only a few days have passed since I have left Paris in the boat *The City of Naples* and I am already another person, sailing on the sea on which our Hebrew fathers sailed in the *Aniyot Tarshish* (which we would call today 'transatlantic'…) but I am not fleeing my Hebrew God, it is him I am hoping to find in […] the land of sand, and the spring and the youth of the Hebrew.

Slouschz here does not refer to Palestine but to Northern Africa. He felt that he himself had reached the Tarshish of the ancient Hebrews: 'I am alone with the last Hebrews in the land of the North [Tunisia], they are my brothers and are familiar to me in feeling and spirit, some of them are able to understand my speech.' He describes his encounter with a rabbi in the Sahara, author of Hebrew songs and hymns and unaware of the Hebrew poets in Europe, whom he told about the thousands of Zionists in Europe—with a feeling of brotherhood between the almost prehistoric rabbi and Hebrew writer and the Sorbonne professor.

One could ask if all this still falls under the heading of Russian Jewish cultural continuity. After one of his visits to Carthage Slouschz

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[41] Nahum Slouschz, *Tripoli and Cyrenaica: Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organization, strictly private and confidential*, translated by P.J. Hartog (London: Bradbury, Agnew & Co., 1907).

[42] He quotes also Guy de Maupassant, who had observed that 'Tunis is neither Arab nor European, […] it is, more than anything else, a Jewish city, and nowhere else are the Jews as much at home as in Tunis' (Slouschz, *Travels*, p. 232).

noted: 'During my travels in this country I have often regretted the absence of a few hundred Russian Jews who, with their nervous vitality, might furnish the initiative and energy which these Jews lack.' Slouschz acted in accordance with his origins as we learn from his own report:

> I have dealt with this problem in 1911, when I delivered in front of the young Jews of Tunis a series of lectures in French and in Hebrew, and tried to persuade them to take a more earnest view of the questions which confront the modern Jew. I had the satisfaction of learning that my words had borne fruit.[43]

In 1919, during his stay in North America, he introduced the mythology of the Mediterranian Sea to the Hebrew reader in a booklet with the title *Iyye Ha-Yam* [Islands of the Sea].[44] Later he revised and extended the booklet into *Sefer ha-Yam* [The Book of the Sea] which was published in Tel Aviv in 1948. Another small book, *Mots'i ha-'ivrim* [The Origins of the Hebrews] published in Tel Aviv in 1945 is entirely dedicated to the myths of origin of the Hebrew nation. His influence on the literature of the Hebrew Renaissance was considerable (though it has never been studied). It was obvious to Joseph Patai who remembered, in an unpublished review of *Sefer ha-Yam* (containing also a sonnet dedicated to the book) the poet Saul Tchernichowsky declaiming, on the shore of the Baltic sea in the summer of 1922, the Hebrew hexameters of his translation of the *Odyssey*, pausing suddenly and exclaiming excitedly: 'Is this not an original Hebrew song indeed?' ['Hari zo ke'ein shirah 'ivrit maḳorit mamash!'].[45] Tchernichowsky never quoted Slouschz but his work would certainly not have been the same without the influence of his childhood friend. Slouschz was the first to explore the pre-rabbinical past in search for a new Hebrew identity; he describes his approach to Jewish history in an article of 1907:

> The Jewish historian haunted by the idea of the moral mission of the Jews, can generally find no other method than to represent the Jewish nation to us as a religious group or community, having its own mentality and its own morality which dominated its entire life, without taking too much notice of the political and social rôle which the Jewish nation

[43] Slouschz, *Travels*, p. 240.
[44] *Iyye Ha-Yam* (New York: Kadimah Publishing Association, 1919).
[45] Ḡnazim Archive, Nahum Slouschz, file 3203, 1.

> has played in the world. […] But it is proved to be completely upset and contradicted by everything that contemporary history has revealed to us concerning the life and evolution of Judaism in Western Europe itself before the tenth century, where Jews were numerous but where Rabbinism, nevertheless, did not yet exist.[46]

Nachum Slouschz's interest in foundation myths was not restricted to the ancient Phoenicians. He wrote a long study on the origins of Russian Jews.[47] In Slouschz's view, they did not immigrate from Poland, nor were they to be identified with the Khazars. He observes, instead, that the period of the appearance of the great masses in Eastern Europe coincided with the reduction of the agglomerations in Iraq and Persia. He attempted to show that one could find in the Crimea and in South East Russia Jews who still bore traces of their oriental origin (e.g. in their pronunciation of Hebrew), and argued that the greatest proportion of the Slavic Jews had, until the sixteenth century, spoken Slavonic languages as well as Aramaic, Hebrew and Persian (in the Caucasus) and Greek (in the Crimea).

There was yet another period in Slouschz's scholarly life which falls beyond the scope of our topic. He became the first archaeologist of Erets Israel, he unearthed the first synagogue in Tiberias and was for many years the editor of *Kovets ḥa-haverah ha-ʿivrit lehakirat ʾarets-yisraʾel ve-ʿatiḳoteha*. Nachum Slouschz also wrote, probably during the 1950s, a very personal biography of his father David Solomon Slouschz in thirty-four chapters which is preserved as a typescript in the Gnazim Archive.[48] It is a unique document showing a family tradition as well as the continuity of values, ideas and visions from the Maskilim to the early Zionists.

Slouschz's œuvre contains, besides the books mentioned, more than a thousand published articles. Only the Hebrew part is, to a substantial extent at least, bibliographically documented (in the card catalogues in the Gnazim Institute). This article has focused on a small part of Slouschz's œuvre in order to highlight his work as an intermediary and as a Hebrew humanist. The question remains why Slouschz did not and still does not receive the acknowledgement he deserves. Was

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[46] Nahum Slouschz, 'Across unknown Jewish Africa', *The Jewish World*, 15 March 1907, p. 229.

[47] Nahum Slouschz, 'Les fondations du judaïsme dans l'Europe Orientale', in *Mélanges Hartwig Derenbourg* (Paris: Leroux, 1909), pp. 67–81.

[48] David Slushts, 'Toldot Ḥayai', *He-ʿavar* 5 (1956/57), 29–43.

it because, as he himself suspected in a letter to Bialik (who was one of his greatest supporters, printed his articles in his ethnographic journal *Reshumot* and planned to edit his collected works),[49] he was 'not the scholar who today dedicates a book to Ahad Ha-am, tomorrow to [Menachem] Ussishkin and the day after tomorrow to [Judah Leon] Magnes?' This was certainly not the only reason. Few contemporaries understood or were ready to accept the possibilities he offered for the introduction of Hebrew into European culture and to build a new Hebrew identity on pre-rabbinical Hebrew roots and on their interrelations with the classical world. If there is one obvious weakness in his work it is that he at times overstressed the bridges between different epochs at the cost of historical accuracy.[50] Jewish and Western scholars alike have neither felt on safe ground in adopting his results nor attempted to verify them and to select the convincing parts which might serve as an inspiration for oriental studies and for the understanding of modern Hebrew culture.

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[49] The planned publication of Slouschz's collected works was interrupted by Bialik's death in 1934.

[50] An article dedicated specifically to the Jews of the Crimea can serve as another example of how Slouschz connected the distant past and present: The article finishes with a note on Saul Tchernichowsky who was born 'on the Crimean peninsula, the limpid and clear view of which evokes the air and the sky of Hellas and of Judea; it is a perfect Mediterranean picture to which the indigenous Muslim population adds an oriental touch. The memory of the Hellenes and the Jewish hellenists is still alive in the regions bordering on the peninsula.' Nahum Slousch, 'Les Krimtchak: Judéo-Tatars de la Crimée', *Revue du monde musulman* 9, 1909, 82–94 (94).

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CULTURAL ANXIETIES OF RUSSIAN-JEWISH EMIGRÉS: MAX EITINGON AND LEV SHESTOV

Olga Tabachnikova

The focus of this chapter is on two outstanding Russian Jews: Dr Max Eitingon, a psychoanalyst of Russian-Jewish origin, founder of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and a close associate of Freud; and the irrationalist and existentialist philosopher Lev Shestov, whose essentially postmodern premonitions are of increasing interest today. Both lived in the first half of the twentieth century outside Soviet Russia, and left behind a corpus of private correspondence, which, together with other materials, sheds light on their inner worlds. Shestov was based in Paris, but often visited Berlin, where Eitingon resided at the time before moving to Palestine in 1933.

It would be a valuable exercise in its own right to compare and contrast such individual destinies as these. There is, however, a more profound task to be found beneath it: to place these individual case studies in the broader cultural context of the epoch and to reconstruct a landscape of the cultural-ideological concerns and attitudes within the Russian-Jewish Diaspora. Discerning typical characteristics from singular ones is a complex, maybe insoluble, problem. In this case one is forced—on the basis of studying these two lives—to pose questions or make suggestions rather than provide answers, thus leaving the reader to extrapolate from the particular to the general.

Max Eitingon was born in Mohilev in 1881 into a Jewish dynasty of rich fur merchants. He grew up in Leipzig, where his family moved when he was 12, and was thus a product of German as much as of Russian-Jewish culture. From 1920 to 1933 Eitingon lived in Berlin where he co-founded and led the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute; in 1926 he became the president of the International Psychoanalytic Association. He prospered professionally within German academia while preserving close ties with the Russian-Jewish Diaspora. With the rise of Nazism, Eitingon emigrated to Palestine where he died in 1943, having established the first psychoanalytic institute there (which

still carries his name). Eitingon was a member of the 'Committee'[1] and Freud's long-term close friend, as well as the first psychiatrist to undertake analytic training under Freud. Yet, despite his prominence in the psychoanalytic movement, he remains a figure in the shadows, a sort of éminence grise, largely forgotten, although re-emerging again in recent years. Thus the French professor of psychology, Michelle Moreau Ricaud, challenges the image 'of a rather insignificant man, slightly sad, with a little moustache and round spectacles, who looks older than his years [...] and who practiced in the shadow of Freud' and draws a different picture of 'a highly effective and energetic intellectual who played a central role in psychoanalytic developments'.[2] Eran Rolnik, an Israeli scholar, continues this line by placing Eitingon at the centre of the establishment of psychoanalysis in Palestine/Israel—a process which he interprets as an interplay between eastern and central European intellectual traditions and between different versions of Zionism.[3] What seems neglected, though, and what I intend to stress here, is Eitingon's active involvement in Russian-Jewish life in exile, above all as a generous Maecenas in cultural matters. The only coverage this aspect of his life has received took on a detective or spy story slant, to which I shall return later.

One of the cultural figures in exile whom Eitingon enthusiastically supported was Lev Shestov (born in Kiev in 1866, emigrated in 1920 and died in Paris in 1938)—a Russian Jew, a philosopher of tragedy, an 'existentialist who emerged long before Existentialism',[4] who was one of the first to introduce Husserl to the French (by challenging his phenomenological ideas), who fought against Reason in favour of Faith, who published in Russian, French and German alike,

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[1] A 'Secret Committee' was founded in July of 1912 and consisted of the most loyal supporters of Freud. Eitingon joined the group in 1919, on Freud's suggestion, to become its sixth member (in addition to Abraham, Jones, Ferenczi, Rank and Sachs).

[2] Michelle Moreau Ricaud, 'Max Eitingon and a question of politics', *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 65, 4 (December 2005), 353–366 (353–354).

[3] Eran J. Rolnik, 'Russian Imageries, Berlin Sensitivities and Jerusalem Realities: The Establishment of Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine/Israel', an extended version of the paper read at the International Psychoanalytic Congress in Berlin on 26 July 2007; id., 'Migration and Interpretation: German-Speaking Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine, 1920–1950', in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. by Dan Diner, vol. III (Leipzig: Simon-Dubnow-Institut Leipzig, 2005), pp. 27–46 (27).

[4] This formula is introduced in Renata Gal'tseva, *Ocherki russkoi utopicheskoi mysli XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), p. 77.

and befriended, both personally and professionally, many Western-European intellectuals.[5]

Anne-Christine Sass has examined the life and heritage of another Russian Jew, Fishl Shneerson, a psychologist and pedagogue, who lived in Berlin in the 1920s and who is equally relevant to the current discussion. There seem to be some common features in Eitingon's, Shestov's and Shneerson's world outlook and, in part, in their activities, which appear characteristic of the times and, to some extent, of Russian-Jewish Diasporic life, especially in Berlin. These include, first of all, the utopian flavour of their aspirations, and the fact that their sensibilities form a prism refracting the encounter between Eastern-European and Western-European Jewry.

As Sass explains, in the 1920s, Shneerson co-edited the German journal *Ethos* in Berlin which set out to establish 'a redemptive science of humankind', [...] 'to form the basis for a common European "culture", which would cure the human propensity for wars and help the various peoples to live together in unity'. He believed that 'only a deeper understanding of the human soul and its potential would allow a transformation of the alienated modern human being into a person with faith and confidence for nobleness, the beautiful and the good'.[6] Shneerson essentially worshipped culture and tried to incorporate Jewish beliefs into the secular life of Berlin. He formulated a kind of new social psychology, a secularized Hasidic definition of being human, effectively synthesising psychology, art, philosophy and Hasidic Chabad piety. 'From a present-day point of view', Sass concludes, 'Schneersohn's ideas may seem utopian and his image of humanity too optimistic or naïve.' She stresses, though, 'his practical work in its remarkable commitment to humanity in times of Europe's and Germany's disintegration and his striking attempts to bridge the gap between East and West European Jewish self-conceptions'.[7]

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[5] To learn more on Shestov's Russian-Jewish affiliations, see Olga Tabachnikova, 'Russian Jews in Exile From Bolshevik Russia: The Case of Lev Shestov as an Example of Russian-Jewish Existential Compromise', *East European Jewish Affairs*, 38, 2 (August 2008), 185–200.

[6] Anne-Christine Sass, from the paper 'Fishl Schneerson in Berlin 1922/23–27', delivered at the University of Bath, England, in September 2008, at the conference 'Cultural Continuity in the Diaspora: Paris and Berlin in 1917–1937. The Experience of Russian Jews in an Era of Social Change', held within the framework of the Leverhulme Trust sponsored project 'Russian Jewish Cultural Continuity in the Diaspora' (of which the current volume is an outcome).

[7] *Ibid.*

In the same vein, it seems to me, Max Eitingon believed in culture and supported its development through financing those individuals and causes which he perceived as culturally promising. His activity in Palestine where he was 'active in movements for young immigrants; offered consultations and trained leaders of various youth movements, and, in 1934, was the adviser to Henrietta Szold, Director of the Youth Alya, an organisation responsible for emigrant children'[8]— this activity was akin to Shneerson's multifaceted social and educational work with children. Psychoanalysis, which became Eitingon's life-long vocation, was for him another way to help humankind, to cure sick souls and to make the world a better place. Those he supported and loved (like, for example, Shestov or Freud himself), he loved unequivocally and with complete dedication. While he was substantially rooted in German culture, raised on German education and based in German institutions, his social and political activities suggest a familiar utopian pattern of socialist variety typical for a product of Eastern-European Jewry: thus, upon establishing the psychoanalytic institute in Berlin—a place for treatment and for training—and financing it out of his personal fortune, he intended to 'fulfil a social commitment to the working classes';[9] as Ricaud describes, 'it was a matter of some urgency that a large number of analysts should be rapidly trained to respond to social need, to the traumas of the war and of the ensuing peace, as well as to the problems of unemployment and social misery'.[10]

In Palestine, he continued to help the poor by making special financial arrangements for them, staying faithful to the Berlin tradition of free treatment in cases of need. A certain aura of social utopia which hovers over these noble aspirations points to the general spirit of the times and echoes the Silver Age in Russian culture, and generally refers to the European fin de siècle, which was accompanied also by political turmoil. In the case of Eitingon, with psychoanalysis being his main occupation, one detects a mixture of, on the one hand, a collectivist consciousness and socialist utopia, again rather along an Eastern-European Jewish line, and, on the other hand, an interest in human psychology and the life of an individual soul. This latter aspect

[8] Ricaud, pp. 361–362.
[9] Ricaud, p. 358.
[10] *Ibid.*

was to be found in abundance, though often in a subtler form, in the writings of Lev Shestov.

Shestov's search was also Salvationist in character, and, like Shneerson, Shestov was an enemy of ideologies, viewing them as inevitably enslaving entities. But Shestov's philosophy was marked by a strong flavour of individualism and despair. It was concentrated fully on a tragic human predicament, on the interplay between the private and the general, and had a profound emphasis on human psychology. Following Dostoevsky, Shestov announced that 'a thousand-year-old kingdom of reason and good-conscience is coming to an end and a new era—that of psychology—is dawning'.[11] Paradoxically though, what Shestov believed to be his adogmatic philosophy, was in fact marked by dogmatism and authoritarian discourse. This led some to place Shestov in theory close to the opposite camp—of materialists and positivists. More generally, Shestov himself, who, like Eitingon, had a multi-cultured identity, represented a blend of Jewish, Russian and European sensibilities. Louis Shein, for example, saw him as psychologically Russian, but thematically European,[12] and Sydney Monas suspected his closeness in spirit to Hasidism.[13]

Such a positioning of forces on the ideological front—with a collectivist-socialist utopia facing pessimistic individualism—reflects, once again, a meeting point between Eastern-European and Western (or Central)-European intellectual perspectives, and is, in particular, reminiscent of the reception of psychoanalysis in Palestine (filtered through Zionism). When Eitingon moved there with his German psychoanalytic model based on the Berlin institute, he had managed to institutionalize the discipline on the Jewish land. Rolnik, who stresses that the many years which Eitingon and his Russian-Jewish colleagues spent in Germany did not weaken their ties to Russian culture, writes, 'Hebrew culture facilitated a particular hybridization between the "Russian Freud"—to whom constructivist-collectivist aspirations have been ascribed—and the original "German Freud"—notorious for his

[11] Lev Shestov, 'Dostoevskii i Nitsshe: Filosofiia tragedii', in idem, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh* (Tomsk: Vodolei, 1996), I, pp. 317–464 (p. 352).

[12] See Louis Shein, *The Philosophy of Lev Shestov (1866–1938): A Russian Religious Existentialist* (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), p. 12.

[13] See Sidney Monas, 'New Introduction', in Lev Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969), pp. v–xxiv (p. viii).

individualistic and pessimistic *Weltanschauung.*'[14] Rolnik emphasizes 'the elective affinity which early Zionists professed to find in psychoanalysis's revolutionary nature', juxtaposing their 'New Man' and the 'Freudian Man'.[15] On this issue Eitingon can be inscribed into, as Ricaud puts it, 'a Zionist trend that was less religious than socialist.'[16] In the course of his life he was close to various convinced Zionists (such as Hermann Cohen, David Eder, Dorian Feigenbaum, Siegfried Bernfeld) although the issue apparently was never discussed with Freud. Moreover, while Freud caused much controversy and disappointment, essentially subverting the Judaic line and divorcing his psychoanalytic ideas from Jewishness per se, Eitingon's own affinity to the Jewish tradition only grew over the years. During his first year in Palestine he gave a lecture at one of the meetings of the fledgling Psychoanalytic Institute entitled 'Sexuality and Dreams in the Talmud' which exemplifies the ethnic-nationalist atmosphere that dominated the institute at the time.

Shestov, on the other hand, was much more ambivalent in this respect. As I have shown previously,[17] he exemplified a perfect Russian-Jewish existential compromise, identifying himself with Russian culture, while drawing heavily on his Jewish roots which he guarded very carefully from any external intrusion. He never displayed any open leanings towards Zionism, although in August 1898 he took part, upon his father's request, in the second Zionist Congress in Basel. In 1925, he wrote to his sister Lisa upon her emigration to Palestine: 'Those at the top of the Zionist movement are not very fluent in cultural matters, especially in philosophy.'[18] Given the profound interest shown by both Shestov and Eitingon in Nietzsche's ideas, one should not forget here a form of convergence between Zionism and the Russian version of

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[14] Eran J. Rolnik, 'Migration and Interpretation: German-Speaking Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine, 1920–1950', in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. by Dan Diner, vol. III (Leipzig: Simon-Dubnow-Institut Leipzig, 2005), pp. 27–46 (p. 44). More generally on these issues see Rolnik, 'Therapy and Ideology: Psychoanalysis and Its Vicissitudes in Pre-state Israel (Including Some Hitherto Unpublished Letters by Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein)', *Science in Context*, 23, 4 (December 2010), 473–506.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Ricaud, p. 361.

[17] See Tabachnikova, 'Russian Jews in exile from Bolshevik Russia'.

[18] From Shestov's letter of 27 August 1925 to his sister Lisa and her husband Lev Mandel'berg. Cited in Natal'ia Baranova-Shestova, *Zhizn' L'va Shestova*, 2 vols (Paris: La Presse Libre, 1983), I, p. 323.

Nietzsche. This convergence was essentially based on an assumption which Olga Litvak has described as follows:

> Zionism is in a certain sense burdened by Jewishness much the same way that Nietzsche longs for a new culture on the basis of a fundamental rejection of Christian morality. This strain in secular nationalist thinking (represented by Zionists like Berdychewski or Brenner) dispenses with the Jewish in Jewish nationalism entirely in favour of what is called 'sheer' Zionism, a form of pure nationalist egoism. While on the surface it is a counter-intuitive idea, in fact Zionism and Judaism are really two competing forms of collective discipline. It is much less of a problem for Zionists on the left [the variety to which Eitingon seems to have been close, O.T.], as Marxism is far more consistent with Jewish ideas, drawn primarily from prophetic material, of collective justice and revolution. In fact, it is possible to describe Zionism as conflicted at its core between the Nietzschean and the Marxist tendency.[19]

This convergence brings us back to the encounter between Eastern and Western European Jewish perspectives. What seems to be the key point uniting these influential ideologies, is the revolutionary idea of moulding a New Man, of stripping away the rudiments of the old world and old time. A striving for this, as it were, cultural revolution and inner, if not outer, renewal was a mark of the epoch, characterized by the crisis of nihilism and renewed religious search. Such concerns appear to have dominated the minds of both Shestov and Eitingon. As their correspondence and writings reveal, the scope of their individual interests encompassed supra-temporal (and largely supranational) themes, touching on the tragic human predicament, on finding harmony in the disintegrating world both within and beyond the individual, on trying to reconcile the private and the general, and in many ways their concerns can be viewed as a reaction to the above mentioned intellectual trends, such as the ideas of Nietzsche, Freud and Marx.

While Eitingon and Shestov found each other fascinating conversationalists and were able to spend long hours in intellectual discussions during Shestov's annual visits to Berlin where he lived on Eitingon's hospitality, they responded differently to the currents of thought referred to above. Shestov, like many of his contemporaries and fellow-philosophers-to-be, had an inoculation of revolutionary Marxism in his youth. His doctoral dissertation at the faculty of law

[19] Olga Litvak, from our private correspondence, 2009.

of Kiev University, which concerned the conditions of the Russian working class and the new Factory Legislation, remained unpublished as it was found too left-wing by the censorship committee. He passed through this phase much faster, it seems, than Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov or Petr Struve, and soon parted with this infatuation, having moved to literature and religious philosophy. Moreover, unlike the majority of his compatriots, Shestov's problematics was much more theoretical than socio-political. His only known writings on the issues of the day were a manifesto against Bolshevism ('What is Russian Bolshevism?') written in 1920 and a manifesto against Nazism ('The Menacing Barbarians of Today'), written in August 1934, although he did make diversions of a socio-political nature in his philosophical-literary writings more often than one is accustomed to think.[20] Eitingon, by virtue of his work, was much more of a practitioner than a theoretician, and far more involved in social activity. While the vector of Shestov's activity pointed predominantly inwards, Eitingon's, to a large extent, looked outwards. Amongst his psychoanalytic colleagues Eitingon remained, despite his most active practical work, as it were at the philosophical (or theoretical) end of the scale. As Ricaud writes, 'Jung, jealous as he was of Eitingon, considered him "a totally ineffectual prattler"' and criticized his 'theoretical intellectualism', predicting that Eitingon would achieve nothing of value except perhaps becoming 'an elected member of the Duma'[21] (notice how Eitingon is singled out here as a Russian).

In contrast to Shestov, Eitingon's involvement with Marx's ideas does not look straightforward. Thus, while in Berlin, he 'relentlessly targeted' his colleague Wilhelm Reich's involvement with communist ideology, and later, in Palestine, objected to Reich joining their developing psychoanalytic community. Yet it was Eitingon who was named as the main benefactor of the Palestine Communist Party. Eran Rolnik's responded to this discrepancy as follows:

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[20] On this issue see Sergei Poliakov, 'Russkaia ideologiia i russkaia utopiia v filosofii L'va Shestova' in *Filosofskii vek.* Almanac: Issue 5. *Ideia istorii v rossiiskom prosveshchenii*, ed. by T.V. Artem'eva and M.I. Mikeshin (St Petersburg: St Petersburg Centre for the History of Ideas, 1998), pp. 265–278; some discussion is also present in Olga Tabachnikova, *Philosophy as Poetry, or Don Quixote's pilgrimage through Russian Literature: Lev Shestov from a Literary Perspective* (London: Anthem Press, forthcoming).

[21] Ricaud, pp. 357, 362.

> Eitingon's communism was essentially secretive and humanitarian and should be regarded in its Zionist and anti-fascist context, while Reich's was much more ideological and passionate. Furthermore, it was most probably Reich's personality, and not his politics, that gradually rendered him a Persona non grata among his colleagues, who indeed appreciated his clinical contributions.[22]

Still, the mystery of Eitingon and communism seems to persist, as we shall see in due course. The picture is much clearer with Eitingon's attachment to Freud. It took time for Freud to grow truly fond of Eitingon after the latter first came to see Freud in 1908 with his own neurosis, and had, as it were, the first 'training analysis' in history. The two came to be very close, to the point of Freud regarding Eitingon almost as part of the family and confiding in him his personal and health problems. At the same time Eitingon became Freud's 'Helmsman' (*Steuermann*), one of his most devoted followers, and the most faithful to the cause. When responding to multiple accusations of authoritarian behaviour that forced people to leave him, Freud mentioned Eitingon as an example of those who stayed steadfastly loyal to him for some fifteen uninterrupted years in collaboration and friendship. In his letters Eitingon informs Shestov that he talked about Shestov's works to Freud (which is confirmed by the Eitingon-Freud correspondence). In the early days of their friendship, Shestov suggested to Eitingon that 'it is a pity that Freud became a doctor rather than a philosopher, since if not for his specific tasks linked to medicine, his bravery and shrewdness might have led him to very interesting discoveries.'[23] To this Eitingon replied that Freud would probably regret similarly that Shestov was not a doctor: 'But I think I am closer to the truth here,' was Shestov's conclusion.[24] Shestov's attitude to Freud's ideas was respectful but calm—perhaps because their conceptions of man and human predicament operated at very different levels. I see the fundamental connection between their respective philosophies in the fact that both, either explicitly (Freud) or implicitly (Shestov), perceived man's relations to culture as rather forced, feeble and secondary.

Shestov keenly corresponded with Martin Buber whose attitude to psychoanalysis, as is well known, was critical. It is apparent that

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[22] Rolnik, from our private correspondence (his letter to me of 16 January 2009).

[23] Shestov reports this conversation in his letter of 10 November 1922 to his sister Fania Lowtsky. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, p. 243.

[24] *Ibid.*

Buber, with his highly spiritual and religious ethos, was much closer to Shestov's heart than Freudian deterministic ideas concerning human sexuality. For deeply personal reasons (and partly due to his Russian background) Shestov preferred to silence such issues, seeking refuge exclusively in the spiritual. He was much more interested in Nietzsche than in Freud, interpreting the German philosopher in a very unconventional light, as a suffering individual who rejected the ideas of good entirely out of despair, being led by tragedy to the irrational, 'beyond good and evil'. In a way Shestov, characteristically, ascribed to Nietzsche his own existential path, marked by a defining crisis. For Shestov, this crisis, although mysterious, was clearly personal and involved affairs of the heart. Eitingon's biography also had its share of mystery, but for him it involved a political scandal, which we are still to address.

There were also similarities in their Russian-Jewish upbringing, it seems. As essentially Russian-Jewish intellectuals, both had Russian as their mother tongue,[25] but (orthodox) Jewish parents, with the fathers being particularly strict and authoritarian. Both fathers had strong personalities and were successful merchants who did not share the purely intellectual ambitions of their sons. Thus, for both Shestov and Eitingon their relationships with their fathers constituted a source of pain; for both it was an important inner battle to free themselves from the influence of the father, while preserving their filial loyalty. Shestov suffered a nervous breakdown and had to conceal his marriage to a gentile woman from his parents, while Eitingon suffered from a stutter. Eitingon was better adjusted to living in exile as he was taken out of Russia in his early teens, but Shestov too was sufficiently acquainted with living abroad as he had spent considerable periods in Western Europe before he emigrated from Russia in 1920. Both married Russian-speaking women. Shestov's wife, Anna Berezovskaia, was not Jewish whereas Eitingon had a Jewish wife, Mirra Iakovlevna Raigorodskaia, who was formerly an actress of the Moscow Arts Theatre—a fact which contributed to the choice of the milieu of the Eitingons' friends in Berlin. Amongst them were many members of the artistic intelligentsia, and, as Natalie Grant puts it, their house was open to guests of diverse political orientations:

[25] Although in adulthood Eitingon was clearly more comfortable with German—for example, his letters to Shestov are written in German, while Shestov's responses are always in Russian.

> The Eitingon home in Berlin served as a meeting place for a motley crowd comprising politically neutral émigrés, pro-Soviet Russians residing in Western Europe, and visitors from the Soviet Union.[26]

As a melting pot and a meeting point for Russians of every stripe, Berlin at the time facilitated such meetings. Shestov displayed a certain tolerance towards various Diasporic currents. He published in émigré journals of quite different orientation (such as the very liberal *Sovremennye Zapiski*, the Eurasian *Versty*, and the religious *Put'*).

Shestov's dealings with Berlin publishing houses started in the summer of 1920. At that time the publishing house 'Skify' (Skythians) was set up there by the left SRs (Social Revolutionaries). Among its employees was Shestov's old acquaintance and admirer of his philosophy Evgenii Germanovich Lundberg, who was a Soviet citizen. He was active in Russian literary circles and in politics in the early 1900s, and regarded himself at the start of his literary career as a protégé of Zinaida Gippius, although their paths later parted decisively. Lundberg initiated the plans to publish Shestov's books with 'Skify' in both Russian and German. He also wanted to publish (in these languages as well as in French) Shestov's above mentioned political pamphlet 'What is Russian Bolshevism?' which he believed to be a purely philosophical work and did not bother to read before publication. It was printed in fifteen thousand copies in November 1920. When Lundberg read it (when it was already in print) he was infuriated by its severe anti-Bolshevik stance. He did not put it on sale, and did not give it to Shestov either. A year later, he destroyed the whole print-run, leaving just 50 copies, of which he gave half to Shestov, the other to the state libraries of Soviet Russia. Shestov's dealings with 'Skify' regarding his other books were equally turbulent due to the financial troubles of the publishing house, although they did have a happy ending. His negotiations with other publishing houses, Russian (such as 'Obrazovanie', 'Slovo' and 'Epokha') and German ('Sibyllen-Verlag', 'Dietrich's Verlag', 'West und Ost') alike, in Berlin, and more widely in Germany, were mostly fruitless.

Berlin was effectively Shestov's second home, as his mother lived there as well as his beloved sister Fania and her husband German

[26] Cited in Stephen Schwartz, Vitaly Rapoport, Theodore Draper, and Walter Laqueur, '"The Mystery of Max Eitingon": An Exchange,' *The New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1988, pp. 50–55 (p. 52).

Lowtsky, a Russian-Jewish intellectual, composer and musical and literary critic, who organized and chaired the Russian musical society in Berlin. Shestov was very close with the Lowtskys and it was actually Fania who introduced him to Max Eitingon, as she became Eitingon's student in psychoanalysis and was very successful in this field. Later she emigrated to Palestine where she, together with Eitingon himself, played an active role in shaping the Palestine/Israel Psychoanalytic Society.

Having met Eitingon in 1922 (thanks to Fania) during Eitingon's visit to Paris, Shestov formed a very positive impression of him: 'He is quite a clever and educated person. Talking to him is interesting,' he wrote to German Lowtsky.[27] Since then Shestov and Eitingon sustained a correspondence which lasted fifteen years until Shestov's death in 1938. Following their personal acquaintance, Eitingon offered Shestov unlimited hospitality—to visit him in Berlin and stay for as long as Shestov wished. They enjoyed personal meetings, almost annually, before Eitingon's emigration to Palestine, when Shestov would pay long visits to the Eitingons' villa in Berlin's Tiergarten district. Their warm friendship and intellectual kinship seem to have been undisturbed by the financial relationship of a Maecenas to his protégé. Perhaps it does have the elusive footprint of a slightly excessive enthusiasm in the number and length of Shestov's letters to Eitingon, which are, however, coloured by their very homely tone. The majority of the surviving letters of their correspondence (forty in all, kept in the Shestov archive in the Sorbonne) were written by Shestov to Eitingon.

The topics of these letters are extremely diverse—from very private family issues, such as personal health, to literary, artistic, philosophical and political news involving various intellectuals and cultural figures, both fellow-émigrés and Western-Europeans. In particular this correspondence elucidates the fact hat Eitingon's house was open to the intellectual élite of the Russian-Jewish and Russian Diasporas. A similar picture emerges in Aaron Shteinberg's book.[28] Shteinberg speaks about literary scholars from Russia, grouped around the psychoanalytic journal *Imago*, who tried to reconcile Freud and Shestov by perceiving

[27] From Shestov's letter of (probably) 20 October 1922 to German Lowtsky. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, p. 241.

[28] Aaron Shteinberg, *Druzia moikh rannikh let (1911–1928)* (Paris: "Sintaksis", 1991), p. 248.

them as fighters against the lies and hypocrisy of modern civilization. 'Thus Shestov's visits to Berlin gave Dr Eitingon', Shteinberg explains, 'a desirable excuse to gather in his house alongside his own school also émigré intelligentsia from various countries.'[29]

Besides Shestov, leading intellectuals of both Jewish and purely Russian background such as Mikhail Gershenzon, Alexei Remizov, Viacheslav Ivanov, Andrei Belyi and many others were guests in Eitingon's house and were treated generously with the nostalgic touch of a Russian cuisine involving various types of pancakes ('bliny' and 'vareniki'). Eitingon's wife Mirra Iakovlevna also took an active part in distributing financial support to many of the Russian-Jewish and Russian intellectuals and artistic figures in the turbulent years of emigration and political upheavals. Juxtaposing this correspondence with Shestov's exchange of letters with a few other friends as well as with recent Soviet historiography, it becomes clear that those who benefited from Eitingon's personal fortune ranged widely over ethnic and political wings and included alongside Shestov many other names, such as Gershenzon (who did not emigrate, but paid visits to Europe), Remizov, Tsvetaeva, and the Plevitskaia-Skoblin couple despite their questionable political profile and alleged anti-Semitic associations.

Notwithstanding the hidden psychological burden for Shestov of receiving Eitingon's sponsorship, it is clear that Shestov genuinely regarded him as an intellectual equal, and shared with Eitingon his creative plans and ideas. Thus when working on Plotinus he wrote to Eitingon about Job's scales (which later became the title of Shestov's book) where human grief outweighs the sand of the seas:

> Do they still exist, such Job's scales? [...] And how can one persuade people of their existence? [...] Maybe we'll still see again what in Plato's language 'those blessed ancient men saw, who were better than us and stood closer to God.'[30]

Max Eitingon was, in turn, genuinely fond of Shestov and his work. When he once stumbled across another reader of Shestov (who turned out to be a musician from Zagreb) on a train to Vienna, he rushed to share this with his friend. 'I was astonished by such a coincidence that two copies of your book were in a compartment of a train going

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[29] *Ibid.*

[30] From Shestov's letter of 19 October 1926 to Eitingon. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, p. 356.

across Germany,'[31] Eitingon wrote in a letter to Shestov in the summer of 1926. When Shestov died in 1938, Eitingon sent the following moving lines to Shestov's widow:

> In my life very few people occupied such a place and had such a meaning as he did. It seemed to me that I knew what he was teaching us and where he was calling us, and I loved him for his infinite kindness and the quiet beauty of that embodiment of humanness which he represented....[32]

The roots of this intellectual kinship can be found, perhaps, in the interest of both in the universal human questions. Shestov's approach to the thinkers under his study, i.e. the reconstruction of their philosophical psycho-biography, laid the foundations for the psychoanalytic as well as for the 'narrative psychology' trends in literary scholarship. In effect, he always uncovered the schism between the man and the writer by unmasking the author through treating his fictional works as his self-narrative, and exposing the conflicting discourses of his psyche.[33] This can be viewed as intrinsically relevant to proper psychoanalytic activity, as Freud and Eitingon understood it. In a sense both Shestov and Eitingon explored the correlation between the conscious and the subconscious, only in different domains: Shestov in the domain of philosophy by literary means, and Eitingon in the domain of real life through the methodology of theoretical medicine.

In practical terms, Eitingon's unequivocal support of Shestov was incomparable. Eitingon invested substantial means to facilitate the publication of a full collection of Shestov's works in French translation. The offer came from the publishing house 'Pleiada' founded in Paris in 1922 by Iakov Shifrin. The project, however, came to a halt due to financial difficulties. Eventually, a committee of friends and colleagues was set up to seek financial support and oversee the publication. Funds were sought in particular from a Jewish Maecenas, but in vain, and in the end Eitingon took it upon himself. A relative from the American branch of Eitingon's family became involved financially as well. This American branch of the family apparently contained Max

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[31] From Eitingon's letter of 30 August 1926 to Shestov. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, p. 340.

[32] From Eitingon's letter of December 1938 to Shestov's widow Anna Berezovskaia. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, II, p. 207.

[33] For a detailed discussion on this see Tabachnikova, *Philosophy as poetry*.

Eitingon's cousin Naum Eitingon[34] who was the overall commander of the Soviet mobile terror squad operating in Western Europe and the Americas against the enemies of Stalin. His name was at the centre of a political scandal in the 1930s involving the abduction of the White Russian general Evgenii K. Miller and the joint project of the Soviet secret police and the German Gestapo in the fabrication of evidence against the Red Generals who were purged and murdered in 1937.[35] The aforementioned singer Plevitskaia and her husband, the general Skoblin, who turned out to be a double agent and soon disappeared, were accused of involvement in the plot; Plevitskaia was convicted in France to years in prison, and during her trial in 1938 Eitingon's name came up. 'I have been mixed up in Plevitskaia's trial', he wrote to Freud, 'because in the pre-trial, when she was summoned to declare which resources she had in recent years, she explained that she had had various friends, among whom was a Dr. Eitingon'.[36] Evidence implicating Eitingon proved to be groundless, and the case against him was closed, although enquiries continued to be made covertly, and, as Eitingon wrote to Freud, 'the newspapers have exploited the situation to libel me,' and later on: 'I must say frankly that I have never been affected by these newspaper libels.'[37] Nevertheless, the rumours and accusations that Eitingon was a secret agent persisted over the years, giving rise to a heated debate and multiple publications, where no convincing evidence against Eitingon was produced.

Kirill Khenkin, whose mother was a friend of Eitingon's wife's sister-in-law, and who himself served under Naum Eitingon's command in the NKVD, wrote in his memoirs, speculating about this whole affair: 'No one today will know what really happened.'[38] Having read through

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[34] This is an open question, whether Naum Eitingon (professional nicknames: Leonid Kotov, Pierre Tomas and various others) was indeed part of that American branch or another Eitingon family branch (which are to be found in Belorussia, Moscow, New York and Leipzig). It is also unclear whether he was indeed Max Eitingon's cousin, or a more distant relative of his.

[35] This is according to some sources. Other sources object to this, stating that Shpiegelglas ('Douglas') was responsible for this operation accomplished using general Skoblin ('Farmer'), whereas Naum Eitingon's task was to exterminate Lev Trotsky in Mexico and to carry out various secret operations in Spain.

[36] From the unpublished letter of 8 January 1939 by Eitingon to Freud. Cited in Ricaud, p. 363.

[37] From the same unpublished letter and from another one of 1938 by Eitingon to Freud.

[38] See Kirill Khenkin, *Les Russes Sont Arrivés; l'infiltration soviétique en Occident* (Paris: Scarabée, 1984).

vast materials of conflicting arguments, my inclination is to disbelieve the allegations against Max Eitingon. Yet he did have a considerable income from his share in the revenues of the Eitingon fur company, and it is well documented that this company did business on a large scale with the Soviet Union. So he profited from the Soviet Union, albeit indirectly.

However fascinating this detective line of enquiry might be, my interest is not in it, but rather in the largely supranational, universal nature of intellectual concerns of both Shestov and Eitingon. These concerns, by their broad 'common to all humans' character, were in sharp contrast with more narrowly national, missionary sentiments of many Russian cultural figures in exile, who, willingly or not, did not really integrate into their new Western environment. Being intrinsically connected and fully conversant with Russian culture in exile and in Russia, Shestov and Eitingon did not have their lost homeland at the forefront of their daily thoughts, unlike Gippius, Merezhkovskii, Bunin, Kuprin, Khodasevich and many others. Was it perhaps a consequence of their Jewish roots, with the concomitant metaphor of exile which loosens personal connections to any lost land? But then we have various counter-examples, like, to name but a few, a 'Fatherland union of Russian Jews abroad' (*Otechestvennoe ob'edinenie russkikh evreev za granitsei*), founded in 1923 in Berlin, whose members were united in the common goal to 'return to the Jewish nation its national pride and respect towards it, and to accomplish as much as possible in order to erase from the Russian Jews a disgraceful label of Bolshevism.'[39] They believed it their duty to criticize their own nation openly, but justly, in order to struggle against the blind and indiscriminate criticism towards the Jews on the part of anti-Semites. This stance is curiously reminiscent of that of Albert Einstein:

> Before we can effectively combat anti-Semitism, we must first of all educate ourselves out of our slave-mentality which it betokens. We must have more dignity, more independence in our own ranks. Only when we have the courage to regard ourselves as a nation, when we respect

[39] E. Solominskaia, 'Soiuz russkikh evreev v Germanii (1925–1935): Urok istorii', in *Russkoe evreistvo v zarubezh'ie* (*Russian Jewry abroad*), vol. V (X), ed. by Mikhail Parkhomovskii (Jerusalem, 2003), pp. 201–226 (p. 202).

> ourselves, can we win the respect of others; or rather, the respect of others will then come of itself.[40]

The members of the above mentioned Union of Russian Jews, who were blamed by their compatriots for all sorts of sins, such as the betrayal of their nation, were preoccupied by the destiny of Jews in relation to Russia. In contrast, Shestov and Eitingon seem to have cut themselves off entirely from the new (Soviet) country (save for personal contacts), and their thoughts were either about their Western-European present, or centred around Palestine, perceived as the Sacred Land. 'I can't imagine myself in Soviet Russia,' Shestov wrote in a private letter in 1925, and further on, 'I am delighted by the prospect of visiting Palestine!'[41] He referred to these plans as a dream and continued: 'I can't express how excited I am by the opportunity to visit Palestine. [...] I am so thrilled about it that I can't do anything at all.'[42] The trip, for logistical reasons, had to be delayed until 1936. Eitingon emigrated to Palestine as soon as the National Socialists came to power in Germany, although the American branch of his family begged him to join them in the States.

It is also possible, of course, that Shestov's and Eitingon's lack of fixation on Russia was due to their professional fields of activity, which was philosophy and medicine rather than creative writing per se. After all it is first of all poets and writers who seem to have suffered nostalgia to the largest extent, perhaps due to their intrinsic link to the language and culture of their homeland, to their potential readers. For example, Andrei Belyi could not withstand exile and returned. Kuprin decided to go back to his homeland to die. Similarly Evgenii Zamiatin suffered

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[40] Michael Berkowitz, from the paper '(Repercussions of) Russian Jews in Berlin: The Visual Idiom of E. M. Lilien, the (Zionist) Conversion of Albert Einstein and Other Eruptions of Jewish National Sentiment', delivered at the University of Bath, England, in September 2008, at the conference 'Cultural Continuity in the Diaspora: Paris and Berlin in 1917–1937. The Experience of Russian Jews in an Era of Social Change', held within the framework of the Leverhulme Trust sponsored project 'Russian Jewish Cultural Continuity in the Diaspora' (of which the current volume is an outcome).

[41] These quotations are respectively from Shestov's letter of 27 August 1925 to his sister Lisa and her husband Lev Mandel'berg and of 22 September 1925 to his sister Fania Lowtsky. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, p. 323.

[42] From Shestov's letters respectively of 22 September and 8 October 1925 to his sister Lisa and her husband Lev Mandel'berg. Cited in Baranova-Shestova, I, pp. 323–324.

heavy nostalgic pangs, and was constantly thinking of coming back to Russia when death put a stop to his agony.

It is, however, equally possible that it was simply a matter of individual characteristics which do not lend themselves to generalizations of this kind. After all there exists a rational/irrational dichotomy by which an individual personality is often marked and which is illustrated best, it seems, in David Aizman's story 'On Alien Soil' where an argument is described between a husband and wife, Russian-Jewish exiles in France. She wants to go back despite having personally suffered pogroms and tries to defend the pogromists by their blindness and poverty. His objections are far more rational: 'My ribs won't care who's breaking them', he says. Yet, as Alice Nakhimovsky comments, it is the wife's illogical arguments that win the day.[43]

This path of rational/irrational inner composition appears most probable, shedding some light on human behaviour vis-à-vis nostalgia and the general character of intellectual preoccupations and emotional attachments, rather than an attempt to explain it by national/ethnic or professional reasons. Despite Shestov's irrationalist philosophy, as a person he remained, using the words of John Bayley, 'a model of sanity and common sense'—a phenomenon that Bayley assigns to Shestov's 'remarkable and unique kind of cultural balance', the origins of which he traces to Shestov's multiple identity as a Jew, a Russian and an European.[44] The same can clearly be said about Max Eitingon. However, a question of this kind—of what determines our cultural choice in exilic conditions—hardly has a definite, clear-cut answer. It is much more probable that only by looking at a large variety of examples a conclusion, if any, can be reached. If so, then the case of Shestov and Eitingon should make a contribution to that pool.

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[43] For the quotation and Nakhimovsky's argument, see Alice Stone Nakhimovsky, *Russian-Jewish Literature and Identity: Jabotinsky, Babel, Grossman, Galich, Roziner, Markish* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 13.

[44] See John Bayley, 'Idealism and Its Critic', *The New York Review of Books*, 18 June 1970, pp. 3–5 (p. 3).

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PINḤAS RUTENBERG AND VLADIMIR BURTSEV: SOME UNKNOWN ASPECTS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PALESTINE AND THE RUSSIAN EMIGRATION IN EUROPE

Vladimir Khazan

The definitive history of the life and activity of Pinḥas Rutenberg (1878–1942), a well-known Russian revolutionary and, later, a major Jewish political and public figure who became the first head of the Palestine Electric Company (*Ḥevrat ha-ḥasmal*), has yet to be written. Despite the existence of two large books about his life, by Ya'ari-Poleskin (1939) and She'alti'el (1990; both in Hebrew), many pages of his biography and of important events in the history of the modern Jewish community in the Land of Israel (under the British Mandate referred to as Palestine) remain obscure. The present article focuses on previously unexamined and unknown aspects of Rutenberg's life and activities.

The name of Vladimir L'vovich Burtsev (1862–1942), a renowned 'hunter of provocateurs'—a public and political figure, historian and publisher, journalist and literary figure—is known only to those who are familiar with the Russian emigration. Nevertheless, the comment by a researcher of the 1990s who concluded that 'the striking biography of Burtsev is reflected only partially in his memoirs and not entirely satisfactorily reflected in reference works' is still true today.[1]

As 'the Sherlock Holmes of the revolution', Burtsev belonged to the realm of legend. Having devoted his life to 'rooting out provocateurs', he became, according to the definition of the police colonel and historian A. Spiridovich (Spiridovich 1991: 47), 'an honest fanatic', who amazed people with his zealous and indefatigable devotion to his mission. The well-known physician and public figure I.I. Manukhin recalled that, after the Bolshevik coup, when Burtsev was imprisoned in the Peter-Paul Fortress,

[1] O.V. Budnitskii, 'Vladimir Burtsev i ego korrespondenty', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 6 (1992), 110–122 (p. 110).

> he had asked me to get for him a cell next to the cell of S.P. Beletskii (the former head of the tsarist Department of the Police between 1910 and 1916 and colleague of the Minister of Internal Affairs), and was now fervently communicating with him through the wall in order to inform him of all kinds of interesting things.[2]

Later, Manukhin reports, he was transferred to the prison hospital Kresty; 'enjoying his conversations with S.P. Beletskii, he [Burtsev] did not want to take advantage of the freedom which the new regime offered him' and 'when Beletskii was transferred to the Kresty hospital he requested to be transferred there as well. There they were kept in one ward and even slept on neighbouring cots' (Manukhin 1958: 106).

V. Zenzinov had a similar, but even more striking version of this situation:

> When, under the Bolsheviks, V[ladimir] L['vovich] ended up in prison, fate brought him together with Beletskii, the former head of the Police Department, one could not tear Burtsev away from him: apparently they even slept on the same bed (Zenzinov 1943: 362).

The attitude of Rutenberg to Burtsev or, more precisely, to people of his profession, was not unambiguous.[3] When Boris Savinkov, a well-known Russian terrorist and close friend of Rutenberg, sent the former 'a certain person' to carry out a secret mission (both Rutenberg and Savinkov were then émigrés, in Italy and in France, respectively), Rutenberg wrote from Genoa on 6 November 1912, asking Savinkov not to set up any more similar meetings:

> You see, as I get older, my feeling of discomfort grows when I meet people of certain professions, including that of Burtsev, people who may be useful and necessary for history and humanity but whom I find unsympathetic. All the more so when these people are lackeys, among

[2] On the topic of his conversations with Beletskii in the Peter-Paul Fortress about *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* see V.L. Burtsev, *Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov: dokazannyi podlog* (Paris: Oreste Zeluk, 1938), pp. 77–80.

[3] This ambiguity derived from the 'specific character' of Burtsev's 'profession' that, from the point of view of usual moral norms, was quite a risky matter. Burtsev himself, in his memoirs, proudly related 'the amusing episode' that took place during a session of the trial involving the double agent and police spy Azef, presided over by German Lopatin, Peter Kropotkin and Vera Figner (this session was devoted to questioning M.E. Bakai, a former member of the tsarist secret police).

> other things. […] I have not been a provocateur and I can not tell you anything now about other provocateurs.[4]

The relations between Burtsev and Rutenberg had an extended history, a 'Jared's age', as Burtsev expressed it in one of his letters cited below. It was in *Byloe*, the journal that Burtsev edited, that Rutenberg published an account of the tsarist provocateur Gapon who, on 9 January 1905, headed a march of workers to the Tsar that was fired on by order of the government (in Russian history the event is known as 'Bloody Sunday').[5] Further meetings between the author and the editor took place in Petrograd after the February Revolution and continued in prison, where both found themselves after the Bolshevik coup. In 1919, after his flight from Russia, Rutenberg published articles in Burtsev's Paris newspaper *Obshchee delo*.

A new stage in their relations occurred at the end of the 1920s and in the 1930s, as indicated in several of Burtsev's letters to Rutenberg, which are now located in the latter's personal archive.[6] However, from these letters it is extremely difficult to obtain a reliably complete and detailed picture of the relations between the author and his correspondent in Palestine. However, some general contours of their relations are undoubtedly clear, and we shall attempt to reconstruct them here. These relations assume a well defined character in late 1929 and in early 1930 when, after having cast a broad net of anti-Bolshevik exposure activity, the tireless investigator Burtsev traced the covert influence of the Comintern, that extended from Moscow to Palestine. Rutenberg provided important financial support to the zealous exposer of Communist activity. In Paris Burtsev was leading a quite miserable existence while he was engaged in combatting his Bolshevik arch-enemy. Roman Gul', who visited Burtsev, described his daily life as follows:

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[4] Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [State Archive of the Russian Federation, abbreviated GARF], f. 5831, op. 1, ed. khr. 175, l. 26. It is possible that, among other things, this was a reaction of Rutenberg to Burtsev's meeting with Azef, which had taken place two and a half months earlier in Frankfurt and was recounted by Burtsev in *Matin* (Aug. 18, 1912, in French; reprinted in Russian translation in the Parisian émigré journal *Illiustrirovannaia Rossiia* (no. 48 [133], 1927, 1–6).

[5] Rutenberg participated in the march. When the tsarist soldiers fired on the demonstrators, he saved Gapon by pulling him out of danger. Later, when Gapon's activity as an agent-provocateur became known, Rutenberg organized and supervised his punishment.

[6] The Rutenberg Archive (hereafter RA) is presently located at the Electric Company (*Ḥevrat ha-ḥashmal*) in Haifa.

> The former editor of *Byloe* and *Obshchee delo*, the former exposer of Azef, whose name was well-known in newspapers around the world, lived on the first floor in a not simply poor, but pitiful tiny apartment, consisting of a miniscule room with an even smaller kitchenette. The disorder and slovenliness in the apartment were unimaginable. Books, newspapers, and piles of *Obschee delo* covered everything. Vladimir L'vovich occupied himself with one thing only: the fight against Bolshevism, even if he had to engage in it by himself! (Gul' 2001: 197).[7]

In his memoirs A. Sedykh also wrote about this situation, comparing Burtsev's idealism to that of Don Quixote:

> For his whole life this man fought windmills, rose high on wings and came crashing down to earth. To some degree he was quite alone like the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, but he did not even have a faithful arms-bearer, he lived his whole life like a monk sworn to poverty, gazing with wonder at the alien and completely indifferent world with his weak-sighted eyes. He was fanatically devoted to his idea. Carthage had to be destroyed and he was so totally swallowed up by the idea of this destruction that he never gave a thought to other, materialistic aspects of life (Sedykh 1979: 90).

Sedykh further recalled:

> The fight against the Bolsheviks and Bolshevik provocation, other than that Burtsev saw no meaning in life. One could not understand how this person continued to exist—he had no interest in earthly goods and considered spending money on himself, on his personal needs, to be the greatest sin. If Vladimir L'vovich happened to get hold of some hundred francs, he would immediately run to the press and order [them to print] his next brochure. This weakness was well known to the friends who were concerned about Burtsev and, eventually, stopped giving him money. Instead they paid for his room in a hotel, purchased for him food coupons for a Russian student dining room, while Vladimir L'vovich would screw up his eyes and look at people scornfully as if to say: 'What are you doing? How much money you are wasting! As a matter of fact

[7] Burtsev's well-known asceticism (see A.V. Rumanov, 'Shtrikhi k portretam', *Vremia i my*, 95 (1987), 212–232 (p. 227)) was not related to his situation as an émigré since, for example, he lived the same kind of life in Petrograd after the February Revolution. S.P. Mel'gunov, who knew Burtsev well, described his living quarters in the same terms: 'But in this regard one could not say anything because in every room of his small disorderly apartment, where all the floors and chairs were piled with books and papers so that there was no room to sit, someone was already sitting awaiting his turn for 'conversations' (S.P. Mel'gunov, *Vospominaniia i dnevniki* (Paris: Les éditeurs réunis, 1964), p. 141).

> I have ready an essay I wrote on Pushkin and I could have used the money to publish it…' (*ibid.*, 90–91).

The comparison of Burtsev to Don Quixote was common among those who knew him well. Not only writers but even some of the characters they created associated Burtsev with this image. For example, in Breshko-Breshkovskii's novel *Belye i krasnye* (The Whites and the Reds) one character, who was based on a historical figure, the investigator Vladimir Grigor'evich Orlov, replied to the question 'But where is Burtsev now [i.e. after the Bolshevik coup]', as follows:

> In the Kresty Prison, unfortunately. The Bolsheviks put him away there. He knows too much about them to go around free. He knows who received how much money from the Germans…A stubborn person! They say to him: 'Stop exposing people and we shall release you'. He won't hear of it. Not for the world! And what would that cost him? He could promise and, later, when he was free beyond their clutches, he could pursue his own goal relentlessly! What a stubborn old guy, what a Don Quixote! (Breshko-Breshkovskii 1926, I: 79).

The same comparison appeared in his obituary written by V. Zenzinov:

> His whole life Burtsev was an enfant terrible and a Don Quixote. By the way, physically he so much resembled the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance that he could have played him on the stage without makeup—all he would have to do was to take off his glasses (Zenzinov 1943: 363).

A new stage in the relations between Burtsev and Rutenberg came with the outbreak of the Arab riots in Palestine. On 23 August 1929 anti-Jewish riots began and lasted several days in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and other locations. The immediate cause was a dispute between the Jews and Arabs about the Wailing Wall. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Huseini, directly accused the Jews of appropriating Muslim holy places for Jewish worship.

'The Arabs wanted to slaughter the Jews in Palestine; the goal of the Jews was to respond to this with a holy war.' That is what the famous Yiddish writer Sholem Asch wrote at that time. He continued:

> If this is considered a sin, then we are all for such a sin. What has just taken place in Palestine was for us a good test, we say this openly to the whole world. Not only in Palestine but wherever we are, any attempt at violence against Jews should be met with a counter-reaction. It is just this that our tortured brothers in Palestine are asking and the lesson we

> are proposing here we shall remember well. It would be a good thing if others also remembered it.[8]

In connection with the Arab terror in the *yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) the view was expressed that what was then taking place reflected interference on the part of the Comintern, whose influence was increasingly felt at that time. Thus, it was hardly surprising that rumors about external encouragement of Arab attacks against Jews reached the ears of Rutenberg, who reacted to the bloody events with pain and anger. His diary contains an undated entry which, apparently, refers to these events:

> Are not those people right who say that agents of Moscow are behind the slaughter? If the most serious suspicions and rumors are confirmed, that will cause a world-wide anti-Bolshevik scandal. However, one should not give way to panic and rush to conclusions (RA).

Despite its reservations and conciseness, this entry testifies to the doubts that plagued Rutenberg in connection with the wide-spread rumours that Communist machinations and intrigues played a significant role in organizing the armed attacks of the Arabs against the Jews. One of the main initiators and proponents of this interpretation of events in Palestine was Burtsev and it is quite likely that the view expressed in Rutenberg's dairy was a reaction to Burtsev's views.

Burtsev was not the only one to hold such a view. For Jews living in the Land of Israel it was no secret that Moscow influenced the actions of the local Communists. What people had in mind was not the actual armed clashes themselves, which were understood as reflecting religious and national strife, but the general atmosphere created by propaganda in favour of the Arabs' 'liberation struggle'.

The leading body in the struggle against capitalism in Palestine was the local Communist organization that consisted of several hundred activists (on Comintern activity in Palestine see Dotan 1991). Its leader was Vol'f Averbukh (1890–1937?), who used the pseudonyms Daniel and Abuziam. Starting at the age of 15, he took part in the Russian revolutionary movement. After his arrival in the Land of Israel in 1922, he was soon compelled to go underground. Other members of the Communist cell in Palestine were Joseph Berger-Barzilai (born Yitzhak Zhelaznik, 1904–1978), Nakhum Leshchinskii, and Moshe

[8] Cited from 'The Hebrew and Yiddish Press,' *The Jewish World*, 29 Sept. 1929, p. 24.

(Meir) Kuperman. The Communists had their own printing facilities, which published propaganda in Hebrew and Arabic. In August and September 1929 Averbukh was not to be found in Palestine. Shortly before this the Comintern had summoned him to Moscow (Berger-Barzilai 1968: 92). There was, however, a Comintern agent in Palestine, the Czech Bohumíl Šmeral (1880–1941), who, before World War I, had been a representative of the Czech Social Democrats in the Austro-Hungarian parliament. He subsequently became one of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a prominent figure in the international Communist movement.[9] In his memoirs, published many years after the events in Palestine, Berger-Barzilai presented the portrait of this full-bodied giant with eyeglasses who moved slowly and laboriously and who could be easily mistaken for the representative of a large European firm, which was indeed the way he appeared in the forged documents that he carried (Berger-Barzilai 1968: 93–4).

It is clear that the presence in Palestine of this Comintern agent was not known—either to the British authorities or to the rank-and-file communists in the country. However, Berger-Barzilai attributes Shmeral's presence in Palestine to his exile from Prague and Europe in general, that was ordered by Stalin, who considered the Czech Communist to be a threat to his own authority (*ibid.*, 94).When the Arab attacks began, Šmeral was living close to Jerusalem in the Arab village Beit Sefafa (where the Communist press was also located). He then moved to a less exposed place. He was concerned that if it was learned that he was in the country, people might conclude that the Comintern was involved in the events (*ibid.*, 92). For this reason everything possible was done to help the Comintern agent leave the country before his presence was detected. Recalling this situation almost 40 years later, Berger-Barzilai wrote that the small group of Communists, including Leshchinskii, Kuperman and himself, who knew about the secret visit of Šmeral to Palestine pledged not to reveal this secret to anyone (*ibid.*, 100).

According to Berger-Barzilai, who had been imprisoned for many years by the Soviet Communist regime,[10] and, therefore, had no

[9] His book *Chekhoslovaki i ėsery* (The Czechoslovaks and the SRs [Social Revolutionaries]) was published in Soviet Russia (Moscow, 1922).

[10] In 1931, Berger (as he was then known) was sent by the Comintern to Berlin as secretary of the Anti-imperialist League (whose chairmen were Albert Einstein and Henri Barbusse). A year later he was called to Moscow to head the Comintern division

reason to conceal or distort matters, neither the local Communists nor the Comintern agent had any connection to the provocation of Arab actions. For the Communists in Palestine the riots came as a complete surprise and, in fact, were targeted against that goal for which they had worked unceasingly—the creation of a single, supra-national front that would fight against British capitalism and its Jewish and Arab defenders and apologists. However, as Berger-Barzilai indicated, a different contemporary interpretation dominated in regard to the events.

European circles, including Communist ones (for example, in Germany) saw the Arab acts as an expression of spontaneous liberation activity that was related to nationalist extremism and to the language of Comintern slogans. As Berger-Barzilai recalled, the first move of the Palestinian Communists was to reject this point of view. However, since their verbal response was weak, it was decided to yield to the development of events and to await instructions from Moscow (*ibid.*, 1–2).

Moscow did react: a letter from Averbukh arrived in Palestine, stating that the Comintern had decided to evaluate the events that had taken place in Palestine as a manifestation of the revolutionary moods of the Arab masses (*ibid.*, 103). Thus, Moscow appeared to reassert its role in the struggle for political influence in the Middle East. At the same time it accepted responsibility for organizing the bloody events that had occurred.

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for the Middle East. In 1934 he was removed from this post for 'Trotskyite agitation', expelled from the Party, and sentenced to five years imprisonment. In 1936, for refusing to provide evidence against Zinov'ev, he was sentenced to death but this was commuted to eight years in prison. After spending a total of 15 years in Soviet jails and prison camps, he was rehabilitated and released in 1956. The next year he left the USSR for Poland, from where he returned to Israel. Berger-Barzilai published, in Russian, a section of his prison memoirs about Parfenov, the author of *Through the valleys and mountains*, a song of the partisans in the Soviet Far East, and about Iurii Esenin (the son of the famous poet Sergei Esenin), whom he met during his period of imprisonment (I. Berger, 'Iz tiuremnykh vospominanii', *Novyi zhurnal*, 74 (1963), 178–185.

Having passed through all the circles of hell of the Soviet camps, Berger-Barzilai believed that the Jewish members of the Palestinian Communist Party had been lured to the Soviet Union to facilitate the preparation of Arab Communist agents, whom Moscow considered more dependable: 'At that time, when the massive execution of Palestinian Jews was taking place in the USSR', Berger-Barzilai said in an interview with a correspondent of *Posev*, 'the schools of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the NKVD were putting considerable effort into preparing cadres of Arab Communist agents' (*Novoe Russkoe slovo*, 11 April 1958, p. 3).

With his keen political sense and his close scrutiny of Bolshevik involvement in various geographical regions, Burtsev perceived what Berger-Barzilai and his comrades had sworn to keep a deep secret. The Rutenberg Archive contains a typewritten copy of Burtsev's article *The Russian Bolsheviks Have Reached Palestine.* The author sent this article to Rutenberg in early January 1930 (see the letter published below that relates to this). The article states that Comintern agents had a hand in the August events and, in order to achieve its goals, they had intentionally poured oil on the fire which was already burning in the region. The following is a translation of the full text of this document:

> *The Russian Bolsheviks Have Reached Palestine*
> For several years now the Russian Bolsheviks have been paying serious attention to Palestine. They had already reached Egypt, the Hijaz, Abyssinia, Turkey, and Persia. Of course, they could not help trying to win influence for themselves in Palestine.
>
> At the present time in Palestine the Russian Bolsheviks have a Communist Party, mostly comprised of Russian Jews although it is not very large. No more than 500 members belong to the organization. But still, with 500 members and with the considerable financial means supplied to them and the support of the global organization of the Comintern, the Communist Party in Palestine already poses a great danger. That is who was responsible last year for the terrible slaughter in Palestine. The Communist Party in Palestine is constantly being replenished by Communist propagandists from Russia. When the government in Moscow gives permission for Jews to leave Russia for Palestine, then it invariably includes its agents in each group emigrating. En route these agents become familiar with the people emigrating with them with the result that, by the time they arrive in Palestine, they have not only increased the ranks of the local Communist Party but have also recruited additional agents.
>
> The Communist Party in Palestine is financed from Moscow by the Comintern. In addition to special subsidies the Communists in Palestine receive $25,000 annually to spread their propaganda. They mainly conduct their activity among Jews and Arabs.
>
> Among the Arab Communists are several leading sheikhs, who are on the Comintern's payroll. These Arab leaders follow the orders of the Communist commissars from Moscow. Recently they took an active part in anti-Jewish activities, which in many places have led to mass bloodshed. One of the tasks set the Arab leaders by the Communists was to systematically arouse hostility towards the British and paralyze their activity not only in Palestine, but also in Cairo, Suez, etc., and to prepare the Arab population to oppose the British in the event of an uprising or of war.
>
> The supervision of the activity of the Communists in Palestine by the Comintern in Moscow is conducted via Constantinople and, partially,

via Berlin as well; that is where the heads of the Comintern's Oriental division, its so-called 'residents', can always be found.

The financial affairs of the Palestinian Communists are dealt with mainly via Berlin, the center of Bolshevik propaganda activity in the East.

One of the leading figures in the Oriental division of the Comintern in Moscow is the well-known Bolshevik Piatnitskii.[11] Once, not long ago, he arrived secretly in Palestine to check things out and to pass on special instructions to local activists. The Palestinian Communists include a representative of the GPU (the secret police], representatives of the *Razvedupr* (i.e. military intelligence), and organizers of operations.

Among the Palestinian Arabs propaganda work is being conducted not only by the Comintern but also via the Saudi Arabian peninsula, from the kingdom of Hijaz. Based there is a Bolshevik representative in the city of Jedda, a [Comintern] agent, the general consul of the USSR, the Tatar Khakimov (Kerim Abdurakhukovich).

The Hijaz regime and its king Ibn Saud are very sympathetic to the Russian Bolsheviks and the Bolsheviks value this connection. They promise the Hijaz government support against the British and this is particularly appreciated by the Hijaz government. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are attempting to supply to the Hijaz government, on favorable terms, goods that it needs, such as kerosene, manufactured goods, etc.

In 1928 a Soviet trade mission arrived in Arabia under the flag of <illegible>. The head of the mission was the former first secretary of the Soviet embassy in Japan Astakhov.[12] Although this mission was dispatched to Yemen,[13] another independent state, on the way it visited Hijaz, where it transferred to Soviet general consul Khakimov $80,000 to organize Arab activity in Trans-Jordan and Palestine.

The work of the Comintern in Palestine is also supervised via Cairo and Alexandria, where money and also literature are sent via secret cells on Soviet long-distance ships of *Sovtorgflot* [the Soviet merchant marine]. Their route is: Moscow—Odessa—Constantinople—Cairo—Alexandria. All these ties involve representatives of the GPU and the Comintern.

V. Burtsev

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[11] Iosif Aronovich Piatnitskii (real family name Tarshis, 1882–1938), Soviet Party and government official.

[12] Georgii Aleksandrovich Astakhov (1897–1942), Soviet diplomat who was of Don Cossack origin. In the 1920s he worked for the Soviet trade mission in Berlin and, later, in the Far East. In 1939, when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was concluded, he was Soviet chargé d'affaires in Germany. He was repressed and died in one of Stalin's prison camps (see V.V. Sokolov, 'Tragicheskaia sud'ba diplomata G.A. Astakhova', *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1997.1, 167–183, and Evgenii Gnedin, *Katastrofa i vtoroe rozhdenie: Memuarnye zapiski* (Amsterdam: Fond im. Gertsena, 1977), pp. 57–58.

[13] Astakhov did reach Yemen in 1928. He sailed on the ship *Tver'* (subsequently renamed *Tovarishch Nette*), the ship to which Maiakovskii devoted a poem. Astakhov published (under the pseudonym G. Ankarin) his memoirs in the book *Po Iemenu* [Around Yemen], Moscow, 1931).

Agents and 'secret advisers' who had fled to the West provided Burtsev with information about events and developments taking place in the Near and Middle East that were inspired by the Kremlin. These people were former Soviet intelligence agents, 'non-returners' (to the USSR) or, as they were still referred to then, representatives of 'the third emigration'. As a rule, the secret information they provided to Burtsev did not differ from what they subsequently related on the pages of sensational exposé books they penned later. This is particularly true of Evgenii Vasil'evich Dumbadze (1899–?) who had worked for the Cheka (under the pseudonym Rokua) and had been a Comintern agent. Dumbadze turned up in Paris in 1928. He had been sent to work in the Soviet trade mission in Istanbul but fled to the West, where he became a 'nevozvrashchenets', one of the non-returners. In 1930 he published the book *Na sluzhbe Cheka i Kominterna*, to which Burtsev wrote a preface (G.A. Solomon wrote another preface for it). Burtsev noted:

> I met E.V. Dumbadze for the first time in late 1928, in Paris. I found him to be a convinced old enemy of Bolshevism. He immediately began to speak to me about the Bolsheviks as the enemy. I didn't need to convince him of anything. What I told him about the Bolsheviks was only commentary to what he said himself (Dumbadze 1930: 11–12).[14]

Another source of information for Burtsev was the former Chekist Georgii Sergeevich Agabekov (1895–1937), who had occupied a high position in the central structure of the OGPU, as the head of the section for the Central and Middle East of the Foreign Department. After being sent as a resident of Soviet intelligence to Turkey in October 1929, he deserted his Communist masters and, for that, was assassinated by them in France. Burtsev was in personal contact with Agabekov.[15]

One of his contemporaries, who described Agabekov in an extremely unflattering way, pointed to Burtsev as having been Agabekov's exposer:

> For a long time Burtsev was also busy with the matter of the escaped Chekist Agabekov. I met this person several times in the offices of *Poslednie*

[14] Burtsev also wrote about Dumbadze in his article 'Razoblachaite bol'shevikov' [Expose the Bolsheviks], published in *Obshchee delo*, 2 (1929).

[15] See, for example, three of Agabekov's letters to Burtsev, published by D. Zubarev in the appendix to G.S. Agabekov, *Sekretnyi terror: Zapiski razvedchika* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1996), pp. 364–366.

> *novosti*, where he attempted to gain the trust of P.N. Miliukov. He had an 'oriental' appearance, his face was pock-marked and, during conversations, he looked aside, constantly averting his gaze from the person he was speaking to. Once when, in order to stress his own importance, he was explaining in detail what an important position he had held in the GPU, I couldn't contain myself and asked tactlessly: 'So, did you have to kill people with your own hands?' Agabekov was silent and then, without batting an eyelash, replied: 'It's dirty work. If it's necessary to kill someone and this doesn't contradict your principles, why not kill?' Soon, via his informants, Burtsev learned that Agabekov had already succeeded in 'getting settled in his specialty' and, in particular, as an informant for the 'Sigurants'[16]—not only about work abroad of the Comintern and the GPU but also about émigré matters. Burtsev exposed Agabekov. If I am not mistaken, the latter was eventually entrapped by his former masters and killed. This was a terrible person and he perished, one may say, in the only way that was fitting for him' (Sedykh 1979: 98).

Agabekov shared his vast information about the Soviet intelligence machine in two books written while he was still in their employ but were published in Berlin after his flight to the West: *Zapiski chekista* [Notes of a Member of the Cheka] (1930) and *Cheka za rabotoi* [The Cheka at Work] (1931). In writing about the interest of the OGPU's Foreign Department in Palestine Agabekov provided information about the work of agents there, e.g.:

> The Foreign Department of the OGPU was long interested in Palestine. For us this country represented a base from which one could carry out intelligence and revolutionary activity in all the Arab countries in order, according to all the facts, to successfully exploit the Jewish Communist Party. However, documents which have come into the possession of the OGPU indicate that the British relate very cautiously to Palestinian citizens. Almost all the mail reaching [us] in Moscow contained copies of directives of the British passport office, sent by consular officials abroad, with lists of Palestinian citizens who, although they have British passports, should not be allowed into territories that were part of the British sphere of influence. In the event that certain individuals turned up at British consulates, their passports had to be confiscated and the passport offices had to be informed.

This information forced the OGPU to refrain from extensive use of Palestinian Communists (Agabekov 1996: 323–324).

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[16] I.e. members of the *Securitate*—the name of the Romanian secret police from 1921 to 1944.

At the same time, as Agabekov noted, agents who were directly continuing their operations in different locations 'acted with considerable boldness'. By way of example, he cites the name of the former head of the Soviet network of agents in the Middle East, Efraim Solomonovich Goldenshtein (1882–1938), a gynaecologist by profession (he had studied at universities in Berlin and Vienna). In the first half of the 1920s Goldenshtein was the main OGPU Foreign Department agent stationed in Austria and the Balkans; in 1925 and 1926 he was stationed in Turkey: and from early 1927—in Berlin, where he held the post of second secretary of the Soviet embassy in Germany.

Agabekov wrote about him as follows: 'While stationed in Constantinople, he consolidated the link with Palestine and, subsequently, continued to maintain it from Berlin' (*ibid.*, 324).[17]

In regard to the events in Palestine in August and September Agabekov wrote:

> The bloody clashes that broke out in 1929 between Jews and Arabs caught the Soviet government by surprise. The Comintern soon began to discuss the events. Immediately afterwards the Politburo decided not to support either side but to exploit the confrontation and attempt to unite the Arab and Jewish Communist parties in Palestine, which until then had been separate. After they united, the parties were expected to favor an ideological approach based on a class interpretation of the struggle, rather than an ethnic one, and to jointly declare war on the Jewish and Arab bourgeoisie, especially in terms of their ties to British imperialism (*ibid.*, 326).

Although the meeting between Burtsev and Agabekov, which took place in Paris on 27 June 1930, did not fit chronologically into the framework of the letters to Rutenberg published below, it did reflect an important stimulus for Rutenberg's anti-Bolshevik activities. Furthermore, one did not need secret information or the insight of Burtsev to realize that in the 1920s and 1930s the Soviet Union interpreted the conflict in Palestine in Marxist terms, understanding the Arab-Jewish conflict as the manifestation of the struggle of 'the Arab national-revolutionary movement' against 'the Jewish bourgeoisie'. This position was an official one and, hence, binding in regard to all aspects of the situation. Thus, for example, a report in the Moscow journal *Prozhektor* about the opening of The Hebrew University in Jerusalem (on 1 April 1925)

[17] Subsequently, during the 'Great Terror', Goldenshtein shared the tragic fate of most of the Soviet diplomatic and intelligence personnel—execution.

stated that 'the British military clique' was 'eagerly taking advantage of the growth of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Palestine to fight against the growing national-revolutionary movement among the Arabs.'

The correspondent of *Prozhektor* in Palestine wrote:

> Recently the Jewish bourgeoisie celebrated the opening of The Hebrew University in Palestine. Balfour arrived specially to attend the opening and spouted mellifluous words in honor of the Jews; he even expressed regret that he did not know the ancient Hebrew language. The Arabs met Balfour with such hostility that special military measures were required to protect this hero of British imperialism.[18]

It is noteworthy that something quite similar was stated in regard to what was occurring in the Middle East by F. Vinberg, a proponent of imperial Russian extremism and, later, of émigré right-wing radicalism, in as emphatic a way as did the Soviet press, although with quite different ideological and political premises and positions.

In the extremely anti-semitic journal *Luch sveta*,[19] which he edited, Vinberg noted that the events taking place in Palestine were surprising for those who were unaware of the covert aspect of contemporary politics:

> The famous British political figure Lord Balfour came [to Palestine] to honor with his presence the opening in Jerusalem of the first Hebrew university. It would appear that such an important personage, such a 'noble lord', would not have found it worthwhile to take such a long voyage for such an insignificant purpose but it turns out that, although he is a non-Jew himself, Lord Balfour has long been tied to the Jews and is always happy to serve their purposes, including in this case doing them a simple favour (Vinberg 1925: 133).

For those of his readers who were ignorant of the secrets of contemporary politics or did not think about them at all, Vinberg went on to explain that this same Balfour, who dined with the Jews, helped them,

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[18] *Prozhektor*, no 6 (54), 30 April 1925, 13. Implied criticism could also be found in *Ogonek* (edited by M. Kol'tsov) that published photographs of flags of mourning flying over Arab houses during Balfour's visit to Palestine (*Ogonek*, no 20 [111], 10 May 1925).

[19] Although *Luch sveta* was founded by Vinberg in Berlin in 1919, until no. 4 its official editor and publisher was S. Taboritskii. Together with P. Shabel'skii-Bork, who was also involved in the journal, he took part in the attempt to assassinate P.N. Miliukov on 28 March 1922, as a result of which V.D. Nabokov (the father of the famous Russian and English author) was killed. Issues 4–7 were edited and published by Vinberg.

under the flag of Zionism, to develop the greatest Jewish *gesheft*. As a result of the world war, which proved a disaster for all the warring nations, he granted to the Jews of Britain who had not fought but who gained greatly from war-time speculation, a large land, a large state that had never belonged to Britain (*ibid.*, 133–134).

There was one matter that united Soviet officials and those who opposed them in all their thinking and who had been exiled from their native Russian home or, it would be more precise to say, those émigrés whose political voice was the Black Hundred (i.e. extremely anti-semitic) press. This was the defence of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs allegedly trampled on by 'the Jewish bourgeoisie'—with the active support of the British authorities and the silent acquiescence of the League of Nations.

There was a surprising coincidence of views of radically opposing political ideologies, that of the Soviet journalists and that of extreme right-wing émigrés, regarding the conflict in Palestine, particularly in terms of the August-September confrontations. However, in Burtsev's interpretation this conflict assumed a new political interpretation, which had to be either proved or disproved.

As was to be expected, the Soviet Union used the bloody events of 1929 as a card in its political game against Great Britain. *Izvestiia* wrote:

> The events in Palestine cannot be understood outside the context of the total policy of British imperialism in the Near and Middle East. For British imperialism the Palestinian problem is primarily a problem of the shortest route from the metropolis to India (Iranskii 1929: 2).

Of course, the Soviet newspaper could not avoid commenting on the—alien to Soviet interests—transformation of Palestine and its return to the Jewish people (in accordance with Soviet terminology, this development was referred to as 'Zionist illusions'). However, *Izvestiia*'s author buttressed his Communist approach to Zionism with elements of quite a different ideology:

> But the Jewish population is hardly completely infected with Zionist illusions and is hardly composed entirely of advocates of British domination in Palestine. *The Jewish working masses are conducting a struggle, along with the Arab workers, against British imperialism and against its agents, the Jewish and Arab bourgeoisie* (*ibid.*).

Pravda, in turn, also presented the situation in a distorted manner, claiming that it was not the Jews but the Arabs who were the suffering

party in the situation and blaming the British government, whom it considered responsible for suppressing Arab activity (as a matter of fact, although they initially acted very timidly and indecisively, eventually the British did undertake measures to restore order).

A high official in the Comintern executive committee's Oriental Division L.I. Madiar (Milhofer) wrote:

> The imperialistic, counterrevolutionary role of the 'workers'' government in the struggle for the position of British imperialism is most clearly, most sharply revealed in connection with the events in Palestine. The 'workers'' government bloodied itself with the blood of the Arab people. For the first time in the history of the workers' movement a government that calls itself socialist is acting in the role of a direct executioner of the colonial revolution (Madiar 1929: 2).[20]

This author, however, closed his eyes to the quite obvious nationalistic nature of the Arab terror, as he further asserted—quite in accord with the Communist lexicon:

> In Palestine itself British imperialism, together with the Jewish bourgeoisie and, often, with the aid of Arab landowners, began to rob the Arab peasants. The old Muslim village community institutions were destroyed. Communal land ownership was transformed into private ownership of land. Vacant land and Bedouin pastures were taken over by British aggressors and transformed into lands for Jewish colonization. With the establishment of private land ownership Arab landowners and officials took into their own hands a large proportion of the lands that belonged to peasants (*ibid.*).

Echoes of such anti-imperialistic Soviet propaganda can be found in the 1925 story *Rasskaz o kliuchakh i gline* [Tale of keys and clay] by the Soviet prose writer Boris Pil'niak. One of Pil'niak's characters, a young Jew sailing on his way to Palestine to become a *haluts* (a pioneer) says:

> In Palestine the British are pursuing a policy that divides Arabs and Jews. We have to discuss collectively how we can win the friendship of the Arabs. Then, together, we can fight against the British…(Pil'niak 1926: 39).[21]

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[20] In the context of Communist criticism of Great Britain it is interesting to note that in 1924, under Prime Minister McDonald, Britain established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

[21] In regard to another source of Pil'niak's work, the book *L'an prochain à Jérusalem* (1924) by the 'Siamese twins of French literature', Jérôme and Jean Tharaud,

It was not only Burtsev who harboured suspicions about the interference of outside parties in Palestinian affairs. On 2 September 1929 the London *Daily Mail* wrote the following:

> Many signs indicate that to a significant degree responsibility for the disorders in Palestine can be attributed to the same harmful influence [of the Comintern]. The revolt has such a systematic nature and is, obviously, so well organized that it exceeds the bounds of local fanaticism.

The Russian-language writer A. Vysotskii, the author of the novel *Subbota i voskresen'e* [Saturday and Sunday] also considered the covert role of the Bolsheviks in the Arab riots of 1929 to be clear:

> As far as we know, he [Vysotskii] is now living in Palestine. The events that recently took place there and the covert participation of the Bolsheviks in them opened his eyes to the actions and aims of the authorities in Moscow. We mention that because in the novel the tormented Zal'man Tinits remarks that the word 'comrade' had formerly made his heart expand with joy but now it contracted in disillusionment (F.S. 1930: 3).

To the insistently repeated expressions of the view that the conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine was taking place with the encouragement of the 'red' factor, one can add the view of *Davar*, the organ of the Jewish workers' movement in Palestine (edited by Berl Katsnelson). The Hebrew newspaper stated that the British administration was informed not only about the upcoming riots but also about the forces that were encouraging them. The lists of Arab activists were reported to have been in the hands of the British police in July, i.e. a month before the first blood was shed but, it was noted, the British did

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which was the source of Pilniak's error, see Vladimir Khazan, *Osobennyi evreisko-russkii vozdukh: K problematike i poetike russko-evreiskogo literaturnogo dialoga v XX veke* (Jerusalem: Gesharim; Moscow: Mosty kul'tury, 2001), pp. 86–90. Another aspect that has not received scholarly attention is the enigmatic phrase spoken by the hero of Pil'niak's novel, Alexander Alexandrovich Alexandrov, a Jewish Communist, whose motivation in travelling to Palestine was unclear (he said to the ship's captain: 'I'd like to see what the current state of the cradle of humanity is'). Alexandrov said: 'Yes, I am a Communist, only I am travelling under an assumed last name and with a foreign passport' (Boris Pil'niak, 'Rasskaz o kliuchakh i gline', *Krasnaia nov'*, 1926, no. 1, 34–55 (p. 40).

Other Soviet prose writers and journalists also wrote about travelling to the Middle East, including Jews returning to the Jewish homeland (see Khazan, 'Moskva ili Ierusalim? Zametki k teme "Evreiskii vopros i sovetskaia literatura 20–30-kh gg."', *Slavica Orientalis*, 46 (1997), 435–448, and idem, 'The Theme and Image of Jerusalem in Early Soviet Russian Belles Lettres', *Jews in Eastern Europe*, 38–39 (1999), 25–43, but none of them mentioned an assumed name or a fake passport, which would clearly imply serving as a secret agent.

not lift a finger to prevent the bloodshed. *Davar* managed to get hold of the relevant documents after the events (apparently by paying highly for them) and published them in its editorial on 4 November 1929 under the headline *The Mufti, together with agents of the Comintern, is on the Black List of the Soviet Government*. Despite the headline, the list was called 'black' not by the Soviet government but by the British police. The list was headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, followed by lesser personalities, whom the Palestinian Communists tried to use to destabilize the already tense situation in the country.

It is in this context that one should read the letters of Burtsev to Rutenberg which, for quite understandable reasons, were of a covert nature and contained conspiratorial references to the expected reception of secret information from numerous 'friends' dispersed around the world and comprising a small army of voluntary, as well as mercenary, informers for Burtsev.

One of the most interesting aspects of Burtsev's letters is that, albeit indirectly, they seem to indicate that at that time Rutenberg had an anti-Bolshevik orientation. Even though it did not attain the fervor that characterized Burtsev's anti-Bolshevism, it was sufficiently strong for him to take valuable time from his main pursuits to devote attention to the red peril. Since he evidently perceived the events occurring in Palestine as signifying a Communist threat, Rutenberg was not in the least surprised by Burtsev's coded letters, replete with conclusions from his passionate agent-hunting. In fact, the letters' indications that their author intended publicly to expose the Kremlin agents who had penetrated Palestine and had stirred up ethnic strife there were clearly useful to Rutenberg who, on 24 September 1929, had become a member of the executive committee of the Jewish community's *Va'ad le'umi* [National Council] and, in October, was selected as its chairman. An editorial in the Paris-based Russian Jewish weekly *Rassvet* commented on this news as follows (13 October [No. 41], 1929, p. 2):

> A short telegram from Jerusalem reported that Pinhas Rutenberg was chosen as chairman of the *Va'ad le'umi*.
>
> The details of this election are not yet known. However, undoubtedly it was meant to indicate a shift in the life and work of that respected nonentity which this highest body of the Palestinian *yishuv* has become. Under the enlightened leadership of its previous bosses the *Va'ad le'umi* was a concentration of cheap political 'cleverness' that paralyzed all its energy and activity. It is better not even to speak of the consequences. Evidently, today's leaders of the *yishuv* at this serious and responsible moment have understood their complete insignificance. It was time to

> call for an outsider to make order. P. Rutenberg, who until now has intentionally remained aloof from all politics and completely devoted himself to his favorite subject—electrification—did not consider it necessary to reject this [new] responsibility and took up the heavy legacy that was being handed on to him.
>
> Much is expected of him. Rutenberg is a person of unusual will power and is not encumbered by obscurantist pilpulistic[22] (Talmudic) logic. He is the kind of person who is capable of talking to the Palestinian [i.e. British—*VKh*] administration in the necessary tone and of dealing with it in the way required. He is respected and recognized by the vast majority of the people of the *yishuv*. It is correct to expect much of him.

To jump ahead historically for a moment, we can say that these high expectations were not fulfilled. Within a year, on 18 September 1930, dissatisfied with what was happening and powerless to change things, Rutenberg asked to resign, although he actually continued in his post until February 1931. (In 1939 he was again asked to head the *Va'ad le'umi* and, again, the scenario repeated itself, with his resigning a second time in August 1940). However, to return to the period of late 1929–early 1930, after taking over as head of the *yishuv*, Rutenberg was interested in uncovering Moscow's intrigues in the Jewish national home especially since such a specialist in exposing provocation and the activities of secret intelligence agencies of foreign countries as Burtsev had volunteered his aid.

If Burtsev were able to establish a connection between Bolshevik propaganda activities and the Arab attacks against Jews, that could have provided Rutenberg with a strong card to use to persuade the British administration to begin to tighten the screws on outside agitators. An argument about the red peril would undoubtedly have had more effect on the British than one about Arab religious-nationalistic fanaticism. In January 1930 an effort by Katsnelson to reconcile Rutenberg and the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann failed on political grounds. Judging from optimistic letters from Katsnelson, then in London, to his wife Leah Mirkin-Katsnelson, written either on 15 or 19 January 1930, and to an anonymous correspondent (see Katsnelson 1961–1984, 5: 296, 301) his intercession was about to produce successful results, but then all was disrupted due to the conciliatory position taken by Weitzmann and the Zionist Organization that he headed

[22] From the Hebrew word *pilpul*, referring to hairsplitting religious discourse that, in Christian terms, has been characterized as Jesuitical.

in relation to the British, despite their not having taken the measures necessary to pacify the Arabs. Thus, regardless of his personal interest in exposing the Communists, simply because of his post in the Jewish community Rutenberg would have needed to take some energetic steps regarding Moscow's role in Palestine.

In all likelihood Rutenberg and Burtsev renewed their contacts in the fall of 1929. According to the first letter below (dated 30 December 1929), from the indomitable Bolshevik-hunter who was then busy exposing Comintern activity in Abyssinia, Rutenberg was of use to him. The previous day, when Rutenberg was in London, he transferred money to Burtsev in Paris. Evidently, for the reason given by A. Sedykh cited above, that it was not safe to transfer large sums of money to Burtsev at that time, Rutenberg made use of an intermediary, Il'ia Isidorovich Fondaminskii who, apparently, knew what was going on and, in general, served as a link between them. In a note of 29 December 1929 Rutenberg wrote to Fondaminskii (copy in RA):

> Dear Il'ia Isidorovich,
>
> I am sending you 2,000 francs. If necessary, telegraph [me]. Another amount will be sent to you, for a total of 6,000, including the 2,000 already sent, even if I am not in London.
>
> All the best to you,
>
> P. Rutenberg
>
> Give the money to Vl[adimir] L'v[ovich] for a passport,[23] and, if he asks, [another] 1,000. In general, provide an explanation for the proposed expenses since we are in tight financial straits. Consult with me ahead of time in regard to major expenses.
>
> P.R.

The letter of Burtsev to Rutenberg mentioned above was dated the following day:[24]

[23] This refers to a foreign passport for Burtsev, who writes about this topic in letters cited below.

[24] Burtsev's letters are cited from the originals in the Rutenberg Archive. With the exception of the one dated Feb. 5, 1930, all were typewritten.

Rutenberg!

Many thanks for the photographs, which helped me very much. As you see, I succeeded in having the Abyssinian newspaper, which had first attacked the Russian emissaries, to admit their mistake. Very soon my articles will appear that expose the Bolshevik intrigues in Abyssinia and the ties of the Bolsheviks with the Negus himself and with Dovgalevskii and Besedovskii in Paris.[25] Then one can foresee an exposure of even

[25] The reference is to three short articles by Burtsev in issue no. 3 of *Obshchee Delo*, the newspaper he edited, which at that time appeared quite irregularly. They were titled 'The Russian Bolsheviks in Abyssinia', 'The Triumph of Abyssinian Provocateurs', and 'The Bolsheviks at Work' and discussed the illegal expulsion of Russian émigrés from Abyssinia. Burtsev also mentioned these articles to V.V. Klopotovskii (whose *nom de plume* was Leri) in a letter of Jan. 31, 1930; see Yurii Abyzov, Boris Ravdin, Lazar Fleishman, *Russkaia pechat' v Rige: Iz istorii gazety 'Segodnia' 1930-kh godov* (Stanford: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1997, vol. 1, 292). Valerian Savel'evich Dovgalevskii (1885–1951) was a Soviet diplomat. He was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Bolsheviks) from 1908 and of the French Socialist Party from 1915. In 1919 he worked in the People's Commissariat [Ministry] of Communications and in 1920 was a member of a commission to repair the roads of Siberia and the Urals, and inspector of communications and commissar of the Kiev district department of engineering. In May 1921 he became commissar of the postal and telegraph services of the RSFSR, and in 1923 assistant commissar of the postal and telegraph services of the USSR (while serving as director of the Moscow Institute of Civil Engineering). He began his diplomatic service in the fall of 1924: he was Soviet plenipotentiary in Sweden (1924–1926), in Japan (1927), and in France (from 1928). Grigorii Zinov'evich Besedovskii (1896–1951) was another Soviet diplomat. He graduated from commercial school in Poltava, then studied in France at an electrotechnical and agricultural institute. He had ties with anarchists from 1912 to 1917. In 1917 he joined the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party (the SRs). In 1920 he became secretary of the Poltava Province central committee of the Left SRs. After the August 1920 union of the Ukrainian Left SRs and the Bolsheviks, Besedovskii was appointed chairman of the Poltava Province economic council and in 1921 he became a member of the central executive committee of Ukraine. The same year he was transferred to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and appointed consul and, then, chargé d'affaires of Ukraine in Austria). He was an agent of the Comintern. In 1922 he became secretary of the Ukrainian mission in Poland and, from 1923 to October 1925, adviser in the Soviet embassy in Poland (headed by P.L. Voiko). In 1926 he was appointed unofficial (since there were no diplomatic relations) Soviet diplomatic representative to the United States, but he was refused a visa. In 1926 and 1927 he served as advisor at the Soviet embassy in Japan and in 1927, also in France. He was opposed to the introduction of the New Economic Plan (NEP) and, without consulting with the Central Committee or the Soviet government, he attempted to initiate economic negotiations with Great Britain (regarding British economic aid). As a result, he was recalled to Moscow. However, fearing for his life,he sought diplomatic asylum in France on Oct. 3, 1929. There he then published the newspaper *Bor'ba* and tried to organize a political party of 'non-returners.' In 1931 he published a book of memoirs, *Na puti k temidoru* [On the road to Thermidor]. He was suspected of having ties with the intelligence services of both the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany. In

greater significance, relating to your country and to other countries involved with it.

I have a very urgent request to you as a Russian journalist. Please answer me the same day you receive this letter and, within a couple of days, send further information. Don't delay for a single day. This is what the matter is about:

A certain influential European newspaper approached me with the request to write for them, under my own name, about the activity of the Bolsheviks in Palestine. I have precise information about how, via their agents, the Bolsheviks stirred up the Arabs to stage a number of very disturbing pogroms and murders this year in Palestine. For this purpose they sent large sums of money there. Moscow sent instructions how, in Palestine, to stir up hatred locally between Arabs and Jews. I have received only a list of all the documents from people who have seen the documents themselves. But it is imperative for me to have the exact (complete) text of these documents. And also photocopies of them. You are a literary figure who has long been interested in these issues. I believe that it will be possible for you to get hold of these documents. But I have to make it clear to you that I need these documents in a great hurry. What can be done today, do not put off until tomorrow. Send everything express!

Furthermore, please send me information about the activity of the Bolsheviks in Palestine, perhaps more documents, as well as your own comments about them and about this matter in general. I know that you are passionate about the fight against the Bolsheviks and, therefore, I hope that you will do everything possible in regard to my request. I require all your materials and all your comments for an extremely important written work.

If you need something, you can even phone me. For me very much depends upon whether or not I receive the documents from you.

Yours, V.L. Burtsev

P.S. Please don't forget the Abyssinian question. Send me also what you have in regard to this matter. For me this question was well formulated by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the same day Burtsev wrote another letter to Rutenberg, one that is opaque in a number of places, which yield only a hypothetical decoding. It is not clear whom Burtsev was referring to by the initials A. (D.) and B. Nor do we at present possess any information about the 'competent person' about whom Burtsev writes as 'living near' Rutenberg, i.e., evidently in a location close to Palestine, most likely in Turkey. In

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Nazi-occupied France he was arrested for participating in the Resistance. After the war he again was suspected of ties with the Soviet intelligence services.

any case, if one examines the text of this letter in the context of what has been discussed above, there is no doubt that its topic is the steps proposed by Burtsev to collect materials which disclose the Kremlin's expansionist plans to extend its tentacles throughout the world. In all likelihood, also connected to this is the request of Rutenberg, who, in this case, is 'commissioning' an exposé of the Palestinian Communists who were an organic part of the OGPU-Comintern global network. The letter has another very interesting aspect: Burtsev acquainted Rutenberg with one of his numerous helpers. This undoubtedly indicates that, after he became 'the head of the *yishuv*' (but, perhaps, independently of this function) Rutenberg, despite being very wary of wasting his time, still considered it necessary to speak personally with this person when he was in Paris. Equally interesting is the fact that while the work of the Communist agents in Palestine was financed by the Comintern, Rutenberg, directly or indirectly, apparently provided support for Burtsev's anti-Comintern activity (see the following letter).

Dear P[etr] M[oiseevich Rutenberg]!

1. I spoke with my friend A. (D.), about whom B. and I spoke with you, and he does NOT think that by the 20th he could do what you asked. But during these days we, I believe, will make an increased effort to obtain the passport. If we succeed, I will write to let you know. In any case, <u>we have already been active</u> today [in this matter]. If we see that we are not succeeding, I will write you to that effect.

2. I have already discussed with him (he is a very <u>competent</u> person) the issue you raised, not in terms of its urgency but in terms of a serious, prolonged struggle, when one has to feed the dog not when you go on a hunt but in good time—and I came to the conclusion that this A. is doing extremely important things <u>there</u>. One only has to speak with him in a clever manner. Consequently, if we see that by the 20th it is impossible to do things, then we shall discuss this with you: in general, perhaps this should be done afterwards.

3. In the event that during this time A. can leave, he might try now to obtain what is necessary from my friend who lives near you (I have told you about him). And I shall write my friend a letter today, requesting that he immediately sends me what he has. The rest he can give to A. after they agree about this.

4. Even if this is not what you <u>specifically</u> requested, it still should be very valuable for you. You can obtain… in Berlin, in that 'center of centers' of the Bolsheviks.[26] There I might have a helper of the kind I

[26] See Dumbadze's aforementioned book *Na sluzhbe Cheka i Kominterna*: 'All Bolshevik activity abroad, in its totality, is generally divided between two main global

told you about last time. In order to make this attempt with confidence regarding good results (especially in regard to your question) one will need to spend ten thousands of francs. Not long ago I made one such attempt (via A.) with brilliant results.

Think about this, speak with whoever is necessary and, if you can arrange this matter for me, do so. I am speaking about this business with complete confidence in our success.

5. I now have unimaginably brilliant prospects for the work about which we spoke. I wrote about this in the second issue of *O*[bshchee> *D*[elo] [Common Cause], which I am sending you. Pay attention to the matter of D.[27] and the matter of P.[28] Both of these matters yielded brilliant results. If they would only give me the opportunity to publish two issues in a row, like No. 2 of *O*[bshchee] *D*[elo] with such appeals, there would be comprehensive results and, perhaps, one should emphasize the need for your special topic. That way for the fight against the Bolsheviks we might be able to do very very much in the immediate future. Knowing myself and the nature of my working in this field, I believe that you understand what one can expect from my initiative if I appeal publicly in the second issue of O…D and with covert missives of A. sent to those it is necessary to reach.

I can say with confidence that the results will be brilliant.

If possible, arrange for me to receive a small sum for this purpose. In this regard every ten or fifteen thousand francs represents something. Of course, it would be better if you could get together 30,000 at one time.

6. Pay attention to the enclosed excerpt from an official Abyssinian newspaper. I have succeeded in showing that those who were deported from Abyssinia as Bolsheviks, are, in fact, victims of the Bolsheviks.

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centers…Berlin and Istanbul. In the first the Comintern's representative is a special plenipotentiary who has in his hands all the work of the Comintern in European countries, as well as in the countries of the Far East; furthermore, his area also includes all of Africa and the Dutch colonies, as well as those "European" states which still have the courage and [good] governmental sense not to recognize the Soviet regime, i.e. Belgium, Holland, etc. It is clear that all the emissaries of countries in his area who are organizationally subordinate to this plenipotentiary in Berlin, who is directly supervised by the Comintern in Moscow,' (E. Dumbadze, *Na sluzhbe Cheka i Kominterna: Lichnye vospominaniia* (Paris: Mishen', 1930), pp. 133–134.

[27] Dumbadze is referred to in no. 2 (1929) of *Obshchee Delo*, as well as in Bursev's editorial 'Expose the Bolsheviks!' cited above in footnote 14, and included in his *Ispoved' chekista* [Confessions of a member of the Cheka], p. 3.

[28] This refers to Alexander Nikolaevich Petrov, an OGPU secret agent who stopped working for the USSR in 1928 and fled to the Belgian Congo. He is the subject of the unsigned article (obviously written by Burtsev) 'Traitor, Spy, and Provocateur', which includes his biography, *Obshchee Delo*, no 2, 1929, 4). For more about Petrov, see Boris Prianishnikov, *Nezrimaia pautina: VChK—OGPU—NKVD protiv beloi emigratsii* (St Petersburg: Chas pik, 1993), pp. 372–374.

Just now an article appeared that exposes the activity of the Negus of Abyssinia, his relations with the Bolsheviks (with Ustinov in Greece, and Dovgalevskii and Besedovskii (via an emissary) in Paris).

My competent informer, to whom I wrote a letter today, promises to provide me with similar information about your area also. It would be good if I could first send our A. there and, then travel there myself and, from there in my own name, produce the necessary exposures of the activity of the Bolsheviks in all the places there.

That, again, would be a brilliant achievement.

I am writing to you all this so that you can seriously consider my proposals.

So:

a) Will we succeed in inquiring about the first point? You will soon receive an answer to this.
b) If we don't succeed on this first p[oint], everything that is done in this regard will be useful for the 3rd point (of course, if you agree to this).
c) Very soon you will receive an answer from my friend to whom I am writing today.
d) On the 4th point I can make an attempt (if, of course, we can get hold of a passport) to obtain the necessary information by the 20th of the month.
e) In regard to the 5th point everything depends on you. I can begin at any time but, of course, the results will not be obtained by the 20th of the month and they will be needed later also.
f) About my possible trip we shall, of course, speak later—if you decide that it might be useful and in the interests of our common fight against the Bolsheviks and, especially, in the interests of those by whom you are employed.

Of course, it is not necessary to write to me in more detail about the proposals I made to you: after all you have known me inside out for a Jared's age.[29] I have succeeded in everything that I have done. I am making proposals to you with complete confidence that I can fulfil them. You may, if you wish, acquaint anyone you like with the contents of this letter.

Yours, Vl. Burtsev

P.S. It goes without saying that if you consider it necessary that the information you have about the activities of the Bolsheviks in Palestine be published now under my name, then it is sufficient for you to have the articles translated into either English or French and send them to me. We shall try to have them published.

[29] I.e., a very long time, since the Biblical Jared was reported to have lived for 962 years.

> Of course, if it is not necessary to make this public now or if you wish these ideas expressed under the name of some foreigners, then there is no need to send these materials to me.
>
> I am enclosing to you a copy of my letter to that competent person who lives in your region and about whom I spoke to you in the presence of B. and to whom A. will be sent, whether he will be sent very soon or later. This person did me a great service and, due to his position, he can be very useful to us.

On 3 January 1930, after receiving from Fondaminskii (it was he who was mentioned in the letter 'from our common friend') notification that the letter had reached its addressee, Burtsev hastened to send Rutenberg another communication:

> Dear P[etr] M[oiseevich]!
>
> Our mutual friend has just informed me that you received my letter.
>
> Read it closely even though it seems to me that you have understood it. Starting today, I will try to get the passport for 'the centre of centres' [the handwriting here is not completely decipherable]; 600 fr[ancs] or more, but this is needed, and in 2 or 3 days I will find out to what degree it is possible to do this. But in any case, I believe that also in 'the centre of centres' I will succeed in doing something serious for you. After all, you know that in this area I have not failed. On the contrary, during the present year I have had some very big successes. If we succeed in making good use of my <u>possibilities</u> in your region, then the results will, undoubtedly, be <u>excellent.</u>
>
> In any case in several days I will write you another letter. I will be happy if you jot me something by way of a reply to my first letter.
>
> Yours, Vl. Burtsev

Several days later, on 11 January Burtsev sent Rutenberg the texts of the article presented above, *The Russian Bolsheviks Reach Palestine*. In an accompanying letter, where he again refers to a certain B., he wrote:

> Dear P[etr] M[oiseevich]!
>
> I am sending you the draft of an article composed by me on the basis of information from B., with whom you and I spoke, and from D., with whom you perhaps will soon need to consult as a specialist.
>
> I am developing this topic and I intend to publish it in both the Russian and the foreign [i.e. non-Russian—*VKh*] press.
>
> If you want me to include the information about Palestine about which you spoke to me, then send it or simply let me know what information or materials you have.
>
> Yours, Vl. Burtsev

> P.S. Here I have met our friend and I sent him a letter by post which, perhaps, he sent on to you. In any case, the machine (in its first small dimensions, about which we spoke) is already in motion and, I hope, this time my emissary will do a good job for you also (as he did also quite some time ago).

The puzzling phrase about D. (Dumbadze?) with whom Rutenberg 'perhaps would soon be dealing [...] as a specialist' may be a reference to a plan that was not carried through for a trip to Palestine. If the reference is indeed to Dumbadze, then, considering that he had graduated from the Turkic Division of the Leningrad Oriental Institute and knew, as he himself said, 'a number of Oriental languages', and, as an agent of the Comintern and of the GPU,[30] was dispatched to work in the Soviet trade mission in Istanbul, i.e. was indeed a 'specialist' in the areas that Burtsev was discussing, this plan assumed important additional arguments.

Burtsev sent another letter to Rutenberg on 30 January 30:

> Dear P[etr] M[oiseevich]!
>
> Our friend did not send me anything <u>from what I left you</u>. I have had no success reaching him by telephone but I hope to catch him tomorrow. Didn't you leave for me what I brought you? I would like to provide you with some commentary.
>
> From B. I heard that he does not have any documents yet although the 'news' is good. There will also be something good from E[gypt], from which there are documents.
>
> Of course, if I receive something tomorrow, I will write to you.
>
> When will you be here? Will you be here long? I am asking because I am expecting a telegram from my friend and I will have to travel to meet him in Belgium.
>
> I would like to have a chance to speak with you or, at least, to communicate by letter.
>
> This is what the matter is.
>
> Along with my friends I have published the 3rd issue of *O<bshchee> D<elo>*, which I am sending you. It is very likely that they will help me

[30] 'I was selected for work in one of the missions abroad due to the fact that I knew a number of Oriental languages and, therefore, could easily and quickly find my way in situations connected with work there. According to the plan, I was supposed to enter an institute that trained organizers and propagandists whose responsibilities would include advancing the revolutionary movement in a given region, recruiting and expanding [a network of] local agents, establishing combat cells, organizing bases of weapons and transporting them, etc.' (Dumbadze, '*Na sluzhbe Cheka*', p. 139).

also publish issues 4 and 5. I am concerned less with literary than with practical matters. The latest issue of *O<bshchee> D<elo>* is a means of convincing people and a means of making contact with Besedovskii. My friend who has left is active in this regard. I am convinced that he will succeed. Nevertheless, of course, it is difficult for me to say what this success will consist of or in what area. Knowing me and what I have done, especially between 1906 and 1914 (as well as before and after), you can well imagine what I am occupied with at present. You can repeat that to whoever might be useful to us. For me the goal of the issues of *O<bshchee> D<elo>* is not mainly literary but practical, aiming at exposure. In that regard, considering my brilliant situation, I can do what no one else can. In this regard every 15,000–20,000 francs is something. But, of course, whoever desires a serious fight against the Bolsheviks needs to conduct serious negotiations with us. It is the greatest mistake for all those with whom you are dealing and who now curse the Bolsheviks that they did not previously understand what I am proving to them today. Is my work not clear to them now? Convince them of this.

Help to those to whom I am now connected can only guarantee the beginning of the work, not the work itself.

Read carefully the issue I am sending you and, if necessary, I will explain to you or to those people you recommend who have come to understand matters better.

Yours, Vl. Burtsev

Dumbadze (this time there seems to be no doubt that it is he) figures also in Burtsev's last letter to Rutenberg. It is dated 5 February 1930 and, in contrast to the previous ones, is written in Burtsev's hard-to-decipher handwriting:

Dear P[etr] M[oiseevich]!

I received a short letter from you. Of course, if Dum[badze] answers me, I will let you know immediately. I did receive a letter from him but not related to the topics that interest you.

He may ask me to come any day, I am awaiting his call. Therefore, it is a pity that you haven't written to me when you will be here and, if so, for how long.

I would like to see you. Perhaps, I will still be in Paris or I will travel there again.

In any case, let me know how I should write to you. I hope that I.I. F[ondaminskii] will know.

It seems that my trip to Egypt will take place in the spring. From there I will make every effort to visit you. But we will discuss that later.

Write me, via I[l'ia] I[sidorovich] [Fondaminskii] when you will be here. He will know whether I have left Paris or not.

Yours, Vl. Burtsev

> I am not writing about my own affairs, I will let you know in person, or I will write in detail when I know that my letter has reached you when you are freer than you are now, when everyone—London, Berlin, and Paris—is pulling you in different directions.

This history did not have a clear resolution. One could take the view that the British authorities interfered in developments when they deported a large number of Palestinian Communists from the country in the early 1930s. However, we are not yet in a position to be able to answer the question whether or not Rutenberg had any influence of any kind on this action. Did he, as head of the Jewish community, *the yishuv*, have any impact on the British or did the latter recognize the danger posed by activists of the Palestinian Communist Party on their own? Unfortunately, neither the Rutenberg Archive nor other archives known to us answer this question.

There is no clear evidence of how effective Burtsev's 'exposé' activity was in this regard. One can only regret that no such material, that would have had an effect on his reputation, has been discovered and come to public attention and, thus, has not provided further perspectives on the history of this matter. This is particularly important since the 'red menace' of the revolution that was perceived by our 'Don Quixote' at every stage of the events was real, not a case of illusory windmills. The actuality or, at least the potential, of subversive Communist activity kept Rutenberg in constant tension. This situation is reflected in Rutenberg's 5 January 1933 letter to M.A. Novomeiskii, that warns of possible 'dirty tricks' (*pakosti*) on the part of Arab Communists directed toward himself and his associates:

> Dear Moisei Abramovich!
>
> Upon my return here I received information that some kind of dirty tricks were being organized against me at the Jordan River and against you at the Dead Sea. I didn't share this with you in Jerusalem because I was not then certain about the value of the information I had received. Now it has been confirmed. I have also learned that among your colleagues there is a whole nest of active Communists who are organizationally linked to the Arabs and are ready, at any moment, to commit all kinds of dirty tricks. I consider it my duty to warn you about this. Measures should be taken—of course, with the greatest caution.
>
> All the best,
>
> P. Rutenberg[31]

[31] The Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem), A 316/6.

If the circumstances had turned out differently and Burtsev had supplemented his exposés with further information about the 'Palestinian topic', the émigré writer Zinaida Gippius would scarcely have written about him the kind of thing she did two and a half years later, when he accused some members of the editorial board of *Vozrozhdenie*, an émigré newspaper in Paris, of ties to the GPU.[32] In a letter to A.V. Afmiteatrov, on 18 August 1932 Gippius wrote about Burtsev in a most uncomplimentary manner:

> By the way, regarding poor Burtsev, it often happens that when an excellent hunting dog becomes old, it completely loses its sense of smell. That is what has happened with Burtsev. The worst part of it is that he himself doesn't know this and, to his harm, slouches out to hunt. Right now he has gone astray in such a matter and gotten himself into such a mess that it is simply a shame to go near it, even vicariously. The farther away the better (Gippius 1992: 303).

In conclusion, we may note that the Arab riots in Palestine in August and September 1929 drew the attention of many social and political figures. Leon Trotsky, who had been deported from the USSR in the summer of 1932, intended to deal with the Marxist aspect of these events. In the summer of 1932 Trotsky had been asked by Lazar Kling, the editor of the Yiddish newspaper *Unzer kemf* to express his views about the destruction of the yeshiva in Hebron by Arab extremists, Trotsky's reply was somewhat evasive but interesting nonetheless. Trotsky replied to Kling on 7 August 1932 as follows:

> Regarding your question about the events in Palestine, I am just now collecting material. In particular, I expect the arrival from Palestine of an American Marxist. Comrade Nathan also sent me valuable materials. This will give me the possibility of expressing myself more definitely about the movement of 1929, and of making clear to myself to what extent the Arab national liberation (anti-imperialistic) movement was combined with elements of Islamic reaction and anti-Jewish pogromism. It seems to me that all these elements were apparent. (quoted in Nedava 1971: 202)

Other than Burtsev and Rutenberg, no one, as far as we know, came so close to disclosing the 'red threat' in the Middle East. Our analysis of their communications has clarified important elements in the con-

[32] For more information about the proposal of A.I. Sipelgas (Sipelgas-Oshanskii), an agent of Soviet and Finnish intelligence, to publish his memoirs in the Riga newspaper *Segodnia*, see Abyzov, Ravdin, Fleishman, *Russkaia pechat' v Rige*, vol. II, pp. 425–429.

nection between Palestine and Russian émigrés in Europe. The Land of Israel, or Palestine, which had been settled by many emigrants from Russia, turns out not to have been isolated but rather to have been closely tied to other parts of the Russian diaspora. The extremely complex interaction between various centers of the Russian émigré community and segments of the Jewish community in Palestine, to some degree, involved the same political and social issues and problems that concerned the rest of the Russian diaspora in the period between the World Wars.

In the mid-1930s and subsequently, the relations between Rutenberg and Burtsev assumed a new content and character. This was primarily related to the fact that Rutenberg suddenly 'warmed' to the Soviet Union, as indicated by his remark to Burtsev that 'now is not an appropriate time to fight with the Bolshevik government'.

Rutenberg's metamorphosis can be attributed to the fact that he had come to view the USSR as the sole real stronghold of opposition to Nazi Germany, especially in regard to the possibility of saving European Jewry. However, that topic is a separate one, beyond the scope of the present article.

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(i) *Archives*

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AN ENCLAVE IN TIME? RUSSIAN-JEWISH BERLIN REVISITED

Olaf Terpitz

While travelling through Europe Ilia Erenburg composed a set of travel sketches and feuilletons. One of those travel features, written in 1923, is entitled 'Letters from a café' (Pis'ma iz kafe), and subtitled 'Germany in the year 1922'. Erenburg outlines in this text casually his perception of Berlin. The city, alien and hostile as it may appear to the foreign visitor, emanates a spirit of dynamism unencountered before and after in other European capitals of the time: 'You can listen to Europe's heart only in Berlin'. However, the city's vitality cannot deceive the visitor about its inherent transitoriness and dangers. 'The heart of Europe does not work as it should at all. It beats irregularly in anticipation of unbearable separations and dazzling encounters.'[1]

Berlin, indeed, became in the interwar period a leading trend-setting centre of cultural production in Europe, later encapsulated in the myth of the 'roaring twenties'. In particular, the city became a major centre for Jewish and non-Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe who established publishing houses, newspapers, cultural associations and organisations, however short-lived. These highly productive cultural milieux have attracted a heightened interest in recent scholarship. Scholars have studied various historical, sociological, and cultural aspects of this migration, often focusing on a selected group, selected persons or works.[2] In those narratives 'Russian Berlin' with its manifold publishing

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[1] My translation, from the German edition: Ilja Erenburg, *Visum der Zeit*, trans. by Hans Ruoff (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam jun., 1982), p. 55. Original Russian edition: Il'ia Erenburg, *Viza vremeni* (Berlin: Petropolis, 1930).

[2] There is a growing number of studies published in Europe, the United States, Israel and Russia: e.g. Sergei S. Ippolitov and Almaziia G. Kataeva, *'Ne mogu otorvat'sia ot Rossii…': Russkie knigoizdateli v Germanii v 1920-kh gg* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Ippolitova, 2000); Marc Raeff, *Russia abroad: A cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Hélène Menegaldo, *Les russes à Paris, 1919–1939* (Paris: Edition Autrement, 1998); Karl Schlögel, *Das russische Berlin: Ostbahnhof Europas* (München: Pantheon, 2007); Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Heather Valencia, 'Yiddish Writers in Berlin 1920–1936', in *The German Jewish Dilemma: From the Enlightenment to the Shoah*, ed. by Edward Timms and Andrea Hammel, (Lewiston,

houses rarely encounters 'Hebrew Berlin'—where Sh.Y. Agnon and Saul Tchernichowsky worked and lived temporarily, 'Yiddish Berlin'—where in 1925 the YIVO was founded, or for that matter 'German' and 'German Jewish' Berlin. The impression arises that studies of migration to Berlin are to a high degree compartmentalized and, as such, detached from the complex net of temporal, spatial, personal, linguistic and ideational relations in which they are situated.

Apart from geographical displacement migration usually entails various forms of dislocation. There seem to be, at first glance, more discontinuities than continuities. This is certainly true to a varying degree in respect of the migrants' social condition, e.g. working place, income, housing, residential permanence. However, changes in social, political, and societal circumstances are usually accompanied by the respective diasporic or ethnic minority group's need for self-assertion.[3] Beliefs, attitudes, behavioural patterns, a shared historical experience, even modes of thinking appear as central elements of preservation in processes of identification. If changes in the social setting have an immediate effect on everyday life, cultural continuity shows primarily in the longer term. To create referential coherence, as cultural continuity might be described in terms of discourse history, or legitimacy in terms of sociology, groups and their participants rely on what Maurice Halbwachs analysed as collective memory. This concept was taken further by Jan Assmann who distinguishes between communicative and cultural memory.[4] Cultural continuity, in short, depends to a high degree on communication, including the availability of means of

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NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), pp. 193–207; Dan Laor, 'Agnon in Germany 1912–1924: A Chapter of a Biography', *AJS Review*, 18:1 (1993), 75–93; Zohar Shavit, 'On the Hebrew Cultural Center in Berlin in the Twenties: Hebrew Culture in Europe—The Last Attempt', in *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 68 (Mainz: Gutenberg Akademie, 1993), pp. 371–380; Verena Dohrn and Gertrud Pickhan (eds), *Transit und Transformation: Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in Berlin 1918–1939* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

[3] On diaspora, migration and identity see among many others for example: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); Jan and Leo Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999); James Clifford, 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology* 9:3 (1994), 302–338; Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora politics: at home abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[4] Maurice Halbwachs, *The collective memory*, translated from the French by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row 1980 [*La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950)]; Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1992).

communication and the accessibility of communication systems that allow the transmission of knowledge, values, ideas. In a migration setting this entails the existence of print media and a reading audience on the material level as well as the negotiation of narratives on the discursive level.

Russian Jewish Berlin in the 1920s was a place of high heterogeneity in terms of language use, ideas, methods of dissemination. It was for a limited time a meeting place of very different streams and strands in Jewish culture(s). The interactions among those milieux were, in all likelihood, contingent on the interests, friendships and participation in specific communication spheres of the respective writer, translator or reading audience.

The assemblage of diverse migrant groups with their own ideas on language, nation and literature might be read, as indicated above, as forms of a migrant or ethnic enclave. Though these groups were restricted in linguistic accessibility and outreach to other groups, there were several multilingual agents such as the publicist and historian Simon Dubnov who facilitated and fostered communication. Even if Russian Jewish Berlin still appears today as an enclave with respect to the various Jewish migrant groups and their interactions, not least with German and German-Jewish culture, and of course with respect to the comparatively short time Eastern European Jewish migrants spent there, in epistemological terms it offers new perspectives on cross-cultural encounters and provides in a comparative way a semantic horizon for the migration of Jews from the former Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1990s.

I will argue that the notion of cultural continuity in terms of temporal, spatial and semantic trajectories goes beyond the physical place and time of Weimar Berlin. As a focus of attention for current scholarship it may direct our attention a) thematically to developments in other places such as Warsaw, b) to theoretical and methodological questions such as translation and genre formation, and c) to the very history of scholarship (e.g. reception history, literary history).

Rather than giving an empirically saturated analysis of the work of a particular writer or a close reading of a particular text I will propose some reflections on the impact and implications of the Russian Jewish migration to Berlin. In order to outline the various trajectories that Berlin might offer I will concentrate on four dimensions that shaped the cultural production in Berlin itself and open at the same time vistas beyond Berlin which are, of course, interconnected. These four

analytical categories are a) the textual dimension (attraction of genres and their context), b) the discursive dimension (questions of reception, scholarly attention and general awareness), c) the cultural dimension (forms of encounter), and d) the 'semantic' dimension (i.e. questions of outreach).

The Textual Dimension—Disposition and Genre

Russian Jewish migration to Berlin and other places, as is the case with every migration, engendered various spatial, cultural, and emotional dislocations. The writers needed to re-evaluate and re-align their set of references, addressing questions such as: the understanding of the self in relation to past and present, in relation to others, to society in general, to the experienced dislocation, not least in relation to language choice and its implications. Migration, we might therefore assume, produced a heightened sense of the self and had a decisive impact on identity construction.

The relation between literature—and cultural production in general—and history has prompted a wide range of scholarly reflections. In his study on the novel and its relation to history and fiction, Dominick LaCapra suggests three analytical categories that apply to the position of the novel in general, but also to the condition of migration in this context. The categories of 'the symptomatic, the critical, and the possibly transformative' are based on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, adopted by LaCapra to develop a reading that examines, on the one hand, the appropriation and inscription of ideologies or assumptions and, on the other, the modes of critical reinscription and carnivalesque stylisation (e.g. irony and parody).[5] Whereas LaCapra focuses on the methods of narrative refiguration, Pierre Bourdieu is concerned with the relation between textual representation and contextual condition. He analyses the field of cultural production as constituted by a multitude of agents and intricate relations. Cultural production, hence, depends to a high degree on social condition, intellectual surroundings, and the artistic decisions of the respective writer. Bourdieu argues: 'To understand the practices of writers and artists, and not least their

[5] Dominick LaCapra, *History, Politics, and the Novel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 206.

products, entails understanding that they are the result of the meeting of two histories: the history of the positions they occupy and the history of their dispositions.'[6] The continuous negotiation between disposition (social condition) and position (artistic agenda) comprises moreover time-specific reception patterns: how a text is received by the reading audience, or by selected groups of the public, and how and whether a writer is acknowledged, indicate reading habits as well as the intellectual needs of the audience. Bourdieu speaks in this respect of a 'hierarchy of genres'.

Taking up the reflections of LaCapra on the transformation of narratives and of Bourdieu on the structure of the field of cultural production it has to be asked in what way the migration experience and the ensuing search for meaning found entry into literary texts and how they were reflected in the proclivities of the reading audience, i.e. the thematic scope of enquiry and the preference for particular genres.

The intricate, almost anthropological nexus between condition and artistic creativity shows itself in the literary production of Russian Jewish migrants in Berlin in the preference for genres that explicitly or implicitly put emphasis on the deictic element of the 'I'. Besides poetry we therefore find a variety of 'small forms' such as the essay, the feuilleton, programmatic texts, short stories or travel sketches.[7] We also find various forms of autobiographical writing, encompassing more traditional autobiographical accounts, and literary conversions of the autobiographical such as the picaresque novel. All these text genres have in common that events or thoughts are generally represented through the perspective of the individual voice. As far as the material aspects of existence are concerned, they correspond to the reading habits of the time—the café culture, the transient, fast-moving information culture of modernity. They are border genres that link the

[6] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, edited and introduced by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 61.

[7] The term 'small form' was used occasionally from the 1880s to denote the mixed literary genre of the feuilleton. André Jolles used the phrase at the end of the 1920s as an analytical category in his typology of oral narrative forms such as the joke (André Jolles, *Einfache Formen: Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz* (Halle: M. Niemeyer Verlag, 1930)).

realms of the individual and society, of fiction and history, of temporalities both sacred and profane.[8]

To return to the example of Ilia Erenburg: in 1930 he published a volume of collected essays under the title 'Visa of the Time' (*Viza vremeni*).[9] It contains travel sketches with titles such as 'In Poland', 'Georgia', 'Double life' or the above-mentioned 'Letters from a Café' in which a first person narrator captures moods and impressions, and analyses contemporary cultural and societal developments. The title of the last essay evokes two sets of references: the personal, intimate, documentary mode of epistolary writing, and the bohemian atmosphere of coffee houses as meeting place for intellectuals to engage in debates. Seen from this angle the narrator in 'Letters from a Café' discusses the migration setting in Berlin in the wider ideational context of his time. He depicts the city in its relation to other European cultural centres and metropolises. The narrator constructs the city as a prism for contemporary developments in Europe and makes it a symbol for the quest for the 'European'. This quest gained momentum in an environment that moved from an imperial into a nationalized setting. 'Wonderful uncertainty! [...] This is the only truth of today's Europe.'[10]

Though written from a particular perspective, the letters point to a more general, systemic phenomenon. They present narrative strategies for coming to terms with the condition of dislocation. As is inherent in the genre of travel writing, the texts are based on a rather subjective mode and transform the experience of the individual into a literary account of how unfamiliar situations are negotiated against the backdrop of available knowledge. The focus on the individual, his or her way of appropriating new knowledge and contextualizing it within the framework of familiar categories depends, however, on the available amount of narrative time. Erenburg characterizes the era of the 1920s and the ensuing available narrative time already pointedly in the title of this volume: *Viza vremeni*, the visa of the time. The very title emphasizes the moment of transitoriness, and the individual's dependency on historical circumstances. The individual's search for new meaning is only temporarily permitted by the visa in this case.

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[8] On the genre of the feuilleton see Katia Dianina, 'The Feuilleton: An Everyday Guide to Public Culture in the Age of the Great Reforms', *The Slavonic and East European Journal* 47 (2003), 2, 187–210.

[9] See above, fn. 1.

[10] Erenburg, *Visum der Zeit*, p. 54.

Apart from the genres of the feuilleton, the letter and other 'small forms' there is another genre popular at the time that is situated at the interface of history and literature, being neither fictive nor non-fictive, namely the genre of memoirs or autobiographical writing. Since the publication of Rousseau's *Confessions* in the 18th century, autobiographical writing has become an established genre that enabled the enlightened man to discuss his position in and attitude towards society. Subjective, critical and self-critical, projecting a persona or neatly accounting for one's life—autobiographies take on differing degrees of 'fictionality'. Whatever form autobiographical writing adopts, it has become clear that it contains more than historical facts, names and events. Beyond a certain documentary value memoirs offer insights into the position of the respective writer. They reflect the transformation process experienced by the migrant. Memoirs formulate an understanding of life by rationalizing events, encounters, cultural embeddedness and so forth. In that way they not only create knowledge of things past but they do so in a conscious way through a process of selecting and ordering.[11] This holds true for the more aesthetic memoirs of Don Aminado, an outstanding Russian Jewish satirist who migrated to Paris in 1919, as well as for the more factual writing of Jakob Teitel, the only Jewish judge in the Russian Empire, who migrated to Berlin in 1921.[12]

The confrontation with a new linguistic, social, and cultural environment catalyses the aspect of self-reflection and self-presentation. Remembering and recounting past events provides the impetus for a necessary, even urgent self-assertion that projects ideas into the past as well as hopes into the future. And, of course, it is accompanied by a process of transfer and cultural translation. This is a double bind phenomenon: on the one hand concepts of the past have to be adapted to the challenging present, and on the other hand ideas, influences and

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[11] Marcus Moseley proposes a typology of Jewish autobiographical writing from the early pre-modern period in his study: *Being For Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[12] Don Aminado, pseudonym of Aminad Peisakhovich Shpolianskii, lived from 1919 in Paris and published his autobiography only in 1954 (Don Aminado, *Poezd na tret'em puti*, (New York: Izdatel'stvo im. Chekhova, 1954)). Teitel published his autobiography as early as in 1925 in Paris; it was translated only four years later into German (Jacob Teitel, *Iz moei zhizni: Za sorok let* (Paris: Ia. Povolotskii, 1925); *Aus meiner Lebensarbeit: Erinnerungen eines jüdischen Richters im alten Rußland*, mit einem Vorwort von S. Dubnow und einer Charakteristik von M. Gorki, Deutsch von Elias Hurwicz (Frankfurt a.M.: I. Kauffmann, 1929)).

experiences of the present have to be rationalized with analytical tools acquired in the past, a past which in this case is encompassed by the multi-ethnically composed Russian Empire. Migration thus means not only social and political change and upheaval but also new contexts for narratives.

The Discursive Dimension—Reception Continued, Interrupted and Resumed

Apart from the writer, it is undoubtedly the reader who constitutes a crucial component in the field of cultural production, as studies in reception history and theory have amply demonstrated. However broad and, at times, contradictory this field of enquiry has become,[13] there are at least two shared assumptions. First, the reader produces the semantics of a text as much as the writer, by interpretation and in accordance with his or her experiences and intellectual horizon.[14] Second, the reader belongs to those very agents of intermediation—besides publishers and professional critics—who ensure the dissemination of a text, its public acknowledgement and henceforth its place in literary history and cultural memory. Though there are no studies on the reading behaviour of Russian Jewish migrants in Weimar Berlin, we find various cases that illuminate the heterogeneous scope of reception. Features of continuity and discontinuity here reach beyond the local context of Berlin to places such as Petrograd or Paris, but also beyond the temporal setting of the 1920s to processes in our immediate presence.

The names and works of writers and other cultural figures prominent in migration circles of Weimar Germany and beyond, such as Vladislav Khodasevich, Ilia Erenburg, Sh.Y. Agnon and Dovid Bergelson, are thus widely known today. Their cultural and aesthetic achievements are recognised by a scholarly audience but also by an interested general public. Whereas these writers have enjoyed a more or less sustained reception history—albeit limited in some cases—and

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[13] For a comprehensive overview of current theoretical concepts in reception history see James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (eds), *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

[14] See e.g. Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, 4th ed. (Munich: Fink, 1994) [*The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge, 1978)].

popularity, there is also a number of writers who did not remain in the cultural memory for various reasons, not necessarily for their lack of literary achievements or merits.

One such is the Russian Jewish poetess Vera Lourié (Vera Lur'e); born in 1901, who had emigrated to Berlin with her family in 1921. Remarkably, she remained in the city until her death in 1998. Lourié had started her literary career in 1920 in Petrograd, a year before leaving Russia for good. There she had joined a circle of young poets around Nikolai Gumilev, a leading proponent of the Acmeist movement, which was known as 'The Sounding Sea-Shell' (*Zvuchashchaia rakovina*). In a collective volume containing a selection of the work of the group's members, she published three poems, the only ones to appear in Russia.[15] Still in Petrograd, as Petersburg had been renamed in the wake of the First World War, Lourié attended meetings of the newly-founded 'House of the Arts' (Dom iskusstv) which was to have a follow up in Berlin.[16]

After settling in Berlin in 1921 she published in Russian émigré literary journals such as *Dni* (The Days) and *Golos Rossii* (The Voice of Russia). Lourié became part of 'Russian Berlin'—she was friends with Andrei Belyi, Vladislav Khodasevich, Nina Berberova, Aleksei Remizov, all prominent cultural figures. Their onward migration to Paris or back to Russia left her alone in Berlin. Above all she lost her reading audience and most of her publishing platforms, i.e. those instances that ensure a continued reception. Though Lourié published poems and short autobiographical accounts erratically after the war in the Paris-based emigré journal *Russkaia mysl'* (La Pensée russe) she fell into oblivion.[17]

After being long forgotten, she was re-discovered by the American scholar Thomas Beyer, who brought her poems back to public awareness. He published a selection of her poems, in the context of Berlin's

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[15] The volume bears the same title as the group: *Zvuchashchaia rakovina. Sbornik stikhov* (Petrograd: 15-ia Gos. tip., 1922).

[16] On the Petrograd 'House of the Arts' see Barry Scherr, 'Notes on Literary Life in Petrograd (1918–1922): A Tale of Three Houses', *Slavic Review* 36:2 (1977), 256–267; on the Berlin 'House of the Arts' see Thomas R. Beyer Jr., 'The House of the Arts and the Writers' Club, Berlin 1921–1923', in Thomas R. Beyer Jr., *et al.*, *Russische Autoren und Verlage in Berlin nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag Spitz, 1987), pp. 9–38.

[17] E.g. 'Berlinskie vospominaniia' [Berlin memories], 1956, iss. 969 (Oct. 25), 4–5; 'Moe znakomstvo s Gestapo' [My acquaintance with the Gestapo], 1957, iss. 1006 (Jan. 19).

750th anniversary in 1987, including her poems of the 1920s written in Russian as well as her later poems written in German,[18] the language in which she also wrote a longer autobiographical account.[19]

The story of Vera Lourié or, more precisely, the way she and her work dropped out of cultural memory and her return to public awareness in the last two decades, points to the very mechanisms of the production of cultural knowledge. It shows how scholarly attention and public awareness depend on the positions and disposition of the respective writer as well as on the very existence of a lay or professional reader who has it in his/her power to see to it that a writer or a text is known. Factors within and beyond a literary text contribute to shaping the discourse on a text and set the parameters for defining the very act and mode of its interpretation.

Lourié's case demonstrates the phenomenon of a discontinued reception history that can be traced back to a variety of reasons—there are, on the one hand, societal, political, even epistemological caesurae such as the Holocaust and World War II and, on the other, structural elements such as the absence of a respective public through emigration to other places. Her case raises, in summary, the question of how reception in particular and intermediation in general worked, i.e. which processes of intermediation took place in Berlin. This encompasses patterns of reception of texts as well as other forms of intermediation such as the interaction between different linguistic and cultural realms (Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian), between different text genres and artistic modes of expression (text, photography, film, ballet), between sacred and profane temporalities, not least between Jewish and non-Jewish milieux.

The Cultural Dimension—Encounter and Transfer

The Jewish migrants from Russia produced in Berlin of the 1920s a vibrant, multifaceted cultural milieu that served competing interests

[18] Vera Lourié, *Stikhotvoreniia, Poems*, ed. and with an introduction by Thomas R. Beyer, Jr. (Berlin: Staatsbibliothek Berlin, 1987). See also Thomas Beyer Jr., 'Nachruf auf eine russische Dichterin in Berlin: Vera Lourie (1901–1998)', in *Das russische Berlin*, ed. by Amory Burchard (Berlin: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Senats, 2002), pp. 32–34.

[19] These memoirs were published in Russian translation in the Russian German journal *Studiia*, nos. 9–12, 2005–2008.

and at times contradicting notions on nation, national culture, autonomy, language choice. Berlin became for a short period a 'marketplace of voices', as David Roskies so aptly characterized the agenda of the American Jewish literary journal *Prooftexts*. At the centre of this 'marketplace' Roskies placed the translator, whose task consisted in facilitating communication between texts of different times, places and languages.[20] Analogously, the setting of Berlin with its communication spheres of Hebrew, Yiddish, German and Russian, and not least Jewish and non-Jewish realms fostered as well as necessitated contact and encounter. Intermediation, though, was not restricted to textual translation but entailed the broader process of cultural translation. Common to both, however, is the potentially transformative effect that the process of appropriation entails.[21]

Intermediation in Berlin took various forms. The encounter between the Jewish worlds of Eastern and Central Europe finds a vivid expression in the literary journal *Ost und West* (East and West), which appeared monthly between 1901 and 1923.[22] The publishing business exemplified such interactions, as the case of the publishing house Grzhebin, which printed books in Berlin and exported them to the young Soviet Union, indicates, but such encounters are also evident in the positions adopted by writers and intellectuals themselves in their work. We find reflections and traces of these processes of appropriation and cultural translation in the work of Lea Goldberg, who rose to become an eminent Israeli literary scholar and writer,[23] as well as in the intensive translation activities in Weimar Berlin. A look at the scope of the

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[20] Roskies composed this note on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of *Prooftexts*: David G. Roskies, 'The Task of the Jewish Translator: A Valedictory Address', *Prooftexts. A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 24:3 (2004), 263–272.

[21] See, for example, the postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha: *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), esp. the chapter 'How newness enters the world: Postmodern space, postcolonial times and the trials of cultural translation', pp. 303–337. Bhabha refers in turn to Walter Benjamin and his famous essay 'The task of the translator'. For a critical discussion of Bhabha's concept see: Birgit Wagner, 'Kulturelle Übersetzung: Erkundungen über ein wanderndes Konzept', in http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/postcol/BWagner2.pdf (last access 1 November 2010).

[22] On the impact of *Ost und West* on national consciousness and matters of integration into non-Jewish society see David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in 'Ost und West'* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

[23] Goldberg wrote poetry, short stories, and children's literature; worked as translator and served as head of the Department for Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. See for example her first novel written in 1937 after her escape from Germany: *Letters from an Imaginary Journal* (*Mikhtavim Mi-Nesi'ah Medumah*

Russian Jewish scholar and translator Alexander Eliasberg, for example, reveals his unique position between Jewish and non-Jewish, between German and Russian cultures. His work could be described as a relay station of modernity. To his œuvre belong translations of Yiddish writers such as Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Leib Peretz and Mendele Mocher Sforim—the so called 'founding fathers' of modern Yiddish literature, as well as translations of eminent Russian writers such as Lev Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky or Dmitry Merezhkovsky. The reader is even given insights into Eliasberg's very translation strategy, explicated in a preface to his anthology of Hasidic tales *Tales of Polish Jews*. Besides briefly sketching the history of Hasidism for the German reader, Eliasberg explains his alterations to the text: 'The translation is throughout literal. To avoid footnotes I paraphrased in the text most of the Hebrew ritual and liturgical expressions. In the original there are no titles to the stories; often they are even not separated by punctuation. All titles in this book are mine.'[24] Eliasberg's changes to the text, therefore, were intended to ensure the reader's accessibility to the text without losing its sacred meaning. His translation, in short, complied with German and German-Jewish reading habits. Eliasberg's statement points to the critical position and transformative function the translator assumes in the process of text appropriation. In terms of comprehension, but also of moral stance or philosophical attitude the translator inevitably alters the text by adding comments, finding cultural equivalents or even cutting words or passages.

We find another form of inter-textual and inter-cultural mediation in the Russian language anthologies of Vladislav Khodasevich and Leib Jaffe,[25] both of whom had started working on the anthologies before leaving Russia. Whereas Khodasevich's volume contains the original texts and his translations of contemporary Hebrew poets such as Hayim Nahman Bialik, Saul Tchernichowsky and David Frishman, Jaffe's volume includes prose texts of Russian Jewish and Russian writers such as Itzhak Katzenelson, Saul Tchernichowsky and

(Tel Aviv: Davar, 1937)) or her essays: *Russian literature in the nineteenth century: Essays*, trans. by Hillel Halkin (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1976).

[24] *Sagen polnischer Juden*, ausgewählt und übertragen von Alexander Eliasberg (München: G. Müller, 1916), pp. 22–23.

[25] Vladislav Khodasevich, *Iz evreiskikh poetov* (Berlin: Grzhebin, 1922); Leib Iaffe, *Safrut: Literaturno-khudozhestvennyi sbornik* (Berlin: Zal'tsman, 1922).

Valery Briusov, Fedor Sologub. Remarkably, Jaffe juxtaposes in the anthology's title the Hebrew word for literature 'safrut' in Russian letters with the prevalent Russian term 'literaturno-khudozhestvennyi sbornik' (a volume of belles-lettres), indicating his cross-cultural intentions. The editions of Khodasevich and Jaffe, like the anthologies of Eliasberg, embody one major aspect of the cultural production characteristic of this period, namely compilation. Selected knowledge was assembled and made accessible, in this case, to the Russian reader.

Beyond forms of intermediation between texts, mainly engineered by translation and compilation, there are forms of encounter in the texts themselves, with 'encounter' figuring from time to time even as motif. Ilia Erenburg, again, wrote in 1927 in Paris the picaresque novel *The stormy life of Lasik Roitschwantz* (*Burnaia zhizn' Lazika Roitshvanetsa*). The fact that this is his only novel in which Jewish themes and characters take centre stage underlines the intricate relation, discussed earlier, between a writer's position and the cultural field in a migration setting. Brought up in an acculturated Jewish environment, Erenburg had little knowledge of Jewish tradition and Jewish literature, in short, those issues referred to in his novel. As he recounts in his memoirs, he became acquainted with Jewish motifs and themes primarily in the legendary Paris café 'La Rotonde', through contact with fellow émigré writers and artists.

Lasik, the first-person narrator of Erenburg's novel, undertakes an Odyssey through post-revolutionary Russia and post-war Europe that comes to an end in Palestine. In the course of his life, which is recounted in episodes, Lasik encounters various settings to which he has to adapt. Born in Gomel into a traditional Jewish milieu, he moves rapidly within about two years through the main locations and ideologies of his time: communism in Kiev and Moscow, petty bourgeois culture in Königsberg, modernism in Berlin and Paris, philanthropy in London, British imperialism and mission in Liverpool and mandate Tel Aviv, Zionism in Jerusalem.

Lasik meets the challenge of this multitude of linguistic and cultural contexts with an idiosyncratic detachment. He responds to them with similes that bring present discourses and events in relation to an a-historical argument. Nevertheless, Lasik's condition is rendered as one of being trapped or suspended in language and thinking. Almost everywhere he goes he finds himself accused of something and sent to prison. He lives in an enclave, an inner world that is not connected

anymore to time or space. On his passage to Palestine, his final geographical destination, he remarks shrewdly: 'I got caught in a historical whirlwind.'[26] The historical whirlwind has stripped the tailor from Gomel of his identity, has left him with ever changing attributions (such as communist, lover, even Cossack) and has transformed his body into the icon of Modernity—the passport.

The reception history of Erenburg's novel illustrates yet another aspect of the above discussed discursive dimension. The novel appeared in Russian in Paris in 1928 and in German translation in the Berlin publishing house Petropolis in 1929. Although Erenburg eventually returned to the Soviet Union, it was neither published there as single edition nor included in his collected works. Thus it remained more or less unknown in the Soviet Union until its Russian re-publication in 1991. Unsurprisingly then, the novel returned to public awareness and scholarly attention only in the 1990s.[27] In other words, it returned at a time of societal upheaval and semantic dislocations, a time that witnessed anew waves of migration and a certain re-connection to the interwar period.

As the case of Vera Lourié has shown, the knowledge of texts and their entrance into cultural memory depends on the presence of a public. If a reading audience is ignorant of a text or if there is, indeed, no reading audience at all, the text will be marginalised or forgotten.

This peculiar combination of availability and accessibility of texts and documents, of public and scholarly interest, of adequate methodological and theoretical tools, mark in general the scope of scholarly enquiry. In the particular case of Russian Jewish Berlin, to be more precise the attention it has received in recent years, this also includes the opportunity to explore other places or developments, such as Warsaw and its Yiddish publishing industry, which had until then been neglected.

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[26] Ilia Erenburg, *Burnaia zhizn' Lasika Roitshvanetsa* (Moskva: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1991), p. 191.

[27] See, for example, Anja Tippner, 'Bewegung und Benennung: Jüdische Identität bei Il'ja Èrenburg', *Osteuropa* 8–10 (2008), 331–340; Shimon Markish, 'Il'ya Èrenburg', in idem, *Babel' i drugie* (Moscow and Jerusalem: Gesharim, 1997), pp. 118–168, esp. pp. 149–163.

Semantic Dimension—Trajectories beyond Weimar Berlin

Berlin was not the only centre for Jewish migration in the interwar period. Putting it into a wider context there are other major centres such as Paris and Palestine, but also hitherto less studied places such as Warsaw or Riga.[28] The onward migration from Berlin to, for instance, Paris connected those diasporic centres in respect of networks and experiences, but also underlined the transitoriness of this migration. Moreover, when looking at migration over a longer time span, it might be asked whether the interwar migration provides an epistemological horizon for the migration, during the 1970s and 1990s, of Jews from the former Soviet Union to Israel, the United States, and Germany. The common denominator of those spatial, temporal and ideational trajectories might be subsumed under the question of outreach which includes, of course, phenomena of cultural transfer.

In *The World Republic of Letters* Pascale Casanova, transposing Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the literary field from a national into an international setting, proposes a reading of world literature or, to be more precise, of a world literary space that unfolds in a continuous struggle between literary centres and peripheries.[29] To acquire literary capital a text has to be recognised by a centre or a dominant literary language. There are, basically, two strategies to move from a periphery to a centre. Either the text is transposed by translation into a language with high literary prestige, or the less acknowledged literary language in which it was written itself acquires, by a process Casanova calls 'littérarisation', the features of a centre. Just as Alexander Eliasberg made outstanding works of Yiddish literature accessible to the German-language reader, thus bringing them wider popularity and acknowledgement, Warsaw witnessed at the same time a proliferation of secular Yiddish culture, not least through an intensive process of

[28] There is almost no research done on Riga; one of the few studies mentioning Riga and its Russian language culture in the interwar period is: Irina Novikova, 'Monuments and the Literary Culture of Riga', in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th centuries*, ed. by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, vol.2 (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub., 2006), pp. 40–56, here esp. pp. 49–51.

[29] Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres* (Paris: Editions Seuil, 1999) [*The World Republic of Letters*, translated by M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004)].

translation of European literature into Yiddish, thus establishing itself as a major centre for modern Yiddish cultural production.

The Warsaw journal *Bikher-velt* (Book world), with its focus on European literature in Yiddish translation, shall serve here to illuminate the semantic and cultural dimensions of Jewish migration in the interwar period.[30]

In the processes of intermediation and cultural transfer, as discussed above, translation plays a central role. Its meaning extends, of course, beyond language, and concerns questions of knowledge. Translation has become in this way a major focus of contemporary cultural studies. The translation practices in interwar Warsaw, however, have rarely been studied. This is even more surprising when we consider the fact that in 1928 Yiddish publishing reached here its peak. The number of translated belletristic works published in Yiddish equalled, moreover, the number of original Yiddish ones.

In Weimar Berlin and in Warsaw Yiddish presses and publishing houses mushroomed with the recognition of Yiddish as an official language. Publishing interests concentrated on schoolbooks, periodicals and translations. With the end of German inflation came the decline of Yiddish journalism, translation and publishing culture in Berlin. Although the economic conditions were much harsher, Warsaw followed the lead that Berlin had started to set a few years earlier between 1921 and 1924. While Berlin publishers had saturated the market for Yiddish schoolbooks, Warsaw publishers now concentrated on translated literature. They explored the 'hunger of Polish Jews for European literature' (Ellen Kellman) and aimed at a market for European literature in Yiddish translation.[31]

However, the poor quality of translated literature provoked severe criticism, as the reviews that were published in the literary journal *Bikher-velt* during the years 1928–29 reveal. In those two years, more than a third of all *Bikher-velt* articles were devoted to translation criticism, reflecting the continuing discourses on translated literature among Jewish literary forces and public figures. With the mass

[30] The material on *Bikher-velt* presented here originates from a joint research project plan initiated by Professor Susanne Marten-Finnis (University of Portsmouth).

[31] On reading habits see: Ellen Kellman, '*Dos yidishe bukh alarmirt!* Towards the History of Yiddish Reading in Inter-War Poland', *Polin* 16 (2003), 213–241; see also Nathan Cohen, '*Shund* and the Tabloids: Jewish Popular Reading in Inter-War Poland', *Polin* 16 (2003), 189–211.

production of Yiddish books the 'plague' of poor translations and careless editions had infected the Jewish literary tradition. Great enthusiasm among readers when Gogol, Hauptmann, Tolstoy and other European masters were announced in Yiddish translation was followed by frustration when those readers finally saw the finished book.

Further criticism concerned the publishers' programmes that appeared to be determined by contingencies and a lack of planning, while completely ignoring the 'intellectual needs' of young Jewish workers. Was there any explanation for the fact that the best Polish writers—Sienkiewicz, Mickewicz, Słowacki, Wyspiański, Krasiński—had so far not been translated at all?

This discussion gained a head of steam in 1929 when both the Bundist literary journal *Bikher-velt* and the unaffiliated *Literarishe bleter* created a wave of indignation about the need to put collective pressure on Yiddish publishers and booksellers to prevent the distribution of unauthorized translations into Yiddish.[32] Severe criticism was directed at the publishers, whose choices were determined by commercialism, while educational ambitions and moral guidance, it was feared, would disappear from the tradition of Jewish publishing.

Besides being key players on the Yiddish cultural scene in Warsaw, the editors of *Bikher-velt* (and *Literarishe bleter*) have a remarkable story of migration to tell. Formerly belonging to the association *Kultur lige* they had moved from Kiev to Warsaw due to the increasing Sovietization of the country.[33]

The journal *Bikher-velt*, one might say, accompanied and reflected on processes of cultural transfer and appropriation. Commenting on strategies of translation, the journal became a major site of intermediation. European literature in various languages encountered here the desire of Yiddish literature to enrich its thematic and stylistic repertoire, in other words to broaden its cultural knowledge. It was the

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[32] See e.g. Yehoshue Rapoport, 'Farlagn, iberzetser, iberzetsungen' [Publisher, translaters, translations], *Bikher-velt* 2 (1928), 32–36; Kh.Sh. K., 'Farlagen un zeyer ideisher mehu's [What have the publishers in mind?]', *Bikher-velt* 5 (1928), 61–62; R.K., 'Lev Tolstoy un di literarishe doyres in Airope' [Lev Tolstoi and the literary generations in Europe], *Bikher-velt* 8 (1928), 28–30; Mark Geler, 'Di kinstlerish-estetishe zayt fun yidishn bukh' [The artistic-aesthetic aspect of a Jewish book] *Bikher-velt* 4 (1929), 28–35; Y. Rotenberg, 'Vos felt undzeren iberzetsungen?' [What's missing in our translations?] *Bikher-velt* 4 (1929), 65–67.

[33] One of those migrants was for instance Nakhman Mayzill, the editor of *Literarishe bleter*. On the history of *Kultur lige* see: Hillel Kazovsky, *The Artists of the Kultur-Lige* (Jerusalem and Moscow: Gesharim, 2003), esp. pp. 16–41.

ambitious project of establishing a Yiddish cultural centre that claimed an equivalent literary capital as other major centres of the day. All this, moreover, took place in a nationalizing Polish setting.

Conclusion

On the preceding pages I have tried to outline some characteristic features of the literary and cultural production of the Russian Jewish diaspora in interwar Europe. I have tried to sketch four dimensions along whose lines the intricate interplay between continuities and discontinuities, and the factors shaping them, might be analysed and described. This, of course, can only be a cursory reading. More comprehensive studies would need to address the cultural production in Hebrew, Russian, Yiddish, and German in equal measure.

Berlin became in the interwar period a meeting place of East and West, of diverse strands of Jewish culture, of different ideological orientations, of Jewish and non-Jewish knowledge. Highly heterogeneous groups made the city their home for a limited time.[34] The migration setting fostered manifold processes of intermediation and encounter that are revealed in various forms of translation and communication. Writers, readers, translators, and publishers created a vibrant intellectual milieu. Besides Berlin, though, the cultural production of Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe was burgeoning also in other places such as Paris and Warsaw.

Berlin, situated at the interface between imperial (Diaspora) experience and national condition, could be understood as a prism for very different enquiries: for the work of selected writers, for the interactions among different groups, for the impact the migration setting had on their cultural activities and on formal issues such as genre preference, for methods of knowledge appropriation, for patterns of social seclusion, for the very history of scholarship dealing with migration in general and Russian Jewish Berlin in particular. It might be worth-

[34] The differing notions of national and cultural belonging had their roots in developments in the late 19th century. On their impact on Russian Jewry after the First World War and October Revolution see, for example, Kenneth B. Moss, 'Not *The Dybbuk* but *Don Quixote*: Translation, Deparochialization, and Nationalism in Jewish Culture, 1917–1919', in *Culture Front: Representing Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Benjamin Nathans & Gabriella Safran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 196–240.

while to look at the forms of convergence and divergence in respect of languages, concepts, practices of dissemination along the lines of the four categories of the textual, discursive, cultural, and semantic dimension I have discussed above. They encompass various aspects of cultural continuity as well as opening vistas beyond a Berlin that only at first glance seems to be an enclave. Studying the migration setting of interwar Berlin might be understood in this sense as an invitation to, but also a challenge for comparative studies in cultural history.

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BERGELSON, BENJAMIN AND BERLIN: JUSTICE DEFERRED

Harriet Murav

By the 1920s Dovid Bergelson had established himself as a leading Yiddish modernist. His prose fiction is set in the *shtetl*, but in a typical Bergelson story people no longer inhabit their customary places in a customary way. In such works as *Arum voksal* ('At the Depot', 1909), *Nokh alemen* ('When All Is Said and Done', 1913), and *Opgang* ('Descent', also translated as 'Departure', 1920), time itself is broken apart and impossibly elongated.[1] Time in Bergelson is 'always already/not yet'. We arrive too late for the event that shapes our lives and yet we are too early for the moment of renewal. Decisions have already been made, but outcomes are unclear. Mirl, the heroine of *When All Is Said and Done*, says that 'someone else' lived out the springtime of her life. The work Bergelson wrote during his time in Berlin is singularly important, because it expands his narrative of belatedness to respond to the violence of World War I and the catastrophic anti-Jewish violence of the Russian civil war, as the narrator puts it in one of the Berlin stories, 'the pillage and murder of the Jewish shtetls in Ukraine'.

Bergelson was born in Okhrimove, near Sarne in Ukraine in 1884; his father was a wealthy timber and grain merchant, and a Talner Hasid. He received no formal secular education, although he read widely in Hebrew and Russian, and his early attempts at authorship were in those languages. Bergelson energetically participated in the development of new Yiddish cultural and literary institutions made possible by the Russian revolution, including the Kiev Kultur-Lige (an organization founded in 1918 to promote Yiddish culture). The vast destruction and economic dislocation of the civil war, however, led him to Berlin in 1921, where he remained until 1933, just after Hitler came to power. He returned to Russia in 1934 where he continued

[1] For a translation of *Nokh alemen*, see David Bergelson, *When All is Said and Done*, trans. Bernard Martin (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977); for *Opgang*, see David Bergelson, *Descent*, trans. Joseph Sherman (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999).

to produce outstanding prose works, and an extraordinary play, *Prince Reubeni*. Bergelson was shot on Stalin's orders in August 1952, along with other members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee.

In the 20s Berlin served as a refuge for such prominent Russian-language writers as Vladimir Nabokov and Marina Tsvetaeva; it was a centre for Hebrew and Yiddish writing and publication, including the Hebrew writers Bialik and Tchernichowsky, and, in addition to Bergelson, the Yiddish writers Lev Kvitko, Moyshe Kulbak, and among others, Der Nister (with whom Bergelson collaborated in the editorship of the journal *Milgroym*). Bergelson supported his family by writing for the American Yiddish newspaper *Der forverts*; he held court at the Romanisches Café, whose habitués also included Alfred Döblin, the critic Alfred Kerr, the visual artists Otto Dix and George Grosz, the poets Franz Werfel and Else Lasker-Schüler, and Walter Benjamin.

While in Berlin, Bergelson wrote a number of short stories that explicitly reference the city, its streets, prostitutes, cheap cafes and restaurants. The fictitious characters Max Wentsl and Dr Mer, for example, who are found in the story 'Mit eyn nakht veyniker' ('One Night Less') in all likelihood refer to the real-life poet Franz Werfel and Alfred Kerr, respectively. Dafna Clifford points out that Bergelson's description of Yiddish literature as 'a young hag powdering herself with the smoke of big-city cigars […] could be taken straight from a painting by Otto Dix or Georg Grosz' (Clifford 247). Bergelson's story 'Far tsvelf toyznt dolar fast er fertsik teg' ('For 12,000 Bucks He Fasts 40 Days') describes a type of performance art well-known in Weimar Berlin, starving for your supper—made famous by Kafka's 1924 story 'The Hunger Artist'. Bergelson also wrote a story ('Atlvarg') comparing Berlin to the sinful Biblical city of Nineve.

In its hunger for novelty and penchant for the outrageous, Berlin culture came to be associated with the caricature of the modern Jew, rootless, urban, and over the top (Gay 169–78). Daily life in Berlin in the 1920s meant living 'on the edge of time', as Hans Gumbrecht writes, without thought for the past or future (Gumbrecht). For Bergelson, in contrast, the edge of the present bears the burden of the past. He was not the only writer to think about the present as particularly laden in this way. Bergelson's contemporaries Freud (in 'The Uncanny', and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, among other work) and Benjamin (in 'Berlin Chronicle', for example, and the *Arcades Project*) also evacuated from the present tense traces of a hidden and ruined past that impose themselves unpredictably on the experience of 'now'.

As Cathy Caruth shows, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud defines traumatic war neuroses as experiences that cannot be known until after their occurrence, in their repetition.[2] Caruth defines 'the story of trauma, then, as the narrative of a belated experience [that] attests to its endless impact on a life' (Caruth 7). It is not, however, only the aesthetic charge of the doubled moment that interests Bergelson, Freud, and Benjamin; it is also the moral charge, the obligation and demand that issues from the other's history that is simultaneously my own and not my own.

Even though the critical literature has recently turned to Bergelson,[3] little attention has been given to the question of violence in his work and the relation between his writing and other leading European figures of the time.[4] This paper explores Bergelson's Berlin stories in dialogue with Freud, Otto Dix, and Benjamin. I do not claim that Bergelson read Freud or Benjamin or vice versa, although some of Bergelson's stories were translated into German. I do claim that we should read Bergelson and Freud and Benjamin together. Freud, Benjamin, and Bergelson were each developing the chronotope of belatedness in response to the catastrophic violence of their time—the greatest destruction the world had seen, the First World War, and for Bergelson, in addition, the Russian civil war with its massive, unprecedented anti-Jewish violence. The two events were related: when Soviet Russia signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918, it lost territories that the Imperial Russian government once controlled, including Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, and thereby made possible the series of national conflicts that followed in those regions. The historian Peter Holquist

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[2] In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, for example, Freud compared the mind to a city whose buildings are 'now taken by ruins, but not by ruins of themselves, but of later restorations made after fires or destruction' (Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 17).

[3] For a discussion of Bergelson's Berlin story 'Among Refugees' and other Berlin works as a key stage in the writer's self-fashioning, see Sasha Senderovich, 'In Search of Readership: Bergelson Among the Refugees', in *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, eds. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraikh (London: Legenda, 2007), pp. 150–66.

[4] For studies of Yiddish writers in Berlin, see Gennady Estraikh, 'Vilna on the Spree: Yiddish in Weimar Berlin', *Aschkenas: Zeitschrift fur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 16 (2006), and Heather Valencia, 'Yiddish Writers in Berlin: 1920–1936', in *The German-Jewish Dilemma: From the Enlightenment to the Shoah*, ed. by Edward Timms and Andrea Hammel (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1999); for a focus on Bergelson in Berlin, see for example, Dafna Clifford, 'From Exile to Exile: Bergelson's Berlin Years', in *Yiddish and the Left*, ed. by Mikhail Krutikov and Gennady Estraikh (Oxford: Legenda, 2001) and Senderovich, 'In Search of Readership'.

speaks of a 'continuum of crisis' from the period 1914–1921.[5] The Pale of Settlement, where most of Imperial Russia's Jews lived, comprised precisely these regions. Furthermore, the anti-Jewish policies of the Imperial Russian army during the First World War, including the classification of Jews as enemies and the massive deportations based on this assumption, fed directly into the 'deterioration of basic legal and social norms', with disastrous consequences for Jews.[6] The anti-Jewish violence of the Civil War period was distinctive in its duration, scope, and scale: a given locale could be in pogrom mode for 'weeks or months on end'.[7] Whites, Reds, the Polish Army, the army of the Ukrainian National Republic, and numerous roaming military bands all perpetrated the killings, rapes, mutilations, and destruction of property directed against Jews. There is general agreement that the lower limit of Jewish deaths in the period 1918–1922 in Ukraine, Belorussia, and the European part of Russia (the former Pale of Settlement) is 50,000 and the upper limit is 200,000.[8]

This paper situates Bergelson in Berlin in the 1920s in a cultural context informed by Freud, Dix, and Benjamin. As I will show in the second part of the paper, Bergelson in dialogue with Benjamin is not so far fetched even on empirical grounds. Part I, 'A Broken Face', focuses on Bergelson's story 'Tsvishn emigrantn' ('Among Refugees', 1927) and the way it conjures the uncanny, that peculiar sense of unease that stems from the return of the familiar. Anthony Vidler sees a direct relation between Freud's writings on the 'traumas of war' and his 'observations on the nature of anxiety and shock' detailed in the essay on 'unhomeliness' (Vidler 7). The second part of the paper turns to Benjamin's and Bergelson's narratives of ghosts in the city, and the moral and ethical demands made by these ghosts. The conclusion focuses on one of Bergelson's most shocking stories of violence, 'Tsvey rotskhim' ('Two murderers') and its staging of uncanny justice.

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[5] See Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[6] For a discussion of Tsarist army policies in relation to Jews, see Eric Lohr, 'The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages, and Violence during World War I', *Russian Review* 60.3 (2001).

[7] *Kniga pogromov: Pogromy na Ukraine, v Belorussii i evropeiskoi chasti Rossii v period grazhdanskoi voiny 1918–1922 gg.*, ed. by L.B. Miliakova (Moscow: Rosspen, 2007), p. vii.

[8] See Oleg Budnitskii, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdu krasnymi i belymi* (Moscow Rosspen, 2005), p. 7; for a discussion of the numbers problem and a documentary history, see Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*.

I. *A Broken Face*

In the story 'Among Refugees' ('Tsvishn emigrantn'), a young Jewish man, originally from Ukraine and a World War I veteran, who has traveled to Palestine and now living in Berlin, discovers that a Ukrainian leader, notorious for his role in anti-Jewish violence, is staying in the same pension as he.[9] The young man decides that he must assassinate the Ukrainian leader, and having failed to find support from the Jewish community, who try to put him under the care of a psychiatrist, he turns to an unnamed writer, the first-person narrator, for help with his plan.

The story opens with a description of the impression the visitor makes on the writer and his family:

> Umkerndik zikh aheym fun Berliner gasn in a hitsikin yuli-tog, hob ikh getrofn mayne eygene zeyer oyfgeregt un ongeshtrengt. Gezikhter hobn oysgezeen blaslekh, shtark ongeshrokn (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 175).
>
> [Returning home from Berlin's streets on a hot July day I found my family very upset and anxious/ strained. They looked pale and extremely frightened.]

The source of their anxiety is the visitor, the young man who sits curled up in a chair in a corner of the writer's study, waiting for him. What is striking about his description is not that he seems particularly strange, but rather that, on the contrary, his appearance is reminiscent of something:

> Zayn gantse figur hot dermont in groyen shoyb, vos af vayte kleynshtetldike vegn, un aleyn hot er gemakht dem ayndruk fun a mentshn, vos hot on otem durkhgemakht zeyer a lange shtreke (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 176)
>
> [His entire figure was reminiscent of the gray dust of far away small shtetl roads, and he himself gave the impression of someone who had walked a very long way without stopping for breath.]

After a few words with his visitor, the writer leaves him in his study, but finds himself nonetheless 'compelled' (nisht vilindik hob ikh

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[9] Neugroschel's translation of the title, 'Tsvishn emigrantn' is 'Among Refugees'. The most common English rendering of 'emigrant' would be 'emigrant', however, in using 'refugees' Neugroschel rightly emphasizes the displaced, exilic, and minority status of Bergelson's hero, and all the 'mute, haunted ghosts' among which he finds himself in Berlin.

getrakht vegn im) to think about the young man (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 177). The narrator emphasizes the strange sensation that this compulsion produces: 'Zitsndik in tveytn tsimer, hob ikh zikh gefilt umheymlekh' ('Sitting in another room, an uncanny feeling came over me') (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 177). The word I have translated as 'uncanny' appears in the original Yiddish as 'umheymlekh'.

In his essay of 1919, Freud describes the uncanny as 'that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar' (Freud 5: 369–70). Freud uses linguistic evidence to show that *heimlich*, familiar and homey also means something concealed or secret, inaccessible to knowledge. He writes '*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops an ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*' and concludes that '*unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*' (Freud 5: 377). In Berlin, the familiar shtetl reappears embodied in the young man as its uncanny opposite. Before I elaborate this point, let me clarify what I am not saying. Bergelson's use of the term 'umheymlekh' does not necessarily constitute a reference to Freud's essay, and even though 'Tsvishn emigrantn' contains an encounter between the young man and a psychiatrist, there is no reference to psychoanalysis. The term 'umheymlekh' has a range of meanings in Yiddish, including uncomfortable, frightening, unusual, and uncanny.[10] It is not the use of the term in and of itself that matters. Freud's and Bergelson's common concern is a broad and diffuse historical sense of the impossible demands of the undead past on the present. The past is undead because those who lived in it were murdered, subject to violence whose injustice has not yet been redressed. Cathy Caruth argues that Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* offers a view of Jewish history in precisely these terms: 'The history of chosenness, as the history of survival, thus takes the form of an unending confrontation with the returning violence of the past' (Caruth 69).

In 'Tsvishn emigrantn' the violence of Jewish history, the plundered shtetl, reappears in the figure of the visitor, the self-styled 'Jewish terrorist'. Bergelson writes, 'His entire figure was reminiscent of the gray dust of far away small shtetl roads'. The line sets up a series of metonymic substitutions: the figure of the young man associated with the

[10] The *Groyser verterbukh fun der yidisher shprakh* gives four meanings for 'umheymlekh': '1) (a bisl) umetik; vos iz on freyd un nisht-bakvem; (2) vos iz anderish vi geveynlekh un derfar drikt es afn gemikt; 3) shvermutik, batribt; 4) vos vekt shrek'. Weinreich defines 'umheymlekh' as 'weird, uncanny'.

gray dust that is associated with the far away roads connecting the small shtetlekh. The most familiar, well-known object, the small shtetl where Bergelson grew up, and about which he made his reputation as a writer—is practically buried in this metonymic chain. Berlin, and its streets are the setting for the writer's home and all those who are dearest to him, his 'own', his eygene, and the small shtetl, the place of his origin, is the farthest away and the most remote—only this farthest away and most remote place is now embodied in this unsettling young man who has succeeded in penetrating the most intimate corner of the writer's new home in Berlin, the place where he writes, his study.

The young man's face receives particular emphasis:

> He had broad cheekbones, but they were not the same, and therefore the two sides of his face looked different. The right cheek was smooth and even, like everyone else's—a cheek that wanted to take pleasure from the world, it let you know,
>
> 'I want to live with people.'
>
> And his left cheek was crooked; as if it were his and not his. It looked like a cheek that fought with the world—life had thrust displeasure at it, and it would sling displeasure at the world. Thanks to his left cheek, the young man was ugly, but as it seemed to me, the young man took the left cheek's side, he was like a mother whose one child was bright, but whose other child was a monster—and out of a sense of justice he took the side of the ugly left cheek, carrying its meanness in himself (getrogn in zikh ir beyzkayt). Because of this ugly cheek he had a mustache—to hide its ugliness a bit. I noticed his mustache and it seemed to me that his right cheek was not satisfied with it, because of its unusual dirty copper color, which seemed to say,
>
> 'Leave me alone. I am a mean one. Better you go your way and I mine.' (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 177).

Refusing the cohesiveness and stability of a normal portrait, this image resembles a Surrealist collage of disaggregated parts. The story of the young man's face gets derailed in the telling; it mutates into a Freudian family drama with a life of its own: the mother who neglects her good-looking, successful child, preferring instead her freakish, ugly child.[11]

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[11] Hélène Cixous's reading of Freud emphasizes repetition, doubling, the inability to recognize the self, and the failure to contain proliferating narrative: Hélène Cixous, 'Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The "Uncanny")', *New Literary History*, 7.3 (1976).

Bergelson's verbal collage strikingly resembles Otto Dix's 'Skin Graft', an etching and aquatint done in 1924 as part of his series called 'The War'. In both images, the left side of the face is distorted. Dix fought in the trenches during World War I and was wounded twice. Facial injury was a terrible new development of the technology of combat at this time, connected to trench warfare. Dix's portrait, like Bergelson's verbal image, unites narrative and static description: a horrifying scene of violence unfolds on the young man's face, transformed into a landscape of destruction.[12] I cannot prove that Bergelson saw Dix's etching, but Bergelson in all likelihood encountered veterans with facial injuries, the so-called 'broken men' in Berlin. Facial disfigurement was a central theme of avant-garde visual art and theatre in the 1920s: El Lissitzky, who, like Bergelson, left Ukraine for Berlin, created photomontages that reconstructed the human face.[13] The terrible mutilations caused by the first world war and the 'plunder and rape' of the shtetl resonate with one another in the parallel pictures created by Dix and Bergelson.

In contrast to Dix, Bergelson's story adds the traumatic dimension of repetition. The young man, true, is a war veteran, but he was already injured before his military service. He always and already resembled the Dix portrait. 'From childhood on, my face has been flattened, crooked, as if run over…I am not very good looking…you think I don't know?' (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 180). In childhood and in the shtetl other boys shunned him, but now, and in Berlin, he fits in. Now and in Berlin, horrifyingly there is a strange rightness about his crooked face; he is particularly well-suited for the task of assassinating the pogromist. Now, in contrast to every other time of his life, he is happy, especially when the progromist is at home in his room, together with him in the pension. In the aftermath of the pogroms, there is a strange symmetry between the asymmetry of the crooked left side of his face and the assymmetry of the victims' unanswered call for justice. It is 'out of justice' (fun yoysher) that the visitor 'takes the side of his ugly left cheek' (Bergelson *Velt-oys velt-eyn* 177). In the Kabbalistic tradition with which Bergelson was familiar, 'din', judgment, appears

[12] For a brief discussion of the Dix portrait in the context of European art of the time, see Wendy Baron, 'Art and the First World War', *The Burlington Magazine*, 136.1099 (1994).

[13] For a discussion see Stanton B. Garner, 'The Gas Heart: Disfigurement and the Dada Body, *Modern Drama*, 50.4 (2007), 500–16.

on the left side of the tree figure used to represent the attributes of God (Scholem 214). 'Mides ha-din' ('The full severity of the law') is the title he gave to another Berlin story of 1929, which ambivalently describes the establishment of Bolshevik power in a border town. The writer's dread comes not in direct response to the murdered shtetls but belatedly and in mediated fashion in response to the hideous young man who calls for justice in their place.

II. *Benjamin*

The embedded narrative contains a description of the peculiar home in which the young man grew up. He was orphaned at the age of eight, and was raised by his grandfather, whose waxen face resembled a clock.[14] All of the grandfather's other children, in addition to the young man's father, died young, and the grandfather had the strange habit of buying a clock to mark the occasion of their deaths. The would-be assassin says that he grew up among these clocks: 'Every clock was a grave, the anniversary of a death' ('Yener zeyger—a keyvr, a yortsayt') (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 182). Instead of a home filled with people, the young man grew up in a home filled with inanimate but lifelike reminders of death, a truly unhomey home. The young man carries this feature of childhood into adulthood: his eyes burn like yortsayt candles. Time fails to move forward in Bergelson, instead the clocks, instruments that keep track of the present, simultaneously record the destruction of the past. The terrible violence of the first world war and the civil war belong on the same chain of time on which the deaths of the hero's family have already taken place. Yet the young hero's trajectory, already determined, remains unfulfilled. At the end of the story, instead of killing his enemy, he kills himself.

The timepiece as gravestone fills the present with the past. This chronological doubling resonates with the work of the other protagonist of my story, Benjamin. The forward motion of time, weighted down by the past, marks only a succession of deaths, and not the forward march of history; the ticking clock more resembles a calendar of

[14] Freud identifies the exchange between the animate and the inanimate as a feature of the uncanny, and singles out E.T.A. Hoffman's story 'The Sand Man' as an aesthetic work associated with this particular feature. The hero, Nathaniel, falls in love with a mechanical doll, Olympia.

remembrances than a timepiece. In his fifteenth thesis on the philosophy of history, Benjamin writes that calendars do not measure time the way clocks do, because calendars register holidays, which are days of remembrance (Benjamin *Illuminations* 261). The 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' upset the more conventional view of history as a rational and intelligible process that moves forward toward the future. Benjamin explicitly names his preoccupation with memory, the past, and the dead as deriving from Jewish sources. The Jews, writes Benjamin, were prohibited from investigating the future; 'the Torah and the prayers instruct them in remembrance, however' (Benjamin *Illuminations* 264). Bergelson's clocks work like Benjamin's calendars.

As I mentioned earlier, while living in Berlin, Bergelson spent many afternoons at the Romanisches Café. So did Benjamin. In his 'Berlin Chronicle' Benjamin describes the ebb and flow of bohemians and bourgeoisie that frequented its tables. Immediately after the war, the bohemians dominated—symbolized, Benjamin says, by the hunchback waiter Richard—but after the German economy began to recover, 'the bourgeois revised his relationship to the inmates of the Café Megalomania (as the Romanische Café soon came to be called) and found that everything was back to normal' (Benjamin *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* 23). The Romanisches Café may have been known as Cafe Megalomania in German-speaking circles, but among Yiddishists it was referred to as the 'Rakhmonishes or Rakhmones café, "Café of Pity" ', an allusion to the down-and-out state of the Yiddish writers at its tables (Estraikh 10). Benjamin does not mention Yiddish speakers in his description of the café, but he does mention the poet Else Lasker-Schüler, who invited him to her table; she also was known to visit the Yiddish tables at the café (Estraikh 11). It is possible that Benjamin and Bergelson had a nodding acquaintance; it is also possible that they did not. Bearing in mind the centrality of the theme of belatedness in their work, I prefer to say they just missed meeting one another. The point is not the empirical fact, but rather, the congruity of their thought, in other words, a meeting on the plane of ideas.

Berlin was not the only place where Benjamin and Bergelson might have met one another; Moscow is another.[15] Benjamin spent two

[15] He mentions attending a performance at 'Granovsky's', in other words, the Moscow State Yiddish Theater. In his diary entry for December 11, 1926, Benjamin writes:

months in 1926–1927 in Moscow, in large part to pursue an unsuccessful relationship with Asja Lacis. Remarkably, in the written work that came out of this time, his *Moscow Diary*, Benjamin does not find the preoccupation with the future usually associated with Russian revolutionary culture of the 1920s. He notes:

> I don't think there's another city with as many watchmakers as Moscow. This is all the more peculiar since people here do not get particularly worried about time. But there must be historical reasons for this. When you watch people on the street, you rarely see anybody rushing [...]. They have gotten in the habit of walking in zig-zags. (It is quite significant that in some club or other [...] there is a poster on the wall with the exhortation: Lenin said, 'Time is money.' Just to express this banality, the highest authority had to be invoked (Benjamin *Moscow Diary* 47).

Benjamin sees in the pedestrians of Moscow the gait of the flâneur. The flâneur wanders and wastes time, thereby experiencing the resonance of the past in the present.

Benjamin, like Bergelson is haunted by the violence of the past. In 'Berlin Chronicle' (1932) Benjamin describes the space of the city as haunted by the dead friends of his youth:

> They steal along its walls like beggars, appear wraithlike at windows, to vanish again, sniff at thresholds like a *genius loci*, and even if they fill whole quarters with their names, it is as a dead man's fills his gravestone. Noisy, matter-of-fact Berlin, the city of work and the metropolis of business, nevertheless has more, rather than less, than some others, of those places and moments when it bears witness to the dead (Benjamin *Reflections* 28).

Shoshana Felman characterizes the Berlin chronicle as 'an autobiography of trauma' and 'an allegory of the ungrasped impact of the First World War' (Felman 36). The shock of the war and the discovery of the suicide of Benjamin's friend Fritz Heinle make it impossible for the writer's self to fill the present to occupy the space where he is located. The dead take his place. A similar description of time and space can be found in Bergelson's story. There is no single, unified subject occupying here and now:

'There were three one-act plays, the first two were beneath mention, the third one, an assembly of rabbis, a kind of choric comedy set to Jewish melodies, seemed far superior, but I could not follow the action and was so exhausted by my day and by all the breaks in the performance that I fell asleep at various points' (Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*, 18).

> it was a day like a year, like a long, long road; on a day like this, looking back, you think to yourself that you've walked a tremendous distance. A day like this drives all the lonely eccentrics onto the street, and they wander around, like mute haunted ghosts.
>
> [Af aza min tog, az me kukt zikh um tsurik, dakht zikh: me iz durkhgegangen an umgeveynlekh groyse shtreke. Aza min tog traybt aroys ale eynzame 'chudakes' in gas aroys, un zey blonzhen arum, vi shtume nogndike gayster (Bergelson *Shturemteg* 178).]

This passage splits and doubles time, and multiplies the writer's self into these mute, haunted ghosts, including first and foremost the visitor himself.

Whereas for Bergelson Berlin's ghosts are the products of geographic displacement, for Benjamin they belong to the city, resembling a *genius loci*. 'Bearing witness to the dead'—which is what these particular places and moments in Berlin do—is related to making a demand in their name—which is what Bergelson's uncanny Berlin visitor does. To be a refugee, which Bergelson and his visitor both are, is to haunt a place and be haunted by an unfulfilled and unfulfillable demand for justice. Recall that in the young man, like a mother with a freakish child, takes the side of his left cheek out of a sense of 'justice'. The shtetl's demand for justice appears uncannily displaced in scowling look of the young man's broken face. In 'Tsvishn emigrantn' the visitor, the would-be Jewish terrorist implicates the writer in responsibility, explaining that he told the writer the story 'zent ir shoyn farantvortlekh tsuglaykh mit mir un nokh mer fun mir, vayl ir zayt a shrayber' ['because you are as responsible as I am, and even more, because you are a writer'] (198). At the end of the story, the young man asks the writer to turn on the light, so that he can see his face: 'Ikh zits mit aykh do, in tunklen stimer, ikh hob shoyn aykh long gevolt zogn: makht, ikh bet aykh, bay aykh in stimer likht. Ikh vil aykh take zen in ponim' (198). Turning on the light turns the tables on the writer: who is he, what is he concealing, what stories does his face tell? The demand for an answer and for justice has no outcome, however, other than this story itself, which comes after and holds the place for the dead. The story addresses its readers with the same unanswered questions posed by the young man. To be 'among refugees' in Berlin and to read 'Among Refugees' is to reside in a world burdened with debts to the past, called upon to answer for and answer to the dead ('to be answerable', 'farantvortlekh') who are not really dead, but without the possibility of discharging the balance owed.

Freud's 'uncanny' is 'everything that ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light' (Freud 376). The hidden and secret thing is the shtetl, which refuses to be contained as an object of nostalgia, exoticism, or as an image of piety. The shtetl itself is internally split (and not merely along class lines that Bergelson himself was to depict in *Baym Dnyeper*) and appears as an unstable, disruptive part of the past that refuses to go away. The shtetl was murdered, raped, and pillaged during the civil war, but it is not dead. It makes demands on the present, from its position in the dustbin of history, it makes demands from afar, in the person of the young man, the would-be 'Jewish terrorist', as he calls himself, who makes a demand on the writer in the name of the dead.

III. *Justice and Belatedness*

'Tsvishn emigrantn' is not the only work in which the demand appears. In another story, 'Civil War' [Birgerkrig] published in the same cycle as 'Tsvishn emigrantn' grotesquely displaces the cry for justice in the image of a silent mouth:

> So what if on a thin, thin thread of memory hangs the big mouth of a girl—a deep-set mouth, like a pig's? So what if a pair of coarse swollen lips remains twisted in insult forever?
>
> [Iz vos, az af a dinem, dinem fodem fun zikhron iz hengen gebliben a groys meydlsh moyl—a tif-farshnitns vi bay a khazer? Iz vos, az a por grobe gedrolene lipn zenen geblibn baleydikt-farkrumt, af eybik farkrumt? (Bergelson *Geklibene verk* 55)][16]

In the story in which this passage appears the direct narration of the violent assault is lacking. The experience of the assault on the part of the victim remains unknown. Furthermore, there is no testimony as if from an eyewitness. No one was there to see it happening, as it were. All that remains is the memory of this silenced mouth, and even the memory has no owner. The memory is estranged, belonging to everyone and no one at once. As in 'Tsvishn emigrantn' the belatedness of the demand only heightens its impact on the present.

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[16] The translation of the story that appears in Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, *Ashes Out of Hope: Fiction by Soviet-Yiddish Writers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), pp. 84–123. This passage does not appear in this translation.

A similarly grotesque and belated demand for justice emerges in the Berlin story 'Tsvey rotskhim' [Two murderers]. The story brings together the aftermath of the Russian civil war and the First World War in the overlapping fates of a German war widow, her dog, and her lodger, a Ukrainian, Anton Zarembo, whom the narrator describes as 'ataman fun a kleyner bande, vos hot barabevet un gekoylet yidishe shtetlekh in Ukrayne' ('the leader of a small group that plundered and murdered Jewish shtetls in Ukraine') (Bergelson *Velt-oys velt-eyn* 206). The narrative disturbingly brings together the First World War and the Russian civil war. The widow, Hilde Ginter, adopts a seven month-old orphan; the dog, Tel, however, is terribly jealous. The widow steps out to get a few things from the store, and when she returns, finds the baby with its throat ripped out. The dog was determined not to be rabid, and as Frau Ginter remarks with regret 'Keyn gerikht iz nisht geven' ('there was no trial') (Bergelson *Velt-oys velt-eyn* 211). The regret, notably, is not for the murdered child, but for the murderer who did not come to trial.

The story of Frau Ginter's dog reminds Anton Zarembo, her Ukrainian lodger, of other, 'very similar' stories:

> Di geshikhte mitn farblutikn kind, vos iz do in tsimer gelign, af der podloge mit an ibergebisn helzl, dermont im in fil enlekhe geshikhtes in yene Yidishe shtetlekh af Ukrayne, vu er mit zayn bande hot gekoylet un gerabevet. Blut…blut in ale Yidishe hayzer gedenkt zikh im, blut af der gas, vu tsvishn tsebrokhn gloz un tsvishn alerlay anderere shmotes un Yidishe bebekhes valgern zikh farblutikte kerpers mit epes an opgehakte kop—a kop mit a grolekh-shvartser bord.
>
> [The story with the bloodied child that lay there on the floor of the room, with its throat ripped out reminded him of many similar stories in the Jewish shtetls in Ukraine, where he with his group murdered and plundered. He remembered blood…blood in all the Jewish houses, blood on the street, where amid broken glass and all kinds of other rags and Jewish guts bloodied bodies lay with chopped off heads—here was a head with a salt-and-pepper beard.] (Bergelson *Velt-oys velt-eyn* 211–12)

It is through the perpetrator's and not the victim's perspective that we learn of the plunder and murder of the Jewish shtetl. Othering the perspective parallels delaying and dislocating the telling of the tale. As in 'Among Refugees' we are not there on the scene; we do not see the events as they happened, but learn about them as they are recalled by another, in this case, the perpetrator.

Bergelson uses the issue of language to heighten the distancing and estranging of the narrative of the anti-Jewish violence. The original scene, the scene of the murder and pillage, took place in Ukrainian and Yiddish, but it is narrated in 'broken German'—the narrator makes a particular point of describing Frau Ginter's difficulty in following her lodger's language ('di gutmutike un fleysike daytshke farshteyt zeyer shlekht zayn tsebrokhenem daytsh'). The account of this narrative in 'broken German' is, of course, in Yiddish. Each of the principal players in this scene—the perpetrator, the listener and the narrator—speaks a different language. The Babel of languages underscores the problem of justice dislocated and delayed.

It is through Frau Ginter, the mistress of the murderous dog Tel that Bergelson focalizes the demand for justice, again, estranged and displaced. She fails to understand 'who is guilty' ('ver iz shuldik') and 'why blood was shed'. What is clear to her, however, is that in Zarembo's homeland there were a lot of murdered children, 'children with their throats ripped out'. She asks with particular interest whether there was a trial (gerikht) and when she learns there was not, expresses her compassion—amazingly, not for the victims, but for the perpetrator. She addresses him in German as 'armer, armer' ('you poor man', Yiddish would be 'oremer') and exclaims over the similarity between the fate of her dog and her lodger. According to Frau Ginter Zarembo's and Tel's stories of failed justice are 'exactly the same' (Bergelson *Velt-oys velt-eyn* 212).

Presumably, the reader's compassion is for the murdered baby, and not the murderous dog, Tel. Similarly, we can assume that Bergelson's and his readers' compassion is for the murdered Jewish victims of Ukraine, and not the perpetrators of the violence. In 'Among refugees' the victims' demand for justice uncannily reappears in the disturbing figure of the would-be Jewish terrorist with his crooked left cheek. In 'Two Murderers' Bergelson displaces the demand for justice to an even greater degree, removing it from the victims and transferring it to the perpetrators, the dog Tel and the Ukrainian Zarembo, unjustly deprived of their day in court. Delaying, dislocating, and othering have the same force. The experience of overwhelming violence is the experience of missing it, as if the violent events happened to someone else—thereby producing the traumatic symptom of repetition. As Freud famously noted, 'hysterics suffer from reminiscences', but victims of war neuroses fail to remember, and are thereby compelled to return to the scene of violence. The uncanny dread invoked by the

return of the familiar in 'Tsvishn emigrantn' and the displaced longing for a court trial in 'Tsvey rotskhim', like Freud's theoretical work on trauma, and Benjamin's belated chronicle of Berlin, are each overlapping and distinct attempts to confront the murderous violence of the recent past and its unclaimed and unanswered demand for justice.

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PART THREE

NEW SOURCES ON RUSSIAN JEWISH INFLUENCES IN MUSIC, ART AND PUBLISHING

IF MOSCOW WERE PARIS: RUSSIA, THE SOVIET UNION AND BIROBIDZHAN AS POINTS OF REFERENCE IN THE YIDDISH PRESS OF PARIS

Agnieszka W. Wierzcholska

'Once Moscow becomes a second artistic Paris, all artists will live in Moscow—and I will be the first among them.'[1] It was Marc Chagall who conceived of such an intriguing possibility in an interview for the Yiddish weekly *Pariz* published in the French capital in April 1935. What if Moscow were to emerge as a second Paris? It seems as if Marc Chagall articulated a wish in the quoted interview and as if he expected his reader to understand his reference to Moscow immediately. Was there—among the Eastern European Jewish immigrants—an imagined but nevertheless vital axis between Moscow and Paris, as suggested by Chagall's words? The potential readers of the Yiddish press in Paris were immigrants from Eastern Europe who had left their old home countries behind. For the most part, they experienced different trajectories, saw the fall of empires and the emergence of smaller East-Central European states after World War I, migrated through Europe and beyond, before arriving in Paris. What was their point of reference and how was it discussed in the Yiddish press? Did an immaterial line between Paris and the abandoned country serve to compare the old and the new, chosen 'homeland'? Did Moscow and more generally Russia or the Soviet Union become a point of reference, in the sense that referring back to this point would allow the affirmation of one's identity and cultural continuity? The articles in the Yiddish press convey a conglomeration of different notions, concepts, and connotations associated with Russia. The Yiddish publicists in Paris constructed an image of Russia and the Soviet Union, and the land gradually became a field of projections. When analyzing the discourse about Russia and

[1] 'Vi nor Moskve vet vern a tsvayt kinstlerish Pariz, weln ale kinstler lebn in moskve, un ikh—der ershter'; 'Bey Marc Chagall: Krizis in der yidishn kunst', *Pariz*, 12 April 1935, 5 (all citations in English are translations from Yiddish made by the author of the paper).

the Soviet Union in the Yiddish press in Paris, the historian must ask what function the portrayals had for the immigrant Jews and what these portrayals said about their relation towards their old and their new homelands. The articles about Russia and the Soviet Union in the Parisian Yiddish press sometimes revealed more about the immigrants' concerns in France and about their concepts of cultural continuity than about the object of interest itself—the current situation in the Soviet Union. This article asks what images of Russia and the Soviet Union were transported in the Yiddish press of Paris and investigates the function these conceptions had for the immigrants.

The Yiddish press published in Paris between the World Wars is an abundant source for historians. Between the wars 142 different periodicals in Yiddish appeared in Paris.[2] Historians assume that the Yiddish speaking community in the French capital numbered around 110,000 to 130,000 people in 1939.[3] In the interwar period, the majority of the migrants came from Poland, Russia and Romania.[4] In Paris, they established a variety of cultural and welfare associations, some of them organized within the *Fédération de sociétés juives*, a non-political umbrella organization.[5] Beyond that, political groups formed associations such as the *Kultur-lige*, controlled by communists or bundist societies such as the *Medem-club* and the *Arbeter-ring*.[6] A worker's choir and theatre group, the PYAT (Proletarishes yiddishes arbayter teater), complete the long list of organizations for the Yiddish-speaking migrants from Eastern Europe. The Yiddish public sphere in Paris was thus diverse and heterogeneous, and indeed, so was the Yiddish press. Its

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[2] Zosa Szajkowski, '150 yor yidishe prese in frankraykh', in *Yidn in Frankraykh. Shtudies un material*, ed. by Eliahu Tsherikower, 2 vols (New York: YIVO, 1942), I, pp. 236–308.

[3] See also: Michel Roblin, *Les Juifs de Paris: Démographie-Économie-Culture* (Paris: Picard, 1952), p. 147; Aline Benain, 'Le Pletzl: tentative de définition d'un espace yiddishophone parisien', in *Vivre et survivre dans le Marais: au cœur de Paris du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Azéma (Paris: Éd. Le Manuscrit, 2005), pp. 305–321 (p. 305); For a critical analysis of the total number of the Yiddish-speaking community see David H. Weinberg, *Les Juifs à Paris de 1933 à 1939* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1974), pp. 49–52.

[4] Roblin, *Les Juifs de Paris*, pp. 149–153.

[5] The federatsie comprised around 50 to 90 organizations, see also *Almanach Juif*, ed. by Colonie Scolaire (Paris: La Nouvelle Génération, 1931), p. 83. More general on the associations and the role of the federatsie, see Weinberg, *Les Juifs à Paris*, pp. 49–50.

[6] Zosa Szajkowski, 'Dos yidishe gezelshaftlekhe lebn in Pariz tsum yor 1939', in *Yidn in Frankraykh*, pp. 205–247.

characteristic traits were the diversity in genre (dailies, weeklies, journals for the young, art journals, press reviews, illustrated magazines), the high fluctuation of periodicals, and their strong political affiliation. Almost seventy per cent of the published periodicals defined themselves as a mouthpiece of a political group or openly adhered to certain political ideas. The diversity of political movements of the time was reflected in the Yiddish press—Zionist, revisionist, territorialist, Poale-zionist, bundist, communist, anarchist, Trotskyist newspapers were published in Paris in Yiddish. The majority of the publications can be considered as left-wing. However, among the many transient und irregular publications in Yiddish, two long-lived dailies emerged. The *Parizer Haynt*, sympathetic to the Zionist idea, was created as a branch of the high-circulation Yiddish daily in Poland—the *Haynt*.[7] In Paris the paper appeared daily for fourteen years from 1926 until 1940. The communist *Naye prese* appeared daily for almost six years—from 1934 until 1939.[8] It was published primarily by members of the Yiddish language section of the Communist Party in France. Finally, two weeklies of the Bund gained an important role in the 1930s: the *Veker* (1932–1934), and *Undzer Shtime* (1935, and 1938–1939). Naturally, antagonisms, even public hostility, existed between the different newspapers, depending on their political standpoints.[9] The diversity of the Yiddish periodicals in the 1920s, and even more so in the 1930s thus reflected the heterogeneity of the Yiddish community itself.

By and large, the Yiddish press was modern in form and content, and played an important integrating role for the immigrants. Already in their appearance the papers used progressive elements, fashioning their typography according to the Art Deco style or constructivism.[10]

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[7] Aron Alperin, 'Di yiddishe prese in frankraykh', in *Di yidishe prese vos iz geven*, ed. by Dovid Flinker, Mordechai Tsanin and Sholem Rozenfeld (Tel-Aviv: Veltfarband fun di yidishe zshurnalistn, 1975), pp. 604–611; on the *Haynt* see Chaim Finkelstein, *Haynt: A Tsaytung bay yidn, 1908–1939* (Tel Aviv: Peretz, 1978).

[8] See also Aline Benain, Audrey Kichelewski, '*Parizer Haynt* et *Naïe Prese*, les itinéraires paradoxaux de deux quotidiens parisiens en langue yiddish', *Archives Juives* 36 (2003), 52–69; Shmuel Bunim, 'Le courrier des lecteurs du *Parizer Haynt* (1926–1932)', *Archives Juives* 30 (1997), 21–38.

[9] On the different political groups that constituted the Yiddish press of Paris and their relations see Agnieszka Wierzcholska, 'Auf Jiddisch in Paris: Zur ostjüdischen Immigrationspresse im Frankreich der Zwischenkriegszeit', *Yearbook of the Simon-Dubnow-Institute* 9 (2010), 37–55.

[10] See for example *Arbeter fraynt* (1926–1927), *Pariz* (1935), *Parizer Moment* (1930–1931).

The newspapers were directed at the Yiddish-speaking immigrants in Paris, who for the most part were workers.[11] Thus, most of the papers contained columns dealing with the worries of the workers, the articles reported on their living conditions, their rights, and labour union news. They covered sports events and some contained *meditsinishe shmuesn*—advice about medicine and hygienic matters.[12] This politically aware and modern public sphere saw its function as the education of their readers. The editors stressed the importance of culture and especially of literature; almost every paper published serialized novels. Naturally, the didactic goals of the papers differed greatly depending on the respective political standpoint: The *Parizer Haynt*, for example, targeted a 'national awakening' of its readers, while the communist *Naye Prese* aimed at welding together the French working class and the Jewish immigrant workers. Principally though, the function of the papers was to facilitate the integration of the immigrants in the 'new homeland'. The papers gave advice as well in legal as in everyday matters, reported on the rights of the immigrants, published announcements helping to find work or Jewish cultural associations.[13] Analyzing the Yiddish press, the historian must be aware of a certain bias. For instance, the *landsmanshaften* as well as religious tendencies were barely represented in the Parisian Yiddish press. Seldom will we find nostalgic portrayals of the old Jewish communities.[14] This modern public sphere was, in most cases, penned by immigrants who had commonly abandoned the traditional Jewish way of life, they were proponents of a modern political movement or idea and addressed the Yiddish-speaking 'masses' of Paris in order to 'educate' them according to their beliefs.

The Yiddish press can be considered as a platform of communication in which questions of self-definition and group affiliation were negotiated. Discussions of how to position oneself as a Jew and as an immigrant within the new context in France were carried out in the Yiddish press. The publicists were concerned with questions of how to integrate the change brought about by the migration to Paris with the

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[11] 60% of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were in trade and crafts, thereof 87% in the textile sector, see also Weinberg, *Les Juifs à Paris*, p. 26.

[12] Compare *Parizer Haynt*, *Naye Prese*, *Ilustrirte Yidishe Prese* (1934–1935).

[13] See regular columns in *Parizer Haynt*, especially since 1927, *Pariz*, *Ilustrirte Yidishe Prese*, *Naye Prese*.

[14] I have found only one example: Shmuel Leyb Shnayderman, 'Alt-Lublin', *Ilustrirte Yidishe prese*, 2 November 1934, 6.

preservation of their own culture—and which elements of this culture were worthy of being protected? As such, it was for a good reason that the Yiddish Press repeatedly likened the Jewish existence to that of 'white Negroes of Europe'.[15] This comparison refers to the fear of not yet belonging to one group but already being detached from the other. The notion of the 'white Negroes of Europe' referred concretely to the state of being not yet assimilated but having already lost one's own culture, still speaking Yiddish, but being too ashamed of transmitting the language to the next generation. Finally, this fear shows the urgent need to identify with a concept that would match the reality of the Eastern European Jewry in Paris—as immigrants and as Jews.[16] It also raises the question about the extent to which one should abandon one's own culture, experiences and concepts and, in turn, absorb the new, foreign culture and values. How might cultural continuity be preserved in the face of the altered world of the immigration context? We can also witness how crucial these questions had become within the Yiddish press in the ghetto debate. The poet Wolf Wieviorka demanded the liberation from the 'mental ghetto' of the traditional way of life in an article published in 1926 in the Yiddish daily *Parizer Bleter* (1924–1926). He argued that the worker's movement opened up the doors and windows of traditional Jewish life and appealed to the Jews not to fear the 'sea of the unknown'. Yet, only 12 years later, in 1938, he argued for a return to a 'mental Jewish ghetto'.[17] The return to a national and cultural cohesion promised a shelter for Wieviorka and the only solution to the difficult situation of Eastern European Jews in Paris at the end of the 1930s. Also, in this case the following consideration is subject to scrutiny: to what extent can immigrants open themselves to external influence without exposing themselves and their own values to risk? These are only few examples of the manifold forms in which the following questions were explored and negotiated in the Yiddish press: How can one reconcile a Jewish life already detached

[15] 'Sholem Asch vegn tsukunfitikn dor', *Parizer Haynt*, 16 October 1927, 2; David Eynhorn, 'A. Litvak', *Veker*, 1 October 1932, 1.

[16] On the issue of 'white negroes' see Agnieszka Wierzcholska, 'Die Angst vor den "weißen Negern Europas": Selbstwahrnehmung ostjüdischer Immigranten in der jiddischen Presse im Paris der Zwischenkriegszeit', *Historie: Jahrbuch des Zentrums für Historische Forschung Berlin der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 3 (2009/2010), pp. 323–335.

[17] Wolf Wieviorka, 'Gedankn in di velt areyn', *Parizer Bleter*, 13 November 1926, 2; I. Shie, 'Tsurik tsum geto', *Undzer Shtime*, 8 October 1938, 2.

from the patterns of its traditional world yet still sustain the values and elements of its own culture in immigration?

When analyzing the discourse about Russia and the Soviet Union, the historian has to keep in mind that the above-mentioned problem of how a modern Jewish life may be fashioned in the immigration was a recurrent theme, in which the Yiddish-writing publicists were very much engaged. Thus, we have to ask how the commentaries on Russia and the Soviet Union functioned as points of reference serving to compare, question, or mirror the situation in France. What can we learn about the concerns of the East European immigrants this way? In order to investigate this question, this article analyzes interviews, commentaries, background reports and journey accounts, published in the Parisian Yiddish press. Due to the fragmentary maintenance of the sources and the transient nature of the publications, a systematic comparison is not always possible. The author has thus chosen to examine representative papers from different political standpoints and will exemplify the depictions of Russia and the Soviet Union on the basis of following publications: the dailies *Parizer Haynt*, sympathetic to the Zionist idea, (preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale only until 1934), and the communist *Naye Prese*, which began to appear in 1934. Furthermore, the following weeklies were examined: the territorialist *7 teg ilustrirt* (1928), edited by Wladimir Grossman, the Zionist *Idishe Prese Revi* (1934), the bundist *Undzer Shtime*, as well as *Pariz* (1935). This last weekly defined itself as a cultural and non-political journal, which allowed it to offer a forum for the discussion of different opinions, and to become a masterpiece of the Yiddish feuilleton in Paris. The articles in these papers seem to reveal the mode of divergent images of Russia, the Soviet Union, and Birobidzhan conveyed in the Yiddish press of Paris.

Complementary to the 'new homeland', as the *Parizer Haynt* referred to France in its first issue, 'old homeland' stands as an umbrella term for the countries left behind by the immigrants.[18] The terms 'new' and 'old homeland' place the act of immigration at the centre of attention; they focus on leaving behind on the one side and on arrival on the other. Change and continuity are thus both implied by these terms. Statistically most of the Eastern European Jews that arrived in

[18] Shmuel Jackan, Noah Finkielstein, 'Tsu unzere lezer', *Parizer Haynt*, 26 January 1926, 1.

Paris between the World Wars came from Poland.[19] Researchers thus mainly refer to a Polish-Jewish immigration to France between the wars and a primarily Russian-Jewish immigration before World War I.[20] Yet national categories do not always apply. The journalists reveal biographical trajectories that cannot be traced back to one single country. Although most of them immigrated to France from Poland, some of the writers grew up in the pale of settlement.[21] They had experienced life in Tsarist Russia, and some also in the Soviet Union. Different lifeworlds constituted their realms of experience. Poland and Russia were in the spotlight in the Yiddish press of Paris between the world wars. Yet while Poland was portrayed almost invariably in a negative light—reducing it to the experience of anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews—depictions of Russia were much more differentiated in tone.

Russia and the Soviet Union played a prominent role in the Yiddish press in Paris in the inter-war period. Yet commentaries about the political situation and the life of the Jews differed depending on the political perspective of each newspaper. The Soviet Union became a crystallization point in which the established worldviews would be mirrored anew. Perceptions of the Soviet Union became a moot point serving to reinforce existing opinions and political positions. The communist *Naye Prese* portrayed the Soviet Union as an absolute model worthy to be imitated. On a few occasions the paper laboured the point that the Soviet Union was the only country in the world that had resolved the 'Jewish question'.[22] According to the paper, anti-Semitism was the spawn of capitalism and could only be abolished by class struggle and Revolution.[23] Audrey Kichelewski shows in her unpublished master's thesis how devotedly the *Naye Prese* followed the line of the Communist Party in France and idealized the Soviet Union.

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[19] Roblin, *Les Juifs de Paris*, pp. 153–156.

[20] Nancy Green, 'Les juifs étrangers à Paris', in *Le Paris des étrangers*, ed. by André Kaspi and Antoine Marès (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1989), pp. 105–118 (pp. 109–110).

[21] For example Shmuel Jackan, chief editor of the *Haynt* and the *Parizer Haynt* and other authors cited in this article such as Dovid Eynhorn, Nokhem Aronson, and Grigorii Aronson were born in the pale of settlement, migrated to different countries, stayed for example in Berlin, before coming to Paris. Wladimir Grossman was born in the Caucasus, studied in Berlin, Odessa, St. Petersburg, migrated to Sweden, Berlin, and finally to Paris. In the late 1930s he migrated to Canada.

[22] *Naye Prese*, 9 May 1934, 1.

[23] Audrey Kichelewski, 'La Naïe Presse: Quotidien juif et communiste 1934–1939' (unpublished master's thesis, Université de Paris I—Panthéon Sorbonne, 2000), p. 60.

The admission of the Soviet Union to the League of Nations in September 1934 was greeted with laudatory comments and the country appeared as the only guarantee for freedom.[24] In contrast, forced collectivization or the great purges were concealed. Instead, economic achievements were praised in order to expose the efficiency of the Soviet model. For the *Naye Prese*, the Soviet Union stood for the dawn of a new society.

On the other hand, papers sympathetic to Zionism pointed to the anti-Semitism that still existed in the Soviet Union. 'Stalin is […] as much an anti-Semite as were the Grand Dukes', according to the *Parizer Haynt*, the other Yiddish daily in Paris. The journalist cites Jewish workers and a rabbi lamenting anti-Semitic victimization. 'All those who believed that bolshevism was a Jewish creature will be surprised. To be honest, I was surprised as well', the author concludes. The article clearly typifies the position of the *Parizer Haynt*. The daily condemned anti-Jewish acts in the Soviet Union, especially the persecution of Zionists. Beyond that, it repeatedly endeavoured to rebut the nexus of Jews and communism. The fear that Jews could be automatically identified with Bolsheviks emerged in other Zionist periodicals as well. Concerning the admission of the Soviet Union to the League of Nations, the Zionist Zvi Hirsch Wachsmann writes in 1934 that the anti-Semitic press was already claiming that the Jewish spirit had entered the League of Nations and soon Jews would dominate the world. Yet Wachsmann knows better: 'It is true […] that Litvinov [the foreign minister of the Soviet Union] is a Jew from Białystok […], but we were certainly the last ones who had any influence whatsoever on Litvinov's decision to enter the League of Nations or not.'[25] Of course, the commentaries about the Soviet Union polarized the Yiddish press according to the political views of the respective papers. On the one hand, communist papers depicted an ideal in their portrayal of the Soviet Union; on the other hand, Zionist papers denounced the persecution of their fellows and denounced the spread of anti-Semitism. The commentaries depended primarily on the political affiliation of the periodicals and thus served to reinforce already-established world views.

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[24] Ibid., p. 58.

[25] Zvi Hirsch Wachsman, 'Iber der vokh: Rusland, Felker-Bund un mir iden', *Idishe Prese Revi*, 21 September 1934, 1.

However, not all articles clearly diffrentiated between the politics of the Soviet Union and the Russian people—the Russian 'dusha' ('soul') as written in the territorialist *7 teg ilustrirt* (1928). The experience of pogroms and anti-Semitism in the pale of settlement was part of a collective experience and the collective memory of the immigrant Jews that the Yiddish press referred to. In the aforementioned newspaper the chief editor Wladimir Grossman wrote about Maxim Gorki, that the writer was raised 'deep [...] amidst the scum of the Russian people'.[26] Gorki himself, as Grossman points out, refers to the Russians as cruel barbarians. Grossman agrees and recommends that the Russians should seek a 'trace of conscience'.[27] This judgement of the 'old home' with its dark anti-Semitism stands in contrast to the descriptions of the new home France as the land of human and civil rights, as maintained repeatedly in the Yiddish press: The *Parizer Haynt* as well as the *Naye Tsayt* (1936), edited by Marc Yarblum, the chief of the Poale Zion Hitahdut in Paris, portrayed France as a country in which democratic rights and the ideals of the French Revolution were implemented and respected also in regard to the Eastern European Jews.[28] However, in his *7 teg ilustrirt* Grossman also makes an issue of Jewish colonization in Russia, which he covers in a mainly positive tone, also publishing many photos of Jews working in agriculture, building houses, and creating their colonies in Birobidzhan.[29] Grossman thus condemned the old forms of life in Russia, including its 'traditional' anti-Semitism, but was fascinated by the labouring Jews colonizing the land. The conception of a modern form of society was what ultimately provided the greatest source of fascination in regard to the Soviet Union, regardless of the political views, as also evidenced by the accounts of Nokhem Aronson's journey.

The sculptor Nokhem Aronson was born in the pale of settlement in 1873 and later immigrated to Paris—to become a student of Auguste Rodin. Being a prominent figure, Nokhem Aronson attracted the attention of the immigrant community. As early as 1928, the

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[26] Wladimir Grossman, 'Maksim Gorki', *7 Teg Ilustrirt*, 12 June 1928, 1.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See for example 'Di letstn minutn', *Parizer Haynt*, 27 October 1927, 1; Marc Yarblum, 'Der letster tog', *Parizer Haynt*, 28 October 1927, 2; Marc Yarblum, 'Der politishe krizis in frankraykh', *Parizer Haynt*, 9 February 1934, 2, 'Fun yidishn leben in pariz', *Naye Tsayt*, 17 July 1936, 5.

[29] See also *7 teg ilustrirt*, 29 June 1928, 13 July 1928, 10 August 1928, 13 August 1928.

aforementioned *7 teg ilustrirt* devoted much space to the artist in the column *Kinstler in Pariz*. In 1935 the author, who describes himself as uninterested in politics, published a series of accounts of his journey to Russia in the weekly *Pariz*. They were entitled 'What I have seen, heard and experienced in Russia'. In contrast to the old times in a 'Jewish ghetto [...] under the iron regime of the Tsar and constant fear of pogroms', he now perceives a 'completely altered Russia that surprises with its new appearance'.[30] In the first place, life in the Soviet Union seems exhausting to Aronson due to his 'bourgeois habits and age', as Aronson puts it. But it is enough to cast these habits off and to liberate oneself from 'material needs' and then one will be carried away in this 'new life full of youth and euphoria'. It astonishes Aronson how content and happy the people are to be part of a collective, creating something grand and important. Unconditional admiration emerges in the accounts of Aronson. The Soviet Union appears as the promise of a better world. His admiration focuses on the new way of life that would abandon the experience of the ghetto and pogroms, which Aronson describes in contrast to the Soviet Union of change. Certainly, this is an element of identification for the immigrant Jews in Paris who also have left the 'old country' and everything associated with it behind—especially pogroms and anti-Semitism, which often appear in the Yiddish press as qualities of the 'old home'. In Aronson's accounts, building a country is intertwined with the words 'happiness', 'triumph', 'satisfaction' and 'euphoria'. As such, Aronson's memories seem to represent a relocated wish projected on the Soviet Union. They contrast markedly with the political crisis in France in 1935. Aronson expressed it himself: 'In the light of all this spontaneity, scepticism seems to be a very poor feeling'. In sum, the articles in the Yiddish press of Paris concerning Russia detach themselves clearly from the 'old world' with its connotations of anti-Semitism. Interestingly enough, the critique in regard to the Soviet Union assumes the continuity of the old antiquated world—the comparison between Russians and the barbarians as well as between Stalin and the Grand Dukes demonstrates that nothing seems to have changed. In these articles the Soviet Union is seen to be as anti-Semitic as Tsarist Russia. On the other hand, the fascination for the Soviet Union is coupled with

[30] Nokhem Aronson, 'Vos ikh hob gezen, gehert un ibergelebt in rusland', *Pariz*, 12 April 1935, 1 (further quotes from Nokhem Aronson originate from the article).

the concept of change. Aronson speaks of a 'new life'—and this is a recurrent motif in the description of the Soviet Union. This surely is an effect of the trajectories and experiences of the migrating journalists and writers who were creating the Yiddish public sphere. The majority of the activists of the Yiddish press consciously relinquished the traditional Jewish world. They had already migrated to larger cities in their respective countries before deciding to set off to Paris. In addition, many received a religious education and would later turn away from religion and gravitate to modern political movements, especially to socialist and communist ones. But what exactly is associated with this term 'new life' in regard to the Soviet Union and how was its image constructed within the Yiddish press? The case of the image of Birobidzhan in the Yiddish press will illustrate this point clearly.

The project of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast Birobidzhan has attracted a lot of attention in the Yiddish press. The settlement of Jews in the Siberian region close to the Chinese border had already begun in 1928, but on 8 May 1934 it was officially proclaimed a Jewish Autonomous Region. The development of Birobidzhan was observed in almost all newspapers in the form of news of the accomplishments or letters from the autonomous region. It was mainly positive in tone. What was fascinating was the concept of a 'new, healthy Jewish life' as L. Budin, president of the American ORT, put it in an interview for the Yiddish weekly *Pariz*.[31] Associated with this description was the notion of a Jewish active working life in agriculture and industry, progress, with Jews themselves building up the autonomous district, in which cultural continuity could nevertheless be preserved. This last point seems crucial in the coverage of the issue of Birobidzhan in the Yiddish press. Budin himself emphasizes: 'and all this combined with our culture—working and speaking our own mother tongue.'[32] The writer and journalist Dovid Eynhorn depicted it in a similar way: 'Moreover, you will immediately be a whole person with your mother tongue and with your culture that you already possess. Nobody is going to break your windows when you sing a lullaby like your mother used to sing to you.'[33] Harking back to the general discussion in the

[31] Shmuel Leyb Shnayderman, 'Ratn-regirung vil untershtitsn a yidishe emigratsie keyn Biro-Bidshan', *Pariz*, 4 October 1935, 3.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Dovid Eynhorn, 'Palestine oder biro-bidzshan? Menakhem Mendel un Tevje der Milkhiker', *Pariz*, 21 June 1935, 1–5.

Yiddish press, it was the same author, Dovid Eynhorn, who compared the Jewish people to 'white Negroes'. His point was that some Jewish immigrants were speaking Yiddish but were ashamed to teach the language to their children. This conflict of cultural continuity seemed to Eynhorn to be resolved in Birobidzhan. This explains the fascination for Birobidzhan—in the concept of the conjunction between a new form of life and the continuiy of a Jewish-Yiddish culture.

The bundist *Undzer Shtime* (1935 and 1938–1939, later it was probably published clandestinely) harshly criticized the evolution of the Soviet Union, especially in 1938. The paper reported on purges, and several times on the execution of members of the central committee of the Communist Party in Poland.[34] As to the Birobidzhan project, the paper proclaimed its total failure in the 1938 issues. At that time, the élites of the autonomous province fell prey to the Stalinist purges.[35] Grigorii Aronson explained in the mouthpiece of the Bund that fifty per cent of the Jewish settlers had already left the region. They were barely prepared to meet the harsh conditions of the Soviet Far East. Beyond that, Grigorii Aronson stated that political dissidents were imprisoned, maybe even in concentration camps.[36] Concerning the question of change and continuity, it is noteworthy that Aronson's critique on the issue of Birobidzhan especially stresses the return to traditional Jewish patterns of life and behaviour. Grigorii Aronson in *Undzer Shtime* recounts how the Jews of Birobidzhan established 'little, poor, typically Jewish small towns. [...] And now these small towns stand for the great plan, prominent in the whole world, of a Jewish Republic in Soviet Russia', he carries on in an ironic tone.[37] Again, the concept of change and continuity reappear. Aronson sketches a picture of a typically Jewish *shtetl*. The critique thus condemns the return to an obsolete world and the failure to achieve real change.

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[34] Sh. Shvarts, 'Vohin stoyert der ratnfarband?', *Undzer Shtime*, 4 June 1938, 2; 'Komintern funandergelozt poylishe kom.-Partei', *Undzer Shtime*, 18 June 1938, 1; Faïwel Shrager, 'Ven di arbeter-partey farleykenet ir printsipn', *Undzer Shtime*, 18 June 1938, 3.

[35] On the purges see also Antje Kuchenbecker, *Zionismus ohne Zion: Birobidžan: Idee und Geschichte eines jüdischen Staates in Sowjet-Fernost* (Berlin: Metropol 2000), pp. 180–195.

[36] Grigorii Aronson, 'Tsen yor biro-bidzshan', *Undzer Shtime*, 18 June 1938, 2.

[37] Grigorii Aronson, 'Tsen yor biro-bidzshan: Vi azoy iz antshtanen di idey fun a yidishe republik?', *Undzer Shtime*, 2 July 1938, 3.

The examples illustrated above demonstrate that the commentaries on Russia, the Soviet Union, and Birobidzhan in the Yiddish press were mostly concerned with the issue of how new concepts of life and of 'being Jewish' could be realized, without sacrificing cultural continuity. The search for models must be perceived with the situation of the immigrants in Paris in mind. The debates about Russia in the Yiddish press relate closely to the question of group affiliation, identity, and continuity that were discussed in Paris in a broader context, as shown in the debates about the 'white Negroes of Europe' and the return to the ghetto. In these questions the debates resemble one another. It is in this sense that Russia can be considered a point of reference. It served to compare, question or confirm the position of the Jewish immigrant in France and the concept of how a Jewish community would be socially and culturally fashioned in the immigration.

In the interview cited at the beginning of this paper Chagall stresses that he was not an 'emigrant'. He had left merely for artistic reasons, as he put it. He was fond of the new themes in Soviet art, but criticized its form. It is in this context that he mentioned that he would move to Moscow if it were to turn into a second artistic Paris. After all, he was recalling 'with nostalgia my work for the Jewish State theatre. It was the Soviet government who ordered my work!'[38] In this interview, Marc Chagall portrays the Soviet Union as a land where artistic activity could be realized in a specific Jewish context. In Paris he could be faithful to his formal desires but nevertheless he was suffering: 'I am deeply rooted in my home country. This is why I have to paint it over and over again.' The search for models for a Jewish identity abroad with its problematic issues of change and continuity emerges at different levels in the commentaries of the Yiddish press—in the question of art as revealed by Marc Chagall, but also in the commentaries about the Soviet Union and about Birobidzhan. The 'old home' was criticized in regard to the experience of the ghetto and of anti-Semitism, yet the formation of a new society, especially the new model of a labouring modern Jewish life, additionally linked with elements of Jewish culture, fascinated the immigrant Jewish publicists in Paris.

[38] 'Bey Marc Chagall'.

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DER EINFLUSS DER JÜDISCHEN KULTURELLEN RENAISSANCE IN OSTEUROPA AUF DAS MUSIKLEBEN IN WIEN (1919–1938)

Jascha Nemtsov

1. *Wien als neues Zentrum jüdischer Musik*

„Das Echo, das unsere Aufführungen allgemein fanden, die immer zunehmende Besucherzahl, zeigt deutlich, daß die jüdische Musik weiteste Kreise zu interessieren vermag. In einigen internen Abenden und zwei öffentlichen Konzerten wurde ein kleiner Ausschnitt aus dem Musikschaffen unserer heutigen Musiker vermittelt. Folgende Werke wurden aufgeführt: Alexander Krejn (Klarinettenquintett, Lieder, Klavierstück); Weprik (Klarinettenstück, Volkstänze für Klavier); Achron (Lieder, Elegie für Streichquartett); Brandmann (Streichquartett, Hebräische Lieder); Engel (Lieder, ‚Hadibuk'-Suite), Milner (Gesänge); Lewin (Elegie); Ernest Bloch (Drei Stücke für Cello); Réti (Hebräischer Tanz); Stutschewsky (Eli, Eli, Dweikuth, M'chol Kedem); Wolfsohn (Paraphrasen über jüdische Volksweisen) und Volksmusik für Gesang und in instrumentaler Bearbeitung."[1]

In diesem Bericht aus dem Jahre 1929 sind nicht die Aktivitäten der Moskauer Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik gemeint, die in den 1920er Jahren der Mittelpunkt der national-jüdischen Bewegung in der Musik war. Die Tage der Moskauer Gesellschaft waren damals schon gezählt. Es mutet fast symbolisch an, dass kurz vor deren Auflösung in Wien ein neues wichtiges Zentrum für jüdische Musik entstand.

Wien war bereits in den 1870er und 1880er Jahren ein Treffpunkt jüdischer national gesinnter Intellektueller geworden. Perets Smolenskin gab hier seine Zeitung *Hashaḥar* heraus, Nathan Birnbaum gründete in Wien 1882 die erste jüdische Studentenvereinigung „Kadimah". Die meisten Aktivisten dieser vor-zionistischen Bewegung stammten ebenso

[1] Joachim Stutschewsky, Jüdische Musik in Wien, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 81, 18.7.1929, S. 10.

wie Smolenskin und Birnbaum aus Osteuropa. 1896 wurde in Wien Theodor Herzls berühmte Schrift *Der Judenstaat* publiziert, die den Grundstein des politischen Zionismus legte. Doch die Mehrheit der Wiener Juden war dieser Problematik gegenüber gleichgültig. Trotz des sich bedrohlich manifestierenden Antisemitismus identifizierten sie sich weitgehend mit der deutsch-österreichischen Kultur und wollten von einer jüdischen nationalen Renaissance nichts wissen.

Diese Situation änderte sich erst nach dem Ausbruch des 1. Weltkriegs. Durch die Flüchtlingsströme aus Galizien und der Bukowina wuchs die Wiener jüdische Gemeinschaft in kurzer Zeit immens. Bis 1923 kamen schätzungsweise 50.000 sogenannte Ostjuden, so dass es damals in Wien insgesamt über 200.000 Juden gab. Die meisten Zuwanderer entstammten dem traditionellen jüdischen Milieu und unterschieden sich somit auf extreme Weise von den assimilierten Alteingesessenen. Dadurch veränderten sich auch die Verhältnisse in der jüdischen Gemeinde: die Anhänger der nationalen Idee gewannen an Boden. Der neue Wiener Oberrabbiner Hirsch Peretz Chajes[2] (1876–1927) trug wesentlich dazu bei. Er war nicht nur ein international anerkannter, von allen Parteien geachteter Gelehrter und Liberaler, sondern auch ein überzeugter Zionist.

Ähnlich wie zuvor in Russland war das wachsende nationale Selbstbewusstsein Voraussetzung für einen jüdischen kulturellen Aufschwung, der „das Leben der bis dahin stagnierenden Gemeinden“[3] grundsätzlich veränderte. Im Laufe der 1920er Jahre entstanden in Wien, wo die Mehrheit österreichischer Juden lebte, zahlreiche jüdische politische, kulturelle und sogar Sport-Organisationen. Die Zionisten waren in dieser Hinsicht besonders aktiv. Zwei große Zeitungen, *Die Stimme* und *Die neue Welt*, waren zionistisch orientiert. Eine entgegengesetzte Position vertrat *Die Wahrheit*, das Organ der assimilatorischen „Union deutsch-österreichischer Juden“. Die beiden jüdischen Sportvereine „Makkabi“ und „Hakoah“ waren, wie schon die Namen erkennen lassen, zionistisch. Der Einfluss der Zionisten verstärkte sich insbesondere ab Ende der 1920er Jahre, nicht zuletzt im Zusammenhang mit dem wachsenden Antisemitismus in Deutschland und anderen europäischen Ländern. Der „Zionistische Verband für Österreich“

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[2] Kratkaja evrejskaja ėnciklopedija [Kurze jüdische Enzyklopädie], Bd. 9, Jerusalem 1999, S. 552–553.

[3] Encyclopeadia Judaica, Jerusalem 1971, vol. 3, S. 896.

gewann seit 1932 ständig die Wahlen in der Wiener jüdischen Gemeinde.

Der erste Versuch, in Wien eine jüdische Musikgesellschaft zu gründen, wurde bereits 1919 unternommen. Das war eine „Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Förderung jüdischer Musik". Zu den Initiatoren gehörten der renommierte Musikschriftsteller und Kritiker Erwin Felber und vor allem der Pianist und Komponist Juliusz Wolfsohn.[4] Wolfsohn stammte aus einer bekannten zionistischen Familie.[5] Sein Onkel, David Wolfsohn (1856–1914) war der engste Mitstreiter und Freund Theodor Herzls und sein Nachfolger als Vorsitzender der Zionistischen Organisation (er hatte u. a. die weiß-blaue Fahne der Zionisten – die künftige Fahne des Staates Israel – entworfen). David Wolfsohn, der in Herzls Roman *Altneuland* als David Litwak vorkommt, wurde nach Herzls Tod Vormund von dessen minderjährigen Kindern. Die Familie Wolfsohn kam aus dem russischen Ansiedlungsrayon. Juliusz Wolfsohn hatte zunächst am Konservatorium seiner Heimatstadt Warschau und am Moskauer Konservatorium studiert, bevor er sich als Pianist bei Raoul Pugno in Paris und bei Theodor Lescheticki in Wien vervollkommnete.

Schon kurz nach der Jahrhundertwende begann Wolfsohn, anscheinend völlig unabhängig von den Petersburger Aktivitäten, sich mit jiddischer Folklore auseinanderzusetzen. Ethnographisch-wissenschaftliche Ambitionen waren ihm ebenso wie dem Moskauer Protagonisten jüdischer Musik Joel Engel[6] fremd. Er wollte ebenfalls nur die Folklore

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[4] Wiener Morgenzeitung, 26.10.1919 und 8.2.1920.

[5] Zur Biografie von Wolfsohn siehe Dr. J. Torbé, Die Schöpfer jüdischer Musik. Juliusz Wolfsohn, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 238, 28.7.1932, S. 7–8.

[6] Joel (Julij) Engel (1868–1927), Musikkritiker, Komponist und Folklorist. Er studierte am Moskauer Konservatorium Komposition und Musiktheorie bei Tanejew und Ippolitow-Iwanow und machte sich danach einen Namen hauptsächlich als Musikschriftsteller. Er leitete über zwanzig Jahre lang die Musikredaktion der Tageszeitung *Moskovskie vedomosti* [*Moskauer Nachrichten*] und publizierte die russische Ausgabe des Riemann-Lexikons. Im Auftrag des Folklore-Forschers Pessach (Petr) Marek arrangierte er für eine Veranstaltung in Moskau Ende 1900 jüdische Volkslieder für Gesang mit Klavierbegleitung. Die Entstehung der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksmusik 1908 gab seiner Tätigkeit auf diesem Gebiet neue Impulse. Er schrieb in den folgenden Jahren weitere Bearbeitungen jüdischer Folklore und initiierte in Moskau und anderen Städten deren Aufführungen, außerdem nahm er an der folkloristischen Expedition von Semjon An-ski teil. Er wurde dann zum Protagonisten der Moskauer Filiale dieser Gesellschaft. Durch seine Bühnenmusik zum Schauspiel *Hadibuk* am Theater Habima wurde sein Name weltweit bekannt. Nach seiner Übersiedlung nach Deutschland 1922 beteiligte er sich an der Gründung des Musikverlags „Juwal", dessen künstlerische Leitung er dann übernahm. 1924 ging Engel nach Palästina, wo er

im gebildeten Milieu popularisieren. Da Wolfsohn nicht nur ein hervorragender Pianist war, sondern da er sich auch eine solide Kompositionstechnik angeeignet hatte, zeigten seine Bearbeitungen ganz andere Qualitäten als die von Engel. Wolfsohn komponierte große Konzertparaphrasen über jüdische Volkslieder, die in erster Linie für den eigenen Vortrag bestimmt waren. Die Volksmelodien wurden in einen effektvollen Klaviersatz integriert, der das Vorbild Liszts nicht verleugnet. Obwohl Wolfsohns pianistisch brillanten Stücke und Engels simple Bearbeitungen in denkbar größtem Gegensatz zueinander stehen, haben sie auch gemeinsame Züge: beide benutzen authentische Melodien aus dem Bereich jiddischer Folklore, die mit konventionellen Stilmitteln bearbeitet werden. Bis 1920 entstanden zwölf solcher *Paraphrasen über altjüdische Volksweisen*,[7] die in drei Bänden von der Universal Edition herausgegeben wurden, sowie eine dreiteilige, ebenfalls auf Volksthemen basierende *Jüdische Rhapsodie*.

Am 2. Dezember 1920 veranstaltete die Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Förderung jüdischer Musik einen Abend mit Wolfsohn, der im ersten Teil einen Vortrag über „Jüdische Volksmusik" hielt und im zweiten neun seiner Konzertparaphrasen spielte. Dieser Abend sollte die einzige Veranstaltung der Gesellschaft bleiben, denn schon kurz darauf musste sie ihre Tätigkeit infolge der Wirtschaftskrise wieder einstellen.[8]

Wolfsohn spielte seine Kompositionen auch in Konzerten der jüdischen Vereine „Jüdische Kinderfreunde", „Jüdischer Jugendbund", „Haruach" (einer Vereinigung jüdischer Forscher, Schriftsteller und Künstler) u. a., sowie in eigenen Recitals in Verbindung mit dem klassischen Repertoire. Er war damals der einzige Komponist jüdischer Kunstmusik in Wien. Seine Vorstellung davon war jedoch eher konservativ.

Wirklich moderne jüdische Musik begann sich in Wien erst nach der Übersiedelung Joachim Stutschewskys in diese Stadt im Jahr 1924 zu etablieren. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war er bereits ein international bekannter Cellovirtuose. Joachim Stutschewsky (1891–1982) war in der Ukraine in einer Klezmerfamilie geboren. Er hatte in Leipzig bei

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an der Musikschule „Shulamith" in Tel Aviv unterrichtete und Schauspielmusik für das Theater „Ohel" komponierte.

[7] Rezension von Joachim Stutschewsky in: Die Stimme, Nr. 39, 27.9.1928, S. 9.

[8] Dr. J. Torbé, Die Schöpfer jüdischer Musik. Juliusz Wolfsohn, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 238, 28.7.1932, S. 8.

Julius Klengel studiert und lebte danach in der Schweiz. Nach Wien war er von Rudolf Kolisch eingeladen worden, mit dem er dann das Kolisch-Quartett, auch Wiener Streichquartett genannt, begründete.[9] Als Interpret war Stutschewsky ein wichtiger Verfechter neuer Musik. Er wirkte u. a. bei vielen Uraufführungen von Werken der Zweiten Wiener Schule mit.

Bereits im Januar 1923 hatte Stutschewsky in Berlin Joel Engel kennengelernt, der sein Interesse für jüdische Musik weckte.[10] Im Auftrag des Verlags Juwal entstand dann Anfang 1924 Stutschewskys erste eigene Komposition mit dem Titel *13 jüdische Volksweisen in leichter Bearbeitung*.

Schon kurz nach Stutschewskys Eintreffen in Wien organisierte er am 23. März 1924 das erste „Konzert Neuer jüdischer Musik". Es fand im Arbeiterheim Borochow statt und wurde vom Kolisch-Quartett, der Sopranistin Hanna Schwarz, dem Klarinettisten Viktor Pollatschek u. a. gestaltet. Rudolf Kolisch und Stutschewsky traten darin auch als Solisten auf. Auf dem Programm standen allerdings keine Werke Engels, sondern die Musik von Komponisten aus dem Jibneh-Kreis, sowie zwei neue Stücke Stutschewskys. Darüber hinaus wurde die *Ouvertüre über jüdische Themen* von Prokofjew präsentiert.[11]

Ein weiteres, von Stutschewsky organisiertes „Konzert jüdischer Musik" fand am 9. Mai 1927 im Kleinen Konzerthaussaal statt. Veranstalter war dieses Mal der Israelitische Humanitätsverein „Massadah" von B'nai B'rith. Zum Andenken an den drei Monate zuvor verstorbenen Joel Engel wurden im ersten Teil des Konzerts ausschließlich seine Werke aufgeführt. Der Musikwissenschaftler Prof. Max Graf hielt eine Gedenkrede. Im zweiten Teil erklangen dann wiederum hauptsächlich Werke aus dem Jibneh-Verlagsprogramm, außerdem das gerade in Moskau erschienene *Poem für Violine und Klavier* von Grigori Krejn. Auch Stutschewskys Stücke *Dweikuth* (*Meditation*) und *M'chol kedem* (*Tanz*) reihten sich in diese „hebräische Richtung" nahtlos ein. Das ganze Programm wurde von Rita Kurzmann am Klavier begleitet, die später neben der Sängerin Hanna Schwarz viele Jahre

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[9] Joachim Stutschewsky, Der Lebenspfad eines jüdischen Musikers, Ms., Tel Aviv 1965, Felicja Blumental Music Center and Library Tel Aviv (FBMC).

[10] Jehoash Hirshberg, Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880–1948, Oxford 1995, S. 102.

[11] Sämtliche Konzertprogramme aus den 1920er und 1930er Jahren mit Aufführungen neuer jüdischer Musik in Wien befinden sich im Archiv Stutschewsky in FBMC, Abteilung 4.

zum festen „Konzertteam“ um Stutschewsky gehörte. Zu den Mitwirkenden gehörten in diesem Konzert auch der Geiger Louis Krasner, der kurz zuvor die europäische Premiere des 1. Violinkonzerts von Achron bestritten hatte, und der Pianist Julius Isserlis.[12]

Solche Ereignisse gab es bis 1928 aber nur sporadisch, systematisch konnte die neue jüdische Musik in Wien erst nach der Gründung des „Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik“ gepflegt werden.

2. *Die Gründung des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik*

Am 11. Oktober 1928 erschien in der Zeitung *Die Stimme* ein programmatischer Artikel von Joachim Stutschewsky, in dem er die Gründung des Vereins bekannt gab und dessen Ziele und Aufgaben erläuterte.[13] Stutschewky betonte gleich am Anfang ausdrücklich, dass es nicht um die Pflege traditioneller Musik und nicht um Komponisten jüdischer Abstammung geht, sondern um neue jüdische Kunstmusik „aus jüdischem Geist und Empfinden“, um eine Renaissance jüdischer Musik, die bereits beträchtliche künstlerische Werte hervorgebracht hatte und die es nun zu unterstützen galt. „Leider verbreitet sich die Kenntnis dessen, was wir bereits an jüdischer Musikliteratur besitzen, nur langsam und der in den letzten Jahren immer stärker aufblühenden jüdischen Musik wird vom jüdischen Publikum und auch von den jüdischen Künstlern noch viel zu wenig an Interesse entgegengebracht. Die Situation wird noch dadurch erschwert, dass die jüdischen Musiker, in der ganzen Welt zerstreut, nicht in der Lage sind, geschlossen für ihre Schöpfungen und Ideale zu wirken.“[14] Es war beabsichtigt, im Rahmen regelmäßiger Veranstaltungen „ein genaues Bild von der Produktion der neuzeitlichen jüdischen Musik [...] weitesten Kreisen der Bevölkerung“ zu vermitteln.[15]

Solche Ansichten wurden zunächst anscheinend nicht von allen Protagonisten des neu gegründeten Vereins geteilt. Seine erste Veranstaltung war ein Sinfoniekonzert mit dem Orchester Hakoah am 29.

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[12] Der Pianist und Komponist Julius (Juli) Isserlis hatte am Kiewer und am Moskauer Konservatorium, sowie bei Raoul Pugno in Paris studiert. Er lebte 1923–1928 in Wien, später in London.

[13] Joachim Stutschewsky, Pflege und Förderung jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 41, 11.10.1928, S. 9.

[14] Ebd.

[15] Ebd.

Februar 1928, dessen Programm in größtem Widerspruch zu den von Stutschewsky formulierten Absichten stand. Neben der *Hebräischen Suite* für Klavier und Orchester von Juliusz Wolfsohn erklangen damals beispielsweise die Ouvertüre *Sakuntala* von Karl Goldmark und die 1. Sinfonie des national-russischen Komponisten Vasilij Kalinnikov! Es ist nicht auszuschließen, dass dieses Konzert durch persönliche Initiative Wolfsohns zustande kam, der an dem Abend auch als Solist auftrat.

Auf alle Fälle sind bis Herbst 1928 keine weiteren Aktivitäten des Vereins bekannt. Ein interner Abend am 14. Oktober 1928 wurde dann in der Zeitung als „die erste Veranstaltung" annonciert.[16] Das Programm umfasste dieses Mal nur Werke der Neuen Jüdischen Schule.

Die Informationen über die Entstehungsumstände des Vereins sind unklar und widersprüchlich. Seine Statuten wurden am 23. November 1927 beim Magistrat der Stadt Wien eingereicht und vier Tage später dort genehmigt. Als „Proponenten" sind fünf Personen aufgeführt. Von ihnen hatte nur Hugo Winter, Direktor der Universal Edition A. G., beruflich mit Musik zu tun. Dr. Löw und Dr. Nobl waren Rechtsanwälte, Dr. Krüger Arzt und Dr. Klein Privatdozent. Doch in der Unterschriftenliste steht der Name von Abram Dzimitrowski,[17] der im Text gar nicht erwähnt ist, als erster.[18] Stutschewsky konnte schon deswegen nicht zu den offiziellen Gründern gehören, weil er nachweislich staatenlos war.[19] Möglicherweise besaßen auch Dzimitrowski und Wolfsohn nicht die österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft, denn Anfang der 1920er Jahre wurde ein Gesetz verabschiedet, das Zuwanderern die Einbürgerung fast unmöglich machte.

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[16] Ebd.

[17] Abram Dzimitrowski (1873–1943), Kantor, Chordirigent, Komponist und Musikverleger. Dzimitrowski war vor der Revolution Kantor an der Kiewer Brodski-Synagoge. Zu seinen Schülern gehörten dort Moshe Milner und Lazar Weiner. Nach 1917 leitete er die Musikschule der Kiewer jüdischen „Kulturliga", zu der auch ein Chor und ein Musikverlag gehörten. Seit Anfang der 1920er Jahre lebte er in Wien. Er arbeitete dort im Musikverlag Universal Edition, wo er zunächst Leiter der Russischen Abteilung und danach Leiter des angeschlossenen jüdischen Musikverlags „Jibneh" wurde, der damals der wichtigste Verlag der Neuen Jüdischen Schule war. Dzimitrowski gehörte außerdem zu den Protagonisten des Wiener Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik; er dirigierte einige Jahre lang den Wiener Jüdischen Gesangverein. 1939 floh er in die USA. Er schuf Chorbearbeitungen jüdischer Volkslieder.

[18] Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv Mabt. 119, Vereinskataster 16642/27.

[19] Joachim Stutschewsky, Der Lebenspfad eines jüdischen Musikers, Ms., Tel Aviv 1965, FBMC. Vgl. auch Brief von Achron an Stutschewsky, Hollywood 30.1.1936, FBMC 3/1/1 (53).

In einem privaten Brief beanspruchte Dzimitrowski später für sich die Ehre, Hauptinitiator des Vereins gewesen zu sein: „Vor mir waren einige Versuche gemacht worden, eine solche Gesellschaft zu organisieren, sie waren aber erfolglos. Erst mir und einigen meiner Freunde ist das vor ein paar Jahren gelungen."[20] Im Zeitungsbericht über die konstituierende Generalversammlung am 12. März 1928 wurde dagegen die Gründung des Vereins „der tatkräftigen Initiative" Hugo Winters zugeschrieben.[21] In einer späteren Konzertbesprechung in der selben Zeitung war wiederum zu lesen: „Dank der unermüdlichen Tätigkeit des ruhmreichen Komponisten und Klaviervirtuosen Prof. Juliusz Wolfsohn und Prof. Dzimitrowski ist es gelungen, die lange erörterte und bloß nur in Debatten geförderte Idee der Popularisierung jüdischer Musikkunstwerke endlich zu realisieren."[22]

Speziell dieser Satz rief eine heftige Reaktion Stutschewskys hervor, der am nächsten Tag einen wütenden Brief an die Redaktion der Zeitung *Die Stimme* schickte, in dem er ihr ein „kurzes Gedächtnis" vorwarf: „Denn jeder weiss, dass ebenso wie bei der Gründung Ihres Blattes auf meine Initiative eine Rubrik ‚Jüdische Musik' geschaffen worden ist, auch die Gründung des Vereins meiner Initiative und aufopfernden Arbeit zu verdanken ist. Die Programme sind auch meistens von mir ausgesucht und einstudiert, was auf jedem Programm ausdrücklich vermerkt wurde."[23]

Damit stimmt auch eine Notiz der Zeitung *Die neue Welt* überein, die ihren Lesern im Januar 1929 mitteilte, dass Stutschewsky „sich in den letzten Jahren hauptsächlich der Propagierung jüdischer Musik gewidmet hat und der Hauptinitiator der Gründung einer ‚Gesellschaft zur Förderung jüdischer Musik' gewesen ist".[24]

In der Tat war Stutschewsky seit seiner Übersiedelung nach Wien 1924 der mit Abstand wichtigste Vermittler der Neuen Jüdischen Schule. Die aktive Tätigkeit des Vereins ab Herbst 1928, deren Beginn mit dem oben erwähnten programmatischen Artikel Stutschewskys datierte, schloss sich inhaltlich nahtlos an die früheren Konzerte an,

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[20] Brief von Dzimitrowski an Jakov Weinberg, Wien 12.7.1933, Glinka-Museum 208/126.

[21] Die Stimme, 22.3.1928.

[22] Dr. K.R.: Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 164, 19.2.1931, S. 8.

[23] Brief von Stutschewsky an die Zeitung *Die Stimme*, Wien 20.2.1931, FBMC 3/2/5 (239).

[24] Joachim Stutschewskys Konzerte, in: Die neue Welt, 11.1.1929, S. 8.

die er noch allein organisiert hatte. Wenn sich Stutschewsky nicht an der Abwicklung der Gründungsformalitäten beteiligen konnte, so waren doch sowohl die ideologische Ausrichtung des Vereins als auch seine praktische Arbeit maßgeblich von ihm geprägt.

Die Rolle Wolfsohns war in dieser Hinsicht weniger bedeutsam. Er nahm seltener als Stutschewsky an der Vorbereitung und Durchführung von Veranstaltungen teil. Dafür verfasste er regelmäßig Konzertbesprechungen und hatte als Vizepräsident des Vereins neben dem Präsidenten Prof. Max Graf und dem anderen Vizepräsidenten Hugo Winter auch repräsentative Funktionen zu erfüllen.

Dzimitrowskis Beitrag konzentrierte sich weniger auf die unmittelbare Tätigkeit des Vereins, sondern eher auf die Verbindungen zu den beiden wichtigsten musikalischen Partnerorganisationen – zu dem Wiener Jüdischen Gesangverein und dem Verlag Jibneh. Dank Dzimitrowski setzte sich der Gesangverein, den er zeitweilig leitete, ebenfalls für die Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule ein. Er gestaltete dann mehrere Konzerte zusammen mit dem Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik.

Der neu gegründete Verein hatte von Anfang an mit diversen Schwierigkeiten zu kämpfen. Es waren zum Teil ähnliche Probleme, mit denen schon die jüdischen Musikgesellschaften in St. Petersburg und Moskau konfrontiert worden waren. Die jüdischen Musikveranstaltungen waren nie Teil des allgemeinen Konzertbetriebs, sie wurden von jüdischen Institutionen organisiert und von jüdischen Künstlern für ein jüdisches Publikum gestaltet. Die Resultate dieser Tätigkeit hingen also unmittelbar von dem Interesse und Geschmack des jeweiligen jüdischen Milieus ab. Je weiter die Assimilation fortgeschritten war, desto geringer waren die Chancen der jüdischen Musik, sich durchzusetzen. In Wien war die zionistische Bewegung die wichtigste soziale Basis für die nationale jüdische Musik.

Während man aber ständig versuchte, möglichst breitere Schichten der jüdischen Bevölkerung für die Konzerte zu gewinnen, wurde kaum etwas unternommen, um auch nichtjüdische Kreise dafür zu interessieren. Man fand es offensichtlich ganz selbstverständlich, dass Konzerte jüdischer Musik ausschließlich von Juden besucht wurden. Es wurde sogar als eine Art Kuriosität vermerkt, dass einmal zu einem Konzert auch einige Nichtjuden kamen.[25]

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[25] Die neue Welt, 16.3.1928.

Diese Abhängigkeit vom jüdischen Publikum barg große Gefahren für die Entwicklung der neuen jüdischen Musik in sich. Die Juden waren den häufigen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Krisen viel stärker ausgesetzt als die übrige Bevölkerung. Jede solcher Krisen hatte daher schwere Folgen auch für die Musikinstitutionen. Mit der späteren Vertreibung und Ermordung der Juden in weiten Teilen Europas verschwand auch die jüdische Musikkultur spurlos aus dem Kulturleben.

Andererseits wirkte sich auch der spezifische Geschmack bestimmter Teile des jüdischen Publikums negativ aus. Die assimilierten Juden nahmen beispielsweise eher eine ablehnende Haltung der nationalen jüdischen Kunst gegenüber ein als die Nichtjuden, die zwar diese Kunst oft nicht verstehen konnten, die aber durchaus bereit waren, ihr wenigstens ein Existenzrecht einzuräumen. Stutschewsky schrieb darüber mit Verbitterung in seinem Artikel *Gibt es eine ‚jüdische' Musik? Eine Kritik der Kritik*: „Es ist in den letzten Jahren von Juden und Nichtjuden, Musikern und Laien viel über dieses Thema geschrieben und gesprochen worden. […] so fällt einem zunächst auf, dass die Nichtjuden eine die jüdische Musik bejahende Einstellung einnehmen, während den ablehnenden Standpunkt meistens Juden, jüdische Musiker und Musikwissenschaftler vertreten. Sobald man von ‚jüdischer Musik' zu sprechen beginnt, zucken sie mit den Achseln: ‚Das gibt es nicht!'"[26]

Man war in jüdischen Kreisen auch in der Frage nicht einig, welche Musik man als jüdische anerkennen oder fördern soll. Für viele Kritiker und einen Teil des Publikums war es ausschließlich die folkloristisch orientierte Musik, in der man mühelos authentische Melodien erkennen konnte. Den Werken, in denen keine Zitate verwendet waren, wurde ihre Zugehörigkeit zur jüdischen Musik abgesprochen. Das galt vor allem für Kompositionen mit avancierten Stilmitteln. Solche Ansichten vertraten sogar einige Vorstandsmitglieder des Vereins, wie Wolfsohn oder Dr. Torbé, aber auch viele einfache Konzertbesucher.

Die Stimme kritisierte zum Beispiel einen Kammermusikabend des Vereins: „Trotz des ausgezeichneten Form- und Klaviersatzes kann man außer des auf ‚Schir Haschirim'-Melodie aufgebauten Hauptthemas so gut wie nichts Jüdisches heraushören."[27] Damit meinte der

[26] Joachim Stutschewsky, Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik, Wien 1935, S. 29.
[27] Die Stimme, 25.2.1932, Nr. 216, S. 9.

Kritiker ausgerechnet die Klaviersonate Alexander Krejns, die Stutschewsky als ein Paradebeispiel neuer jüdischer Musik charakterisierte: „Die Klaviersonate von Alexander Krein ist zumindest so jüdisch, wie die von Bartók ungarisch."[28]

Nicht besser schnitt in derselben Zeitungskritik auch Gnesins *Lied vom roten Motele* ab, das auf typischen Intonationen der jiddischen Sprache gebaut ist und in dem der Rezensent ebenfalls „nichts Jüdisches" bemerkte. Er lobte dagegen überschwänglich zwei alte Stücke aus dem Repertoire der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksmusik in St. Petersburg, die *Jüdische Rhapsodie* von Ajsberg und *Freilachs* von Kopyt, sowie die „prächtige" Suite für Klarinette und Klavier von Engel. Engels Volksliedbearbeitungen, allen voran seine Suite *Hadibuk* mit ihren „echten chassidischen Stimmungen" riefen in Wien immer wieder Stürme der Begeisterung hervor.

Es ist vor allem Stutschewsky zu verdanken, dass die Konzertprogramme nur zu einem bestimmten Teil aus solchen gefälligen Stücken bestanden und daneben ein breites Spektrum neuer jüdischer Musik vertreten war. Darunter gab es auch viele anspruchsvolle Kompositionen der „neuhebräischen" Richtung, die schließlich ebenfalls eine hohe Akzeptanz beim Publikum fanden.

Die kurze Geschichte des Wiener Vereins zeigt anschaulich, wie instabil die Lage der Juden und entsprechend wechselhaft die Lage der neuen jüdischen Musik damals war. In nur zehn Jahren erlebte der Verein mehrere Höhen und Tiefen. In den beiden ersten Jahren war man noch nicht imstande, Konzerte aus eigenen Mitteln durchzuführen. Alle Veranstaltungen in dieser Zeit fanden in Kooperation mit anderen jüdischen Vereinen statt. Der Wirtschaftskrise 1930 folgte dann ein zeitweiliger kompletter Stillstand. Noch im Juli 1931 schrieb Stutschewsky an Rosowsky in Palästina: „Sie können sich nicht vorstellen, wie miserabel die Situation in Wien ist. Wer leidet am meisten unter finanziellen Krisen – die Juden. Die Stimmung ist daher bedrükkend. Man weiß nicht, was im Winter kommt. Vielleicht wird es noch schlimmer. – Unser Verein besitzt keinen Pfennig. Wir können nichts unternehmen… Ich fahre Ende der Woche in die Schweiz. Versuche

[28] Joachim Stutschewsky, Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik, Wien 1935, S. 16.

dort, ein paar Juden zu schütteln. Jetzt sind alle geizig, sie zittern um ihr Geld."[29]

Die nächsten Jahre brachten eine deutliche Verbesserung. Von 1931 bis 1934 veranstaltete der Verein regelmäßig eigene Kammermusikkonzerte, die ständig ausverkauft waren. Doch schon 1934 brach die nächste Krise aus, sie hatte dieses Mal politische Hintergründe. Nach dem Machtwechsel in Österreich änderte sich die Lage der Juden dramatisch. „Nach der Unterdrückung der Sozialdemokratie 1934 verschlechterte sich die Situation der Juden. Sie wurden stillschweigend ihrer Existenz unter verschiedenen Vorwänden beraubt, während die Regierung nach wie vor betonte, dass alle Bürger gleiche Rechte besitzen."[30]

Die wenigen Veranstaltungen jener Zeit wurden „von einer erschrekkend kleinen Interessentenzahl besucht."[31] Grund dafür war aber nicht mangelndes Interesse an jüdischer Musik, sondern die Verunsicherung und grassierende Armut unter der jüdischen Bevölkerung. Ein Konzert mit freiem Eintritt im jüdischen Volksheim fand im vollen Saal statt: „Der Andrang [...] war so groß, dass viele keinen Einlass finden konnten."[32]

Eine nochmalige Belebung wurde im Jahr 1936 registriert. Die Besucherzahlen stiegen wieder an. Diese Phase war aber nur ganz kurz. Das Ende der jüdischen Gemeinde stand bereits unmittelbar bevor. Die Vorahnung der sich nähernden Katastrophe zwang viele Juden schon vor dem Anschluss Österreichs, ins Ausland zu gehen. Die letzte öffentliche Veranstaltung des Wiener Vereins war ein Vortrag von Solomon Rosowsky mit einem anschließenden Konzert mit seinen Werken am 6. Dezember 1936. Danach sind keine weiteren Aktivitäten des Vereins mehr dokumentiert.

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[29] Brief von Stutschewsky an Rosowsky, Wien 5.7.1931, JTSA Archiv Rosowsky Addendum.

[30] Encyclopaedia judaica, Vol. III, Jerusalem 1971, S. 898.

[31] Olja Silbermann, Prof. Wolfsohn über jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme Nr. 446, 3.5.1935. S. 6.

[32] Die Stimme, Nr. 519, 31.1.1936, S. 7.

3. *Konzerte neuer jüdischer Musik*

Der Wiener Verein betrachtete sich als Fortsetzer der Petersburger Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksmusik und der Moskauer Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik, auf deren Vorbild er sich ausdrücklich berief. So übernahm er in seinen Konzerten fast das gesamte Repertoire der Moskauer Gesellschaft und fügte den Programmen neu entstandene Werke jüdischer Musik hinzu. Dabei wurden nun Werke jüdischer Komponisten aus verschiedenen Ländern, wie z. B. aus Amerika, Palästina, Frankreich und natürlich aus Österreich einbezogen, die die Tradition der Neuen Jüdischen Schule weiterentwickelten.

Auch das Prinzip der Programmgestaltung war das gleiche wie in Russland. Die Konzerte sollten den Geschmack des Publikums bilden: es wurden anspruchsvolle Werke aufgeführt, die das Verständnis neuer jüdischer Musik befördern sollten. Neben der rein künstlerischen Ambition wurden die Programme auch und vor allem unter einem aufklärerischen Aspekt gestaltet. Man verstand sich als bildende und erzieherische Institution. Man betrachtete also die Förderung jüdischer Musik nicht als Selbstzweck, sondern als Beitrag zum Aufbau einer eigenständigen jüdischen Nationalkultur und schließlich sogar einer modernen jüdischen Nation.

Das war gerade der Punkt, in dem man eng mit den zionistischen Organisationen Wiens kooperieren konnte. Stutschewsky selbst war ein aktiver Zionist, und die Tätigkeit des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik entwickelte sich in vollem Einklang mit den zionistischen Ideen. Es ist daher nicht verwunderlich, dass er von Anfang an die tatkräftige Unterstützung der Wiener Zionisten genoss. Der Zionismus war damals in Österreich nicht, wie in Russland, eine verbotene und verfolgte Untergrundbewegung, sondern eine wichtige politische und gesellschaftliche Kraft.

Für den Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik war diese Unterstützung lebenswichtig. Da seine Mittel ihm nur zeitweilig erlaubten, eigene Veranstaltungen zu organisieren, wäre der Verein ohne die Kooperation mit zionistischen Institutionen schnell eingegangen. Das zeigten vor allem die großen, repräsentativen Konzerte, wie z. B. das Orchesterkonzert am 1. Februar 1931, das vom Jugendverein „Erez Israel“ veranstaltet wurde. Dieses Konzert, an dem das Wiener Symphonieorchester, der Jüdische Gesangverein und mehrere prominente Solisten teilnahmen, fand im Großen Konzerthaussaal statt. Bei solchen Konzerten übernahmen die Partnerinstitutionen den gesamten

finanziellen und organisatorischen Aufwand, während der Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik meist in der Person von Stutschewsky das Programm konzipierte und mit den Künstlern arbeitete.

Es ist kaum zu glauben, wie viele verschiedene zionistische Vereine es damals in Wien gab und wie viele von ihnen sich für die Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule einsetzten. Hier sind noch einige Beispiele dafür: Am 1. Dezember 1928 veranstaltete der zionistische Mädchenverein „Mirjam" (später Jung-WIZO genannt) einen Abend jüdischer Kunst. Der von Stutschewsky vorbereitete Konzertteil umfasste das Klavierquintett *Elegie* von Lewin, eine Suite *Jüdische Skizzen* von Alexander Krejn und Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier von Achron, Bloch, Tschernjawski und Stutschewsky.[33]

Am 15. Dezember 1928 fand im Neuen Saal der Hofburg ein großes Konzert jüdischer Musik statt, das von Keren Kajemeth (Jüdischer Nationalfonds) und der WIZO Österreichs organisiert wurde. „Die Durchführung dieses Konzerts […] hatte der erst seit kurzem bestehende ‚Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in Wien' übernommen. Ihm, beziehungsweise dem musikalischen Leiter der Veranstaltung, Herrn Joachim Stutschewsky, der seit langem gewissermaßen in Ton und Schrift für die Propagierung des neuen musikalischen Schaffens der jüdischen Künstler bemüht ist, haben wir wohl die vorzügliche Zusammenstellung des Konzertprogramms zu verdanken."[34] Nach der Einführung von Max Graf erklangen Lieder von Engel, Alexander Krejn, Achron und Milner, sowie Instrumentalstücke von Zeitlin, Achron, Bloch und Stutschewsky. Im Mittelpunkt stand die europäische Erstaufführung der *Kindersuite* von Achron in der Version für Klarinettensextett.

Stutschewsky war ebenfalls künstlerischer Leiter einer Veranstaltung des „Vereins der Freunde des arbeitenden Palästina in Wien" am 19.12.1929 im Großen Konzerthaussaal. Der gesamte Reinertrag des Abends sollte dem Palästina-Arbeiter-Fond zugute kommen; das Geld wurde dann für den Wiederaufbau der jüdischen Werkstätten und der Infrastruktur verwendet, die kurz zuvor durch die arabischen Angriffe zerstört worden waren. Es wurden Chorwerke von Erdstein, Engel und Saminsky, Klavierwerke von Achron und Stutschewsky, ein Streichquartett von Brandmann und Cellostücke von Bloch,

[33] Die Stimme, 22.11.1928, S. 11, und 6.12.1928, S. 9.
[34] E.G.F., Konzert jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 51, 20.12.1928, S. 10.

Gnesin und Stutschewsky aufgeführt. Stutschewskys *Vier jüdische Tanzstücke* für Klavier gelangten durch den Pianisten Jakob Gimpel „mit durchschlagendem Erfolg“ zur Uraufführung.[35] „Es war ein wirklicher Festabend, für die Künstler und für das Publikum, das nun endlich […] für unsere neuzeitliche Musik reif zu werden beginnt.“[36]

Der Verband demokratischer Zionisten und der jüdische Hochschulausschuss waren Veranstalter eines Konzerts mit Werken von Stutschewsky, Weiner, Lewin, Achron, Brandmann, Rosowsky, Engel, A. Krejn und Schalit im November 1931. Das war ebenfalls eine Benefizveranstaltung, diesesmal „zugunsten einer Nothilfe für die Institutionen der jüdischen Studentenschaft“.[37]

Auch einzelne Wiener Bezirkssektionen des zionistischen Verbands organisierten solche Konzerte, wie z. B. am 12. März 1932 in der Leopoldstadt mit Werken für Streichquartett, Violine, Cello und Liedern von Kaplan, Wolfsohn, Achron, Gnesin und Bloch. Die achtjährige Evelyne Wächter, eine Schülerin Wolfsohns, führte dabei dessen virtuose Klavierparaphrasen auf. Der XVI. und der XVII. Bezirk veranstalteten zusammen mit WIZO im Februar 1936 ein „dem neuhebräischen Kunst- und Volkslied“ gewidmetes Konzert.[38] Für die meisten dieser Institutionen waren solche Konzerte keine einmaligen Aktionen, sondern Teil eines dauerhaften Engagements für die neue jüdische Musik.

Im Jahr 1932 versuchte der Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik, seinen Einfluss auch über die zionistischen Kreise hinaus zu verbreiten. Zu diesem Zweck organisierte man damals eine Konferenz, zu der Vertreter aller jüdischen Vereine eingeladen wurden. Das erklärte Ziel dieser Versammlung war, das Niveau der musikalischen Darbietungen bei jüdischen Veranstaltungen zu heben.[39] Es wurde unter anderem beschlossen, dass sich alle Vereine mit der Programmkommission des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in Verbindung setzen „und von dieser Vorschläge […] entgegennehmen und dieses Programm nach Möglichkeit durchführen.“[40] Diese Entscheidung sollte allerdings lediglich ein Papierbeschluss bleiben. Ein Jahr später stellte die

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[35] Die Stimme, Nr. 104, 12.12.1929, S.11 und 27.12.1929.
[36] Die neue Welt, 25.12.1929.
[37] Die neue Welt, 6.11.1931, S. 6.
[38] Die Stimme Nr. 520, 4.2.1936, S. 5.
[39] Die Stimme, 7.4.1932, S. 7.
[40] Ebd.

Zeitung *Die Stimme* fest, dass man nach wie vor reichlich Gelegenheit hatte, „seine Wunder an den Darbietungen pseudojüdischer Musik" zu erleben.[41]

Der wichtigste und zuverlässigste Partner des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik war eine andere Wiener Musikgesellschaft – der Jüdische Gesangverein. Er war bereits 1920 von einem Dr. Ebner aus Chernowitz gegründet worden, und zwar nach dem Muster des dortigen Chors „Hasomir".[42] Der erste Leiter, der Komponist und Volksliedbearbeiter Leon Erdstein, und sein Nachfolger, der Komponist S. Braslavsky, kultivierten eine für jüdische Musikvereinigungen damals übliche Stilmischung aus Liedern der deutschen Romantik, Ausschnitten aus liturgischen Kompositionen von Sulzer und Lewandowski, Werken jüdischer Komponisten wie Mendelssohn, Goldmark und Rubinstein, Arrangements gängiger jüdischer Volkslieder, usw. Ab Anfang 1928 wurde Abram Dzimitrowski Leiter des Jüdischen Gesangvereins. Er veränderte radikal das Profil des Chores, der dadurch neben dem Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik zum zweiten wichtigen Vermittler der Neuen Jüdischen Schule in Wien wurde.

Nach einer einjährigen Auftrittspause, während der der Chor das neue Repertoire einstudierte, trat er erstmals am 12. Januar 1929 wieder vor die Öffentlichkeit. Der Meinung der Zeitung *Die Stimme* zufolge bildete dieses Konzert im ausverkauften Festsaal des Industriehauses „einen Höhepunkt in der Reihe von Darbietungen neuer jüdischer Musik, die in der letzten Zeit rasch aufeinander folgten."[43] Der Rezensent lobte gleichermaßen enthusiastisch die Qualität der aufgeführten Werke wie auch die Interpretation: „Was gebracht und wie es gebracht wurde, war erstrangig." Der unter Dzimitrowski reorganisierte Chor verwandelte sich zu einem „Instrument von geradezu vollendeter Präzision, das aus Menschenstimmen nur durch unerhörte disziplinäre Hingabe einerseits und durch stärkste künstlerisch-suggestive Kraft andererseits geschaffen werden kann."[44] Diese Komplimente dürften zwar etwas übertrieben sein, sie sind aber wohl durch den Kontrast zu den früheren Auftritten des Chors nachzuvollziehen. Außer Chorkompositionen

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[41] Olja Silbermann, Zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in Wien, in: Die Stimme Nr. 279, 11.5.1933, S. 6.

[42] Die Stimme Nr. 124, 1.5.1930, S. 11.

[43] S.S., Konzert jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme Nr. 55, 17.1.1929, S .9–10.

[44] Ebd.

von Saminsky, Low, Lwow, Achron, Engel, Dzimitrowski und Rubinstein wurden in diesem Konzert auch die Klaviersonate A. Krejns und *Drei Tänze* op. 13b für Klavier von Weprik aufgeführt, die ebenfalls begeisterte Aufnahme fanden. Der Pianist Jakob Gimpel musste als Zugabe noch Wepriks *Tanz* op. 13a spielen.[45]

Allein im Jahr 1929 gestaltete der Gesangverein noch fünf weitere Konzerte. Eines davon – am 27. April 1929 – wurde zusammen mit dem Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik veranstaltet. Kammermusik von Achron und Engel und Lieder von Brandmann wurden mit Chorwerken Saminskys, Milners, Dzimitrowskis, Achrons u. a. kombiniert.

Schon zwei Tage später, am 29. April 1929, wurde der Chor vom Zionistischen Jugendverband für ein Jugendkonzert engagiert, das im selben Festsaal des Industriehauses stattfand. Die anderen Konzerte des Chores waren eine von der Union deutsch-österreichischer Juden organisierte Veranstaltung zum 200. Geburtstag von Moses Mendelssohn, der schon erwähnte Abend des Vereins der Freunde des arbeitenden Palästina, sowie ein vom Gesangverein selbst veranstaltetes Konzert, in dem aber auch Künstler des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik mitwirkten.

Diese intensive Konzerttätigkeit wurde in den folgenden Jahren fortgesetzt, wobei auch die neuen Chorleiter, Aron Marko Rothmüller (1931) und Israel Brandmann (1932–1935), die von Dzimitrowski eingeschlagene Richtung beibehielten und die künstlerische Leistung des Chores sogar noch wuchs. Erwähnenswert sind dabei folgende Höhepunkte: Am 26. April 1930 wurde mit einem Jubiläumskonzert das zehnjährige Bestehen des Gesangvereins gefeiert. Ins Programm wurden u. a. Werke der bisherigen Leiter Erdstein, Braslavsky und Dzimitrowski aufgenommen. Der Rezensent betonte erneut speziell die Verdienste des gegenwärtigen Chordirigenten: „Dzimitrowski legt besonderen Wert auf die Pflege größerer Werke der Chorliteratur neuer jüdischer Musik, und da er ein großer Kenner derselben ist, sind die Programme mit Sorgfalt und Geschmack gewählt.“[46]

In diesem Artikel wurde hervorgehoben, dass der Gesangverein damals „die einzige Chorvereinigung [war], wo die Aufführung solcher

[45] Ebd.

[46] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jubiläumskonzert des Jüdischen Gesangvereins, in: Die Stimme Nr. 124, 1.5.1930, S. 11.

wertvollen Werke wie […] *Unsane Tojkef* von Milner oder sein *Psalm XIII* möglich war."[47] Dzimitrowski schrieb danach an seinen ehemaligen Schüler Milner nach Leningrad: „Am 26. dirigierte ich im Konzert *Unsane Tojkef* und *Psalm XIII*. Den Psalm hatte ich für Chor, Orgel und Klavier arrangiert. Er wurde von einem wunderschönen Tenor gesungen und es klang entzückend."[48] Diese Meinung teilte auch der Zeitungsbericht: „Diese tiefempfundenen Schöpfungen wurden mit Hingabe und Elan gesungen, wobei das Tenorsolo von dem beliebten, bestbekannten, stimmgewaltigen Oberkantor Gershon Margulies mit Inbrunst, reinster Intonation und großem vokalem Können vorgetragen wurde."[49]

Am 28. Mai 1930 dirigierte Lazare Saminsky den Chor des Gesangvereins in einem Konzert der von ihm gegründeten Polyhymnia Society New York, deren Ziel „die Förderung des internationalen Austausches unbekannter alter und neuer Musik" war. Das Konzert stellte mehrere jüdische Kompositionen Saminskys vor, sowie Werke einiger junger amerikanischer Autoren und amerikanische Folklore: „Als Dirigent und als Komponist zeigte er [Saminsky] viel Qualität, Routine, Sicherheit und mitreißendes Temperament."[50]

Eines der interessantesten Konzerte neuer jüdischer Musik fand am 10. Mai 1933 im Kleinen Musikvereinssaal statt. Dies war eine gemeinsame Veranstaltung: dem Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik „stand mit voller Hingabe der Jüdische Gesangverein mit seinem hochtalentierten Führer Israel Brandmann zur Seite".[51] Der Titel des Konzerts lautete: „Zeitgenössische synagogale und weltliche jüdische Musik". An diesem Abend wurden erstmals in Wien Ausschnitte aus neuen liturgischen Kompositionen für den Sabbath-Gottesdienst von Joseph Achron, Frederick Jakobi und Lazare Saminsky präsentiert. Diese Werke waren im Auftrag des New Yorker Temple Emanu-El auf Initiative seines Musikdirektors Saminsky erst ein Jahr zuvor entstanden. Außerdem sang der Chor die *Drei palästinensische Hirtenweisen* Brandmanns. Der kammermusikalische Teil des Programms umfasste Lieder von Engel, A. Krejn, Achron, Arno Nadel und H. Kopyt, Werke für Violine und Klavier von Wolfsohn, Bloch und Achron,

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[47] Ebd.
[48] Brief von Dzimitrowski an Milner, Wien 14.5.1930, RIII 42/63.
[49] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jubiläumskonzert des Jüdischen Gesangvereins, s. o., S. 11.
[50] Die neue Welt Nr. 142, 6.6.1930, S. 10.
[51] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme Nr. 281, 25.5.1933, S. 9.

sowie zwei Uraufführungen: Stutschewskys *Bagatellen* für Klavier und Brandmanns *Variationen über ein Volkslied* für Klarinette und Klavier. Unter den hochkarätigen Interpreten glänzte insbesondere die aus Palästina stammende Geigerin Schulamith Silber, die in Wien einen Wettbewerb gewonnen hatte und dann dort lebte. „Die bekannte und beliebte Geigerin [...] spielte mit Inbrunst und Wärme, mit Noblesse und ausgefeilter Technik."[52]

Ab Februar 1931 veranstaltete der Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik auch eigene Konzerte. Das waren ausschließlich Kammermusikabende, und sie fanden meistens im Saal von B'nai-B'rith in der Universitätsstraße 4 statt, wo der Verein auch seinen Sitz hatte. In den ersten Jahren brachte man es auf drei bis vier öffentliche Konzerte pro Saison, ab 1934 waren es jährlich nur zwei Veranstaltungen. Darüber hinaus wurden ab und zu interne Aufführungen für Vereinsmitglieder organisiert.

Das wichtigste Konzert der ersten Spielzeit war wohl der Kammermusikabend am 24. März 1931. Das Programm wurde mit Wepriks 2. Klaviersonate eröffnet, die von der bekannten Pianistin Renée Gärtner interpretiert wurde.[53] Joachim Stutschewsky sprach danach „einige warm empfundene Worte des Gedenkens für den allzu früh verstorbenen Komponisten und Pionier jüdischer Musik Leo Zeitlin."[54] Anschließend spielte er Zeitlins *Eli Zion*. Eine weitere Komposition von Zeitlin, *Reb Nachmans Nigun*, bildete den Abschluss des Konzerts. Außerdem wurden Vokalduette von Engel, Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier von Bloch, Gnesin und Achron, sowie zum ersten Mal in Wien das Präludium für Flöte, Streichquartett und Klavier von Grigori Krejn aufgeführt.

Dieses hohe Niveau hielten auch die anderen Konzerte des Vereins. Ihre Programme wurden meist von Stutschewsky, manchmal auch von Wolfsohn und Dzimitrowski konzipiert. Es ist ihnen stets gelungen, ein anspruchsvolles Repertoire zu präsentieren, ohne die Zuhörer zu überfordern. Neben avancierten Werken schloss jedes Programm auch Musik volkstümlichen Charakters ein, die jedoch nie

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[52] Ebd.

[53] Renée Gärtner-Geiringer (1908–1944) wurde 1942 aus Wien nach Theresienstadt deportiert. Sie wirkte dort in der „Freizeitgestaltung" bei vielen Konzerten als Solistin und Begleiterin mit. Sie kam mit einem der letzten Transporte nach Auschwitz.

[54] Juliusz Wolfsohn, II. Kammermusikabend des „Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik", in: Die Stimme Nr. 109, 26.3.1931, S. 10.

geschmacklos war. Es waren überwiegend Kompositionen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksmusik in St. Petersburg oder von Engel. Man war aber insbesondere bemüht, dem Publikum die Neuigkeiten jüdischer Kunstmusik vorzustellen. Dazu gehörten hauptsächlich Stücke, die erst kurz zuvor in Konzerten der Moskauer Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik uraufgeführt worden waren, sowie die neu entstandenen Werke der Wiener jüdischen Komponisten, vor allem Stutschewskys und Brandmanns. Man nutzte aber auch vielfältige Kontakte zu anderen Ländern, um Werke dortiger Komponisten nach Wien zu holen. Die Wiener Konzerte waren für diese Komponisten oft die einzige Aufführungsmöglichkeit.

So wurden in Konzerten des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik drei Werke des amerikanischen jüdischen Komponisten Michel (Mitya) Stillman (1892–1936) gespielt. Dieser Kontakt kam vermutlich durch Dzimitrowski zustande, der vor seiner Emigration ebenso wie Stillman in Kiew gelebt hatte. Stillman hatte am Kiewer Konservatorium Komposition und Bratsche studiert, ehe er nach Amerika auswanderte. Er arbeitete dort als Bratscher im CBS-Orchester in Detroit und komponierte viele symphonische und Kammermusikwerke. Der Erfolg als Komponist blieb ihm aber versagt. Stillman starb im Alter von 44 Jahren, kurz bevor ihm die erste große Anerkennung zuteil werden konnte – der Kompositionspreis der NBC für sein 7. Streichquartett als bestes Kammermusikwerk des Jahres 1936.[55] Stillman schrieb auf Anregung von Simeon Bellison einige Werke für Klarinette, darunter die *Phantasie über ein chassidisches Thema* für Klarinette, Streichquartett und Klavier, ein Quartett für Klarinette, Violine, Viola und Klavier und eine *Jüdische Melodie* für Klarinette und Klavier, die in Wien ihre europäische Erstaufführung erlebten. Die Phantasie für Klarinettensextett wurde danach bei Jibneh herausgegeben. Sie sollte das einzige Werk Stillmans bleiben, das je gedruckt wurde. Seine avancierte Musiksprache zog zwar gelegentlich den Unmut konservativer Kritiker auf sich, doch auch sie würdigten ausdrücklich seine Werke als einen „Versuch, mit ganz modernen Mitteln nationale jüdische Musik zu schaffen."[56]

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[55] Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians. Seventh Edition (Revised by Nicolas Slonimsky). Schirmer – Macmillan, New York 1984.

[56] Dr. J. Mann, Neue jüdische Musik, in: Die neue Welt Nr. 282, 3.2.1933, S. 8.

Auch ein anderer amerikanisch-jüdischer Komponist, Lazar Weiner,[57] wurde dem Wiener Publikum erstmals durch die Konzerte des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik präsentiert. Weiner war übrigens als Kind Schüler Dzimitrowskis gewesen (zur gleichen Zeit wie Milner). Die freundschaftliche Beziehung zu seinem alten Lehrer hielt bis zu dessen Tod an. Am 27. Januar und am 3. März 1935 spielte der Pianist Robert W. Spitz mehrere jüdische Klavierstücke Weiners.

Das letztgenannte Konzert bot den Zuhörern eine weitere interessante Neuigkeit, den *Palästinensischen Tanz* für Gesang und Klavier von Verdina Schlionsky (1905–1990). Die junge Komponistin stammte ebenfalls aus Russland. Sie hatte in Berlin Klavier bei Egon Petri und Arthur Schnabel studiert, danach in Paris Komposition bei Darius Milhaud und Edgar Varèse, bevor sie nach Palästina auswanderte. Schon 1925, während ihres ersten Besuchs in Palästina, hatte Joel Engel sie zum Komponieren und zur Beschäftigung mit nationaler Folklore angeregt. Für ihren ersten Liederzyklus *Palästinensische Skizzen* gewann Schlionsky dann den Nadja-Boulanger-Kompositionspreis.[58] Äußerst erfolgreich war auch die Wiener Premiere: „Der primitive, orientalische Provenienz verratende, wortlose Sang […] wird in einen sehr komplizierten, von Parallelakkordik und polytonalen Wendungen überhäuften Klavierpart eingebettet. Die Ursprünglichkeit des musikalischen Einfalles siegt aber: man spürt darin den Atem der palästinensischen Wirklichkeit, ein neues jüdisches Raumgefühl.“[59]

Die letzte öffentliche Veranstaltung des Vereins am 6. Dezember 1936 war, wie bereits erwähnt, dem damals ebenfalls in Palästina lebenden Solomon Rosowsky gewidmet. Zwei Tage später spielte Stutschewsky bei der „Großen Makkabäerfeier“ (dem Chanukka-Fest) erstmals in Wien „ein prächtiges Stück“ des französisch-jüdischen Komponisten Vladimir Dyck *Der Rabbi spricht*.[60] Das jüdische Musikleben in Wien

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[57] Manja Ressler, Lazar Weiner, Composer of Jewish Art-Songs, in: Levend Joods Geloof, Nr. 3 Chanukah 1996.

[58] Jessica L. Levitt, The Tango and the Hora: Conflicting Cultural Influences in Verdina Shlonsky's Life and Music 1905–1990. Thesis for Master of Sacred Music Degree. Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music, New York 1998.

[59] Olja Silbermann, Professor Wolfsohn über jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 446, 5.3.1935, S. 7.

[60] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Die große Makkabäerfeier, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 603, 10.12.1936, S. 3.

war aber damit nicht erloschen. Ende 1937 startete Stutschewsky eine neue Initiative. Auf der Basis der Jüdischen Kulturstelle in Wien wurde unter seiner Leitung ein Zyklus aus sechs Konzerten mit jüdischer Musik geplant. Zwei Abende sollten der synagogalen Musik gewidmet sein, zwei jüdischer Kunstmusik und jeweils ein Abend der Folklore und der Theatermusik.[61] Realisiert wurde nur ein Programm mit Kunstmusik von Joseph Achron, Israel Brandmann, Paul Dessau, Julius Chajes, Aron M. Rothmüller, Lazar Weiner, Alexander Krejn und Joachim Stutschewsky. Dieses Konzert fand am 2. Februar 1938 statt,[62] also nur wenige Wochen vor dem Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen in Wien.

Diese und viele andere Zeugnisse beweisen, dass die Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule seit Ende der 1920er Jahre durch die Aktivitäten des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik, des Jüdischen Gesangvereins und weiterer jüdischer, insbesondere zionistischer Vereine zu einem wichtigen Bestandteil des Wiener jüdischen Kulturlebens wurde. „Kompositionen von Stillman, Krejn, Milner und vornehmlich Joel Engel sind in den jüdischen Wiener Kreisen bereits populär geworden, ebenso wie die Namen der Ausführenden Hanna Schwarz, Robert Spitz, Hans Lewitus, Elsy Stein, Lotte Hammerschlag und E. Gara. Der ausschlaggebende Impuls geht von Israel Brandmann und Joachim Stutschewsky aus, die als Komponisten wie ausübende Musiker aus dem Wiener jüdischen Musikleben nicht mehr wegzudenken sind.“[63]

4. *Israel Brandmann*

Von allen bedeutenden Komponisten der Neuen Jüdischen Schule ist der Name Israel Brandmann (1901–1992) wohl am gründlichsten vergessen. Das ist umso erstaunlicher, wenn man anhand der zeitgenössischen Dokumente feststellt, wie hoffnungsvoll seine Karriere im Wien der dreißiger Jahre begonnen hatte. Sogar in Israel, wo der Komponist noch bis 1992 lebte, fanden nur einige wenige Aufführungen seiner

[61] Siehe die Rubrik „Jüdische Musik“ in der Zeitung „Selbstwehr“, 24.12.1937, FBMC Archiv Stutschewsky.

[62] Joachim Stutschewsky, Jüdische Musik, in: Die Garbe. Offizielles Organ der Jüdischen Kulturstelle und Volkshochschule, Wien 2.2.1938, FBMC 4/4/2 (741/1).

[63] R.d., Konzert jüdischer Musik, in: Die neue Welt, Nr. 334, 23.1.1934, S. 4.

Werke statt. In anderen Ländern wurde seine Musik nach bisherigen Erkenntnissen überhaupt nicht gespielt.

Brandmanns Werke wurden nur in einem Verlag – dem Wiener Jibneh – gedruckt. In der Zeit zwischen 1931 und 1935 erschienen dort sechs Kompositionen: Zwei Lieder nach Texten Bialiks, Variationen über einen palästinensischen Volkstanz [Hava nagila] für Streichquartett, Variationen über ein Volksthema op. 12 für Klarinette und Klavier, das *Palästinensische Tanzlied* für Chor a cappella, *Drei palästinensische Hirtenweisen* für Chor und Klavier und schließlich eine Bearbeitung von *Hatikva* für Solostimme, Chor und Klavier. All diese Ausgaben gibt es nur noch in seltenen Einzelexemplaren. Ein großer Teil seines handschriftlichen Nachlasses befindet sich heute im Archiv der Musikbibliothek des Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. Einige Kompositionen, sowie fast alle privaten Dokumente gelten als verschollen.

Brandmann wurde 1901 in der ukrainischen Stadt Kamenez-Podolsk geboren. Von 1913 bis 1917 studierte er Violine am St. Petersburger Konservatorium. Schon ab 1917 war Brandmann in seiner Heimatstadt als Dirigent, Geiger und Musikpädagoge erfolgreich. Spätestens 1919 gründete er dort zusammen mit seinem Bruder Jakov die „Jüdische national-musikalische Organisation Kadimah", die aus einem Symphonieorchester (mit 33 Mitgliedern) und einem gemischten Chor (mit 49 Mitgliedern) bestand. Es sind mehrere Konzertprogramme dieser Vereinigung in Kamenez-Podolsk aus den Jahren 1919 bis 1920 erhalten, sowie eine komplette Liste der Orchestermusiker und Choristen, unter denen auch einige Mitglieder der Familie Brandmann waren.[64] Im Jahr 1921 übersiedelte der gesamte Verein nach Palästina, wo in den nächsten Jahren mehrere Konzerte von Kadimah unter Brandmanns Leitung stattfanden. Er trat dabei auch als Geiger solistisch auf.[65] Im Jahr 1924 kam Brandmann nach Wien, wo er an der Hochschule für Musik bei Franz Schmidt Komposition studierte.

Brandmann war ein ausgesprochenes Multitalent, er vermochte seine Zeitgenossen gleichermaßen mit seinen Leistungen als Sologeiger, Primarius eines Streichquartetts, als Chorleiter, Dirigent des Symphonieorchesters und als Komponist zu begeistern. Er schloss sich

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[64] FBMC RPI2/11 und R1/2/11/4 (3006), sowie in der Israel Brandmann Collection in Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

[65] Vgl. die Programme der Konzerte am 7.9.1922, 23.3.1922, 24.11.[1922], 4.10.1923, FBMC R1/2/23 (6–8).

dem Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik schon kurz nach dessen Gründung an. Seine erste jüdische Komposition, die Variationen über *Hava nagila* für Streichquartett, wurde allerdings nicht von diesem Verein, sondern in einem Konzert des Wiener Vereins zur Förderung zeitgenössischer Musik am 16. Oktober 1928 uraufgeführt. „Als Erstlingswerk ist es bestimmt eine starke Talentprobe. […] musikalische Begabung, die zu Zukunftshoffnungen berechtigt", schrieb darüber *Die Stimme*.[66]

Die drei kurz danach entstandenen Lieder auf hebräische Texte von Bialik (zwei Lieder) und Tschernichowsky wurden dann aber schon in einem jüdischen Konzert erstmals präsentiert, und zwar bei einer gemeinsamen Veranstaltung des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik mit dem jüdischen Gesangverein am 27. April 1929. Der Kritiker der Zeitung *Die neue Welt*, der seine Besprechung mit „or" unterzeichnete und der offensichtlich kein Ohr für moderne Musik hatte, fand kein gutes Wort für diese Lieder: „Ein trauriges Kapitel bildeten drei Lieder von Brandmann, […] trotz schwülstiger Phrasierung und sogenannter ‚moderner' Untermalung nichts als banal, am Schreibtisch gekocht."[67]

Diese Kritik blieb jedoch die einzige negative Beurteilung Brandmanns in der Wiener Presse jener Zeit. Auch die erwähnten Lieder, vor allem die beiden Bialik-Vertonungen, die danach oft in Konzerten zu hören waren, erfreuten sich bei Publikum und Kritikern höchster Wertschätzung: „Die Lieder von Israel Brandmann […] erschließen sich dem Zuhörer dank ihrer Konzeptionstiefe erst beim öfteren Hören", schrieb Olja Silbermann vier Jahre später. „Beide Lieder […] zeigen die charakteristischen Merkmale der schöpferischen Persönlichkeit Brandmanns: Die wechselseitige Beziehung von lyrischer Innigkeit und starkem, leidenschaftlich drängendem Pathos. […] Die Eigenart des melodischen Einfalles (wie schön wird im zweiten Lied der tiefe Bratschenton gegen die Gesangsstimme geführt), der feine Sinn für klangliche Zusammenhänge, die Knappheit der formalen Struktur und nicht zuletzt die hohe Gesinnung, das Ethos dieser Lieder, geben

[66] Ethan, Uraufführung eines Wiener jüdischen Musikers, in: Die Stimme, 25.10.1928, S. 10.

[67] Or, Jüdische Musik, in: Die neue Welt, Nr. 86, 10.5.1929, S. 10.

ihnen ein einmaliges Gepräge und lassen sie zum Wertvollsten des jüdischen musikalischen Literaturbesitzes [werden].“[68]

Es ist auffällig, dass sogar diejenigen Kritiker, die Lob und Tadel meist mit schablonenhaften Floskeln verteilten, beim Namen Brandmann einen ganz besonderen Ton anstimmten. Außerdem vermochte Brandmanns Musik offensichtlich Kritiker aus dem fortschrittlichen wie auch aus dem konservativen Lager gleichermaßen zu begeistern. Juliusz Wolfsohn beispielsweise, der die avancierten Werke Stutschewskys, Stillmans oder Grigori Krejns in der Regel skeptisch beurteilte, schätzte die Musik Brandmanns trotz ihrer Modernität außerordentlich hoch. Über die Bialik-Lieder schrieb er, dass sie „immer wieder neu wirken und durch ihre Klangschönheit und Tiefe berücken.“[69]

Wolfsohn liebte diese Lieder offensichtlich ganz besonders. Als sie bei Jibneh gedruckt wurden, verfasste er eine Annonce, die eher einem Poem glich: „[…] somit ist den jüdischen Sängern Gelegenheit gegeben, ihr Repertoire mit einem Werk zu bereichern, das in seiner warmen poetischen Erfindung, seiner echt jüdischen Deklamation, seiner durchglühten und dennoch in Meisterschaft zurückgehaltenen Leidenschaft das höchste Lob verdient. Im ersten Lied fällt knapp vor dem Schluß das grandiose Pathos in der Begleitung […] und der zauberhaft aushauchende Lauf auf. Auch der Schluß des zweiten Liedes ist in seiner Struktur einzigartig; ganz ohne Begleitung klingen der Gesang und die Bratsche wie im Traum aus. Mögen diese zwei Werke ihren Siegeslauf durch die Welt beginnen, sie verdienen es.“[70]

Brandmanns Variationen für Klarinette und Klavier bezeichnete Wolfsohn als „Wegweiser für die Entwicklung der jüdischen Musik“.[71] Ebenfalls überzeugt zeigte sich der Kritiker von der ersten Aufführung der *Palästinensischen Weise* für Violoncello und Klavier: „Es ist das erste Werk Brandmanns für Cello, trotzdem scheinen die Klangmöglichkeiten dieses Instruments in dem Werke vollauf ausgenützt.“[72] In einer anderen Besprechung bemerkte Wolfsohn: „Jedes Werk dieses

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[68] Olja Silbermann, Zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in Wien, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 279, 11.5.1933, S. 6.

[69] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Kammermusikabend des Vereins für jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 343, 10.4.1934, S. 5.

[70] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Neuerscheinungen jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 291, 20.7.1933, S. 5.

[71] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Neue Werke jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 323, 26.1.1934, S. 5.

[72] Ebd.

einfallsreichen, fruchtbaren und tiefschürfenden Tondichters erfreut immer aufs neue."[73] So etwas sagt man selten über einen Kollegen, und es ist tatsächlich zu spüren, dass Brandmann damals allgemein als der begabteste jüdische Komponist seiner Generation betrachtet wurde.

Ebenso gewürdigt wurde Brandmann als Geiger. Er trat manchmal als Solist auf, wie z. B. am 15. Februar 1931, als er „gefühlvoll und mit feurigem Temperament" die Uraufführung seiner „tief empfundenen, mit großem Können und instrumentalem Klangsinn geschriebenen" Sonate für Violine und Klavier spielte.[74] Besonders oft war er aber in verschiedenen Kammermusikbesetzungen zu hören. So schrieb *Die Stimme* über eine Streichquartett-Aufführung: „Mit befeuernder Impulsivität leitete das Quartett Israel Brandmann – eine eminente kammermusikalische Begabung".[75]

Nicht weniger erfolgreich war dieser vielseitige Musiker auch als Chordirigent. Brandmann leitete den Jüdischen Gesangverein drei Jahre lang bis zu seiner Abreise aus Wien, und laut der übereinstimmenden Berichte war er der beste Dirigent, den dieser Chor je hatte. Die Zusammenarbeit begann im November 1931 und war für beide Seiten, für den Chor ebenso wie für den Dirigenten, bereichernd. Durch Brandmann erreichte der einst bescheidene Laienchor ein hohes professionelles Niveau, das es ihm ermöglichte, komplizierte Partituren moderner Autoren künstlerisch überzeugend zu interpretieren. Das Repertoire des Klangkörpers erweiterte sich enorm, fast jedes Konzert schloss mehrere Erstaufführungen ein. Auf den Komponisten Brandmann wirkte sich diese Arbeit ausgesprochen positiv aus: sie regte ihn zu einigen Chorkompositionen an, die er schon bald nach ihrem Entstehen zum Klingen bringen konnte. Auch seine neuen Kammermusikwerke bekamen bessere Aufführungsmöglichkeiten, weil sie oft in Programme des Gesangvereins integriert wurden.

Eines der ersten Konzerte unter Brandmanns Leitung fand Anfang April 1933 statt. Unter den fünf neu einstudierten Werken war auch eine Komposition von ihm: „Nach langer Zeit ließ sich der Jüdische Gesangverein in einem groß angelegten Konzert hören. Diese Körperschaft, die jetzt ihren berufensten Leiter gefunden hat, machte in

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[73] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jüdische Musik, in. Die Stimme, Nr. 281, 25.5.1933, S. 9.

[74] Dr. K. R., Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 164, 29.2.1931, S. 8.

[75] Olja Silbermann, Zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in Wien, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 279, 11.5.1933.

der letzten Zeit große Fortschritte. Schon das Programm zeigt hohes Niveau, was man einem Künstler wie Israel Brandmann freilich zumuten konnte. […] Der Clou des Abends war die Erstaufführung dreier Palästinensischer Hirtenweisen für Chor von I. Brandmann. Neue Klänge, […] aparte Klangkombinationen, meisterhaft in der Satztechnik und vor allem in jedem Ton, jeder Figuration echt jüdische Musik, nichts Erkünsteltes, sondern aus dem tiefsten Inneren Erlebtes […] Diese *Palästinensischen Weisen* […] gehören zu den bedeutendsten Werken der Chorliteratur der letzten Zeit. Das Werk hatte einen ungewöhnlichen Erfolg."[76] Schon fünf Wochen später präsentierte der Chor ein anderes großes Programm, das wieder mehrere neue Werke einschloss. Der Rezensent begeisterte sich: „Nicht weniger als sieben Erstaufführungen hat dieser prächtige Chor in verhältnismäßig kurzer Zeit einstudiert und vollendet zu Gehör gebracht: ein Beweis mehr für die außerordentliche Dirigentenbegabung Brandmanns."[77]

Das letzte Konzert des Jüdischen Gesangvereins unter Brandmann im Juni 1935 war zu einem beträchtlichen Teil seiner Chor- und Kammermusik gewidmet. Es gab darunter auch zwei Uraufführungen: die *Variationen über ein Thema von Engel* für Klavier und ein *Palästinensisches Tanzlied* für gemischten Chor. Die Variationen waren Brandmanns erstes Werk für Klavier solo, nach Meinung Wolfsohns, der ja selbst ein bedeutender Pianist war, demonstrierten sie trotzdem „einen erstaunlich gewandten Klaviersatz". „Die zweite Variation weitet sich zu einem Bild aus der palästinensischen Wüste, man sieht förmlich eine melancholisch ziehende Karawane, auch vom Tropp[78] hat Brandmann in geistreicher Weise Gebrauch gemacht; die letzte Variation sprüht von Rhythmus, Freude, Humor und echter jüdischer Eigenart der melodischen Zeichnung."[79] Auch das Chorstück, das „eigentümlich, mystisch, in der Harmonik kühn und neu" erschien, gefiel dem Kritiker außerordentlich gut: „Die beiden neuen Kompositionen von Brandmann reihen sich würdig seinen früheren Tonschöpfungen an".[80]

Vielleicht seinen größten Erfolg als Komponist erzielte Brandmann mit seinem einzigen in Wien aufgeführten Orchesterwerk – der

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[76] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme, 7.4.1933, S. 15.
[77] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 281, 25.5.1933, S. 9.
[78] Gemeint sind Bibelkantillationen.
[79] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Konzert des Wiener jüdischen Gesangvereines, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 459, 21.6.1935, S. 7.
[80] Ebd.

symphonischen Dichtung *Hechaluz*. Es erlebte seine Uraufführung beim IV. Hebräischen Konzert des Jugendvereins Erez Israel am 1. Februar 1931. Das war wohl die aufwendigste Aufführung neuer jüdischer Musik, die in Wien je stattfand. Die Programmplanung hatte Wolfsohn vorgenommen. Brandmanns Werk stand im Mittelpunkt des drei Stunden dauernden Programms, das außerdem zwei weitere symphonische Werke (die symphonische Dichtung *Chassidim* von Rosowsky und die *Hebräische Suite* für Klavier und Orchester von Wolfsohn), sowie zahlreiche Chor- und Kammermusikstücke darbot.

Es war aber gerade das vom Komponisten selbst dirigierte *Hechaluz*, das die Rezensentin der Zeitung *Die Stimme* ins Schwärmen brachte: „[…] beim *Hechaluz* merkte man, daß hier jüdische Musik neue, zukunftsreiche Wege geht. Sein *Hechaluz* ist eine einzig dastehende Verlebendigung […] der palästinensischen Wesenheit mit einer Macht, wie sie eben nur der Musik eigen ist.“[81] Die Kritikerin konnte sich nicht verkneifen, eine ausführliche, in poetischen Tönen gehaltene Beschreibung des Werkes in ihren Artikel aufzunehmen: „Die Wanderer- und Klagemotive werden zu einem verzweifelten Aufschrei, der aber dann zu Arbeits- und Aufbauthemen führt. […] ‚El jiwneh Hagalil!‘ Inmitten harmonischer Härten und rhythmischer Bewegtheit erhebt sich ein Unisonogebet des Hoffens und Klagens und dann verhüllt alles die palästinensische Nacht. […] Ein Lagerfeuer wird angezündet, in wilder Leidenschaft die palästinensische ‚Hora‘ getanzt. […] Die kontrapunktische Themendurchführung, das Vorausahnen des Klanges sind bei diesem Orchestererstlingswerk geradezu erstaunlich und zeugen von einem ungemein starken Talent.“[82]

Auch als Dirigent hat sich Brandmann bestens bewährt. In demselben Artikel wurde eine Äußerung des Rektors der Wiener Musikhochschule, Franz Schmidt, zitiert, zu der ihn der außergewöhnliche Erfolg seines ehemaligen Schülers veranlasste: „Brandmann wird der nationale Heros seines Volkes; man kann ihm eine große Zukunft prophezeien.“[83] Schmidts Prophezeiung sollte sich leider nicht erfüllen. Die politische und wirtschaftliche Situation verhinderte Brandmanns weitere Karriere. Eine gesicherte Stellung blieb dem begabten Musiker verschlossen. Die Konzertauftritte waren in der Regel ehrenamtlich,

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[81] Olja Silbermann, Das IV. Hebräische Konzert, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 162, 5.2.1931, S. 7.
[82] Ebd.
[83] Ebd.

und die jüdischen Vereine, die ständig um ihre Existenz kämpften, zahlten nur spärlich. Ein Vorgänger Brandmanns, Prof. Braslavsky, schrieb in einem Artikel verbittert, dass er in seiner Wiener Zeit „nicht weniger als acht Posten" in jüdischen Institutionen bekleiden und dazu noch Privatstunden geben musste, „um existieren zu können".[84] Braslavsky emigrierte 1927 in die USA.

Nach 1934 wurde die wirtschaftliche Lage der jüdischen Einrichtungen katastrophal. Im Unterschied zu christlichen Institutionen erhielten sie keine staatlichen Subventionen. Auch die jüdischen Musiker spürten deutlich diese Diskriminierung. So international renommierte Interpreten wie Wolfsohn oder Stutschewsky konnten keine Stelle im Staatsdienst, etwa an der Musikhochschule, bekommen. Sie lebten von ihren Konzerten und von Privatschülern. Wolfsohn unterhielt sogar eine private Klavierschule. Brandmann, der lange Zeit am Rande der Existenznot war, sah sich schließlich gezwungen, Österreich zu verlassen. Er ging im August 1935 nach Palästina – in das Land, in dem er schon einmal von 1921 bis 1924 gelebt und das er 1931 erneut besucht hatte. Dieses Mal war es jedoch kein günstiger Zeitpunkt: nach Palästina flohen nun viele jüdische Musiker aus Deutschland, und der Konkurrenzkampf war in dem kleinen Land besonders hart. Brandmanns weiterer Lebensweg war vermutlich sehr schwer. Ein Hinweis darauf findet sich in einem Brief von Joseph Achron an Stutschewsky aus dem Jahr 1936: „Was Sie über Brandmann und sein *Martyrium* schreiben, ist nicht neu bei Komponisten. Leider können die Schöpfer ernster Kunst nie von ihren Werken existieren."[85] Einigen Angaben zufolge gab Brandmann in Palästina das Komponieren auf.[86] Er wirkte dann Jahrzehnte lang als Leiter des Tel Aviver Arbeiterchors.

5. *Joachim Stutschewsky über die neue jüdische Musik*

Stutschewsky war Mitbegründer der zionistischen Zeitung *Die Stimme*, die in Wien ab Januar 1928 erschien. Auf seine Initiative hin wurde dort eine Musikabteilung eingerichtet, die sich speziell für die Neue

[84] Prof. S. Braslavsky, Zur Pflege der jüdischen Musik, in: Die neue Welt, 20.12.1929, S. 10–11.

[85] Brief von Achron an Stutschewsky, Hollywood 30.1.1936, FBMC 3/1/1 (53). Der hier gemeinte Brief Stutschewskys ist verschollen.

[86] Peter Gradenwitz, Music and Musicians in Israel, Tel Aviv 1959, S. 32.

Jüdische Schule einsetzen sollte. „Die Gruppe der Komponisten nationaler jüdischer Musik ist in der ganzen Welt zerstreut. Ohne Kontakte, ohne Kenntnisse voneinander," beklagte er damals in einem Brief an Rosowsky.[87] Er wollte die Zeitung als ein Informations- und Propagandazentrum nutzen, das einerseits den Komponisten ein Diskussionspodium bieten, andererseits der Öffentlichkeit aktuelle und ausführliche Informationen über die neue jüdische Musik und das jüdische Musikleben in verschiedenen Ländern liefern sollte.

Schon Anfang 1928 knüpfte Stutschewsky Kontakte zu jüdischen Musikern in den drei wichtigsten Ländern – Russland, Amerika und Palästina – und bezog von dort Material über Neuerscheinungen jüdischer Musik, Konzerte, Schallplattenaufnahmen, jüdische Musikgesellschaften und einzelne Komponisten. Stutschewsky hoffte sogar, dass dieses Material in Zukunft Grundlage einer „Geschichte jüdischer Musik" werden könne.[88] Wie intensiv diese Arbeit war, bezeugt ein weiterer Brief Stutschewskys aus dieser Zeit: „Ich versichere Ihnen, dass ich absolut keine Minute Zeit habe. Ich habe hier den Verein, die Zeitung, eigene Kompositionen und Konzerte um die Ohren, aber die Hauptsache ist … mein riesiger Briefwechsel mit Ihnen, den jüdischen Musikern (das ist kein Scherz!). […] Mein Ziel ist es, die Musikabteilung allmählich zu entwickeln, so dass unsere wichtigsten Musiker auch selbst schreiben."[89]

Tatsächlich erschienen damals in der Zeitung *Die Stimme* Beiträge von Achron, Saminsky, Rosowsky, und später auch von den Aktivisten des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik Wolfsohn, Dr. J. Torbé u. a. Stutschewsky blieb jedoch nach wie vor der führende Publizist der Neuen Jüdischen Schule. Seine Artikel wurden damals nicht nur in der *Stimme*, sondern auch in der anderen Wiener zionistischen Zeitung *Die neue Welt*, in der Prager *Selbstwehr*, in der schweizerischen *Menora*, sowie in der Berliner *Jüdischen Rundschau* veröffentlicht. Die letztgenannte Zeitung, das Organ der Zionistischen Organisation in Deutschland, gab ab 1928 eine spezielle Beilage „Jüdische Musik" heraus, die ebenfalls neue jüdische Musik propagierte. Sie wurde von der Pianistin

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[87] Brief von Stutschewsky an Rosowsky, Wien 25.2.1928, JTSA Archiv Rosowsky Addendum.

[88] Brief von Stutschewsky an Rosowsky, Wien o.D. [1928], JTSA Archiv Rosowsky Addendum.

[89] Brief von Stutschewsky an Rosowsky, Wien 16.9.1928, JTSA Archiv Rosowsky Addendum.

Alice Jakob-Löwensohn redigiert. Besonders bedeutsam waren Stutschewskys Artikelserien über die Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule für verschiedene Instrumente und über ihre Komponisten, über das Wesen jüdischer Musik und die Renaissancebewegung jüdischer Musiker. Einige dieser Artikel wurden 1935 in dem Sammelband *Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik* im Verlag Jibneh zusammengefasst.

Stutschewskys publizistischer Einsatz galt unter anderem der Überwindung der Skepsis, mit der die Neue Jüdische Schule zunächst in Wien konfrontiert war. Gegen diese Skepsis argumentierte er mit einer ausführlichen Übersicht über die jüdische Musik im Altertum, sowie über die neuesten Erfolge der „jüdischen musikalischen Renaissance": „Man hat wiederholt versucht, das Judentum ausschließlich aus der Perspektive der Vergangenheit und nicht auch der der Gegenwart zu sehen. Typische Auswirkung der Kurzsichtigkeit assimilierter Denkungsart. Gerade die letzten fünfzig Jahre jüdischer Geschichte dokumentieren mit eindringlicher Unzweideutigkeit die Fähigkeit des Juden zur aktiven Äußerung auf allen Gebieten. So auch in der Musik. Allen Zweiflern gegenüber können wir darauf hinweisen, dass die ‚Neue jüdische Musik', alle Bezirke musikalischer Formen gestaltend, sich unaufhaltsam entwickelt, aus dem Stadium des Suchens und Experimentierens immer mehr heraustritt."[90]

Die Neue Jüdische Schule oder „die jung-jüdische Schule in der Musik",[91] wie Stutschewsky sie manchmal nannte, ist seiner Meinung nach eng mit der allgemeinen Renaissance-Bewegung des jüdischen Volkes verbunden: mit denjenigen geistig-kulturellen Prozessen, die ein neues nationales Selbstbewusstsein hervorriefen und die die „Zwiespältigkeit" des assimilierten Judentums überwanden. Für Stutschewsky war die neue jüdische Musik ein wichtiger Faktor der nationalen Wiedergeburt oder der „nationalen Gesundung", wie man damals sagte, „die das jüdische Volk von Gestern […] trennen und es in eine neue Epoche weisen" kann.[92]

Diese Musik war daher für ihn nicht nur ein ästhetisches, sondern auch ein ethisches Phänomen. Er schrieb über eine neue Generation jüdischer Musiker, die zwar „fern von einem heimatlichen Boden" aufgewachsen war, die aber von einer „glühenden Sehnsucht, […]

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[90] Joachim Stutschewsky, Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik, Wien 1935, S. 16.
[91] Ebd., S. 7 und 17.
[92] Ebd., S. 5.

dem wachen Traum nach Heimat und Zukunft“ inspiriert wurde.[93] Für diese Musiker stellt die Musik ein sittliches Ideal dar, sie glauben an die „erzieherische und läuternde Kraft der Musik“.[94] Diese Einstellung beeinflusste auch Stutschewskys Definition jüdischer Musik. Eine Voraussetzung dafür war für ihn die Trennung zwischen der „Musik der Juden“ und „jüdischer Musik“. Nicht die jüdische Abstammung, sondern vielmehr die innere Verbundenheit des Künstlers mit seinem Volk war ausschlaggebend. Aus solcher Verbundenheit, auf einer „inneren Scholle“ würden sich bewusst oder unbewusst auch entsprechende Stilelemente herausbilden, die das Kunstwerk zu einer Einheit von Idee und Material werden lassen.

Die gründliche musikwissenschaftliche Erforschung der charakteristischen jüdischen Stilmerkmale der neuen jüdischen Kunstmusik strebte Stutschewsky erst einmal nicht an, er überließ sie künftigen Generationen: „Wenn es der folkloristischen Forschung einmal gelingt, eine Basis zu finden, um in der melodischen Kurve, im Rhythmus und im Aufbau eines Volksliedes die spezifischen Besonderheiten eines Volkes zu erkennen, wird man auch die Eigenart und den Reichtum des jüdischen Volksliedes und den Grad seines Einflusses auf die Entwicklung der jüdischen Kunstmusik feststellen können.“[95]

Stutschewsky fand es jedoch wichtig, das Grundprinzip dieser Kunstmusik zu definieren. Nach seiner Auffassung war es eine Synthese jüdischer Musiktradition („der eigenen Vergangenheit“) mit der europäischen Musikkultur („der fremden Gegenwart“): „Über die Frage des ‚spezifisch Jüdischen‘ in der Musik wird eifrig debattiert. Die aufschlussreichste Antwort darauf können doch nur die schaffenden Künstler selbst und ihre Werke geben. Und diese Werke werden uns schon beim ersten Hören vom Vorhandensein eines jüdischen Elementes, eines jüdischen Charakters in der Musik überzeugen. […] Erst die späteren Generationen werden die Bindungen und Kurven zwischen den verschiedenen Strömungen innerhalb der eigenen Stilkreise herzustellen vermögen, die Verknüpfungen der jüdischen Musik mit der eigenen Vergangenheit und der fremden Gegenwart zu verstehen und zu klären wissen.“[96]

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[93] Joachim Stutschewsky, Die jüdische Musik. Ein neues Werk von Dr. Lanko, in: Die neue Welt, Nr. 132, 28.3.1930, S. 4–5.

[94] Ebd.

[95] Joachim Stutschewsky, Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik, Wien 1935, S. 17.

[96] Ebd., S. 17.

Damit war auch der internationale Aspekt der Neuen Jüdischen Schule verbunden. Einerseits sollte die nationale jüdische Musik kein Retortenprodukt sein, sie entstand vielmehr im Kontext der neuen europäischen Musik. Andererseits bedeutete die Suche nach nationaler Identität keinesfalls eine Abgrenzung, sondern im Gegenteil gerade eine Bereicherung des internationalen Musiklebens. Im Einklang mit zeitgenössischen neofolkloristischen Theorien behauptete Stutschewsky, dass Kunst „in der tiefsten Bedeutung des Wortes national [ist]. Das Nationale ist das Urelement der Kunst."[97] Doch nur eine durchschnittliche Begabung bleibe auf der Ebene des Nationalen, der echte Künstler schaffe zwar national, er werde aber international verstanden und empfunden: „Wir sind von der schöpferischen Begabung des jüdischen Volkes überzeugt und sehen die Notwendigkeit und die Möglichkeit einer jüdischen Kunstmusik als gegeben an. Aber nicht einer Musik, die uns von den ganz großen Werken anderer Völker trennt, sondern einer, die aus eigenem Wesen und Gestalten einen Widerhall bei den übrigen Völkern, einen Platz in der Musikliteratur in der ganzen Welt finden wird."[98]

Ideen dieser Art gehörten damals zum allgemeinen Gedankengut der Neuen Jüdischen Schule, sie waren auch in Russland verbreitet. Die Wiener Komponisten bekannten sich im Unterschied zu den russisch-jüdischen Theoretikern aber deutlicher zum Zionismus. „Dass die vollkommenste Erfüllung einer jüdischen Musik erst in Palästina möglich sein wird, steht außer Zweifel. In der palästinensischen Landschaft, der Kultur des neuen Lebens und der hebräischen Sprache, dort wird auch der Musiker die innere Haltung finden, die seine Empfindungswelt und Phantasie befruchtet und die Entfaltung des Talentes im vollen Maße zur Auswirkung bringt".[99]

Leider konnte sich Stutschewsky einige Jahre später selbst davon überzeugen, wie weit dieser Traum von dem realen Leben entfernt war. Nach seiner Emigration 1938 versuchte er mit der ihm eigenen Energie, seine Ideale und die Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule durchzusetzen. Seine Bemühungen waren aber weitgehend erfolglos.[100] Resigniert schrieb er 1959 an Rosowsky, dass er nicht einmal

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[97] Ebd., S. 11–12.
[98] Ebd., S. 34.
[99] Ebd., S. 19.
[100] vgl. Jehoash Hirshberg, Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880–1948, Oxford 1995, S. 275–277.

die Möglichkeit hatte, das fünfzigjährige Jubiläum der Petersburger Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksmusik in Israel auf irgend eine Weise zu würdigen. „Ich bin ausgekämpft", fügte er hinzu.[101]

6. *Wien als internationales Zentrum jüdischer Musik*

Während sich die Tätigkeit der ersten jüdischen Musikgesellschaften in St. Petersburg und Moskau aus politischen und geografischen Gründen hauptsächlich auf Russland konzentrierte, war der Wiener Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik in der Lage, Verbindungen zu jüdischen Zentren in verschiedenen Ländern zu pflegen. Diese Verbindungen waren mannigfaltig. Erstens versuchte der Wiener Verein, die bereits bestehenden Aktivitäten auf dem Gebiet der neuen jüdischen Musik zu unterstützen. Man half mit Programmvorschlägen, Noten und Empfehlungen. Stutschewsky erstellte u. a. eine Repertoire-Liste, die ins Ausland verschickt wurde.[102] Der damals einzige Verlag für neue jüdische Musik, Jibneh in Wien, bekam ständig Anfragen nach Noten. Durch Vermittlung des Vereins erhielten die jüdischen Kultureinrichtungen bei der Universal Edition einen Preisnachlass. In einem Brief Stutschewskys ist beispielsweise zu lesen: „Sogleich nach Erhalt Ihres Briefes vom 25.9.[1931] ging ich in die Universal-Edition, um dort persönlich für Ihren Verein zu intervenieren und eine größere Ermäßigung für die Noten zu erreichen. Mir wurde weitgehendstes Entgegenkommen zugesagt."[103] Bald danach erreichte Stutschewsky eine grundsätzliche Regelung der Angelegenheit. Auf Bitten eines jüdischen Chors aus Lettland schickte Stutschewsky eine Liste mit Chorwerken neuer jüdischer Musik. Er versprach, auch weiterhin über die Neuigkeiten in dieser Gattung zu informieren, und fügte hinzu: „Die Noten erhalten Sie meistens durch die Universal-Edition, Wien. Unter Berufung auf mich unter günstigen Bedingungen."[104]

Stutschewsky führte in den 1930er Jahren Briefwechsel mit Dutzenden jüdischen Kultureinrichtungen. Belegt sind seine Kontakte in

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[101] Brief von Stutschewsky an Rosowsky, Tel Aviv 11.9.1959, JTSA 1/70.

[102] Diese Liste ist u. a. in der Prager Zeitung *Selbstwehr* (*Die Zionisten*) vom 12.3.1937 abgedruckt.

[103] Brief von Stutschewsky an die Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik in Krakau, Wien 1.10.1931, FBMC 3/2/1 (158).

[104] Brief von Stutschewsky an den Jüdischen Musik-Dramatischen Kunstverein in Libau, Wien 21.1.1932, FBMC 3/2/3 (206/4).

der Tschechoslowakei, in Polen, Ungarn, Holland, Portugal, Jugoslawien, in der Schweiz, in Italien, Lettland und Deutschland.[105] Es ging fast immer um die Organisation von Konzerten mit der Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule. Die meisten solcher Konzerte fanden in den Jahren 1931 bis 1934 statt. Manche Dokumentensammlungen enthalten interessante Äußerungen und sogar längere Diskussionen über das Wesen jüdischer Musik und ihre Rezeption. Stutschewsky versuchte nicht nur die Werke der Neuen Jüdischen Schule, sondern auch ihr Gedankengut zu verbreiten. Ein Beispiel dafür ist sein Briefwechsel mit Dr. Else Thalheimer vom Jüdischen Kulturbund Rhein-Ruhr.[106]

Eine mehrjährige Brieffreundschaft verband Stutschewsky mit der Berliner Pianistin Alice Jacob-Loewenson,[107] die damals zur wichtigsten Propagandistin der Neuen Jüdischen Schule in Deutschland wurde. Ab August 1928 war sie Herausgeberin der Beilage „Von jüdischer Musik" der Zeitung *Jüdische Rundschau*, dem Zentralorgan der zionistischen Bewegung in Deutschland. In dieser Beilage, die in loser Reihenfolge meist vierteljährlich erschien, wurden fast ausschließlich analytische Artikel und aktuelle Informationen über die neue jüdische Musik veröffentlicht. Als Pianistin gab Alice Jacob-Loewenson in vielen europäischen Ländern zahlreiche Konzerte mit Werken der Neuen Jüdischen Schule, über die sie auch Vorträge hielt. Über eine ihrer Tourneen mit vierzehn Gesprächskonzerten berichtete sie Stutschewsky: „Die Reise war über alles Erwarten erfolgreich und hat mir wieder bestätigt, […] dass meine Vorträge ein wichtiger Vorspann für alle Konzerte jüdischer Musik sind. [Sie wurden] mit einem kaum glaublichen Enthusiasmus aufgenommen und überall von einem großen Publikum besucht."[108] Auch Alice Jacob-Loewensons pianistische und publizistische Laufbahn wurde jäh beendet, nachdem sie 1934 aus Nazi-Deutschland nach Palästina emigrierte.

Seit Ende der 1920er Jahre entstanden in verschiedenen Ländern weitere jüdische Musikgesellschaften, die in enger Beziehung zum Wiener Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik standen und von ihm beeinflusst wurden. Spätestens im Januar 1928 wurde in Warschau unter dem Vorsitz von Dr. Jakob Rosenblatt eine Gesellschaft für

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[105] Vgl. den Stutschewskys Briefwechsel in seinem Archiv in FBMC, Abteilung 3.
[106] FBMC 3/2/2 (196/1–9).
[107] FBMC 3/2/2 (189/1–31).
[108] Brief von Jacob-Loewenson an Stutschewsky, Berlin 13.12.1930, FBMC 3/2/2 (189/13).

jüdische Musik gegründet. Am 27. Februar trat sie mit ihrem ersten Konzert an die Öffentlichkeit; es wurden Werke von Gnesin, Engel, Zeitlin, Achron, Schalit und Rosowsky aufgeführt.[109] Zwei Aktivisten der Gesellschaft schrieben damals an Gnesin: „Die hiesige musikalische Jugend ist sehr stark assimiliert, sie würde nur dann auf unserem Gebiet […] mitarbeiten, wenn wir zwar jüdische, aber anspruchsvolle Werke präsentieren."[110]

Zwei Jahre später organisierte sich in Krakau ebenfalls eine jüdische Musikgesellschaft. Ihr wichtigster Initiator und Vorsitzender war der bekannte Musikschriftsteller und Rechtsanwalt Dr. Henrick Apte. Die Tätigkeit dieser Gesellschaft begann Anfang März 1930 gleich mit einem großen Orchesterkonzert. „Durch diese überaus glückliche und gelungene Veranstaltung kann Krakau für sich den Ruhm beanspruchen, das erste Symphoniekonzert jüdischer Musik in großem Rahmen veranstaltet zu haben."[111] Das Orchester spielte unter der Leitung des jungen Wiener Dirigenten Norbert Gingold Werke Achrons (den 2. Satz des 1. Violinkonzerts), Rosowskys (die symphonische Dichtung *Chassidim*), Wolfsohns (*Hebräische Suite*), Gnesins und Blochs. Als Solisten traten der Geiger Alfred Schenker und Juliusz Wolfsohn auf, dessen Teilnahme *Die Stimme* in besonders enthusiastischen Tönen lobte: „Den Höhepunkt der Veranstaltung bildete die meisterhafte Interpretation der Hebräischen Suite von Wolfsohn durch den Komponisten selbst, dem das den großen Saal des Alten Theaters übervoll füllende Publikum schon beim Erscheinen hinreißenden Beifall spendete. Das temperamentvolle und tief empfundene Spiel des Meisters faszinierte das Publikum, sowohl das jüdische als auch das nichtjüdische. Die dankbaren Zuhörer erzwangen sich durch den nichtendenwollenden Beifall einige Zugaben."[112] Noch ein Jahr später erinnerte sich *Die Stimme* an dieses Konzert, als an „eine Sensation für die gesamte musikalische Welt Krakaus".[113] Die Krakauer Gesellschaft existierte noch bis mindestens 1934, wie ihr Briefwechsel mit Stutschewsky belegt.[114]

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[109] Die Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik in Warschau, in: Die Stimme, 8.3.1928, S. 10.

[110] Brief der Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik in Warschau an Gnesin, 23.1.1928, RGALI 2954, 1, 875.

[111] Dr. T. Lot, Prof. Wolfsohn in Krakau, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 116, 6.3.1930, S. 10.

[112] Ebd.

[113] Die Stimme Nr. 159, 15.1.1931, S. 8.

[114] FBMC 3/2/3 (209/1–16).

Sie organisierte „Konzerte synagogaler und weltlicher Musik und viele interne Instrumental-Darbietungen und Vorträge.“[115] Wolfsohns Informationen zufolge gab es damals in Polen außerdem einen Chor „Schir“ in Lodz, sowie eine jüdische Chorvereinigung in Bielitz, die „ganz auf neue jüdische Musik eingestellt“ waren.[116]

Der aus Jugoslawien stammende Komponist, Sänger, Dirigent und Musikschriftsteller Aron Marko Rothmüller, der während seines Studiums in Wien ein Jahr lang den Jüdischen Gesangverein geleitet hatte, gründete danach 1932 in Zagreb den Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik „Omanut“ (später als Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Kunst). Rothmüller leitete ihn zusammen mit dem Komponisten und Musikkritiker Ziga Hirschler (1894–1941). Neben Konzerten jüdischer Musik riefen sie einen gleichnamigen Verlag ins Leben: „Die vor kurzer Zeit von einigen mutigen Musikern Zagrebs gegründete Gesellschaft zur Förderung jüdischer Musik entwickelt eine rührige und fruchtbare Tätigkeit. Sie veranstaltet Konzerte und Vorträge und – was noch erfreulicher und bewundernswerter ist – sie gründet einen Verlag und hat bereits einige wertvolle Werke jüdischer Musik herausgebracht.“[117] Die Tätigkeit des Vereins Omanut und seines Verlags wurde auch fortgesetzt, nachdem Rothmüller 1935 in die Schweiz übergesiedelt war. 1937 berichtete *Die Stimme* beispielsweise über die *Zwei palästinensischen Gesänge* von Paul Dessau, die im Verlag Omanut erschienen waren: „[…] fein differenziertes Klangbild von großer Eindringlichkeit. […] Diese Lieder dürfen bald in keinem Programm einer jüdischen Veranstaltung fehlen.“[118] Der Zagreber Omanut wurde vermutlich erst nach der Besetzung Jugoslawiens durch die deutsche Wehrmacht aufgelöst. Ziga Hirschler kam in das KZ Jasenovac und wurde dort ermordet. Aron M. Rothmüller gründete 1941 in Zürich einen neuen Verein unter dem selben Namen, der bis heute existiert. Juliusz Wolfsohn betonte speziell das große Interesse, das der neuen jüdischen Musik in Jugoslawien entgegengebracht wurde: „Ich hatte Gelegenheit, in der vorigen Saison eine Konzert- und Vortragsreise dort zu absolvieren, und konnte mich somit selbst von der Wissbegierde des Publikums auf

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[115] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Wie sieht es mit der neuen jüdischen Musik aus?, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 302, 28.9.1933, S. 9.

[116] Ebd.

[117] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Zwei Neuerscheinungen jüdischer Musik, in: Die Stimme Nr. 388, 28.9.1934, S. 8.

[118] Joachim Stutschewsky, Jüdische Musik, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 695, 17.11.1937, S. 6.

diesem Gebiet und dem Enthusiasmus für die neue jüdische Musik überzeugen."[119]

In Holland organisierte der Geiger Alexander Schmuller, ein Freund Gnesins, in den 1920er Jahren mehrere Konzerte mit Werken der Neuen Jüdischen Schule.[120] Über eins dieser Konzerte in Den Haag am 20. Oktober 1925 berichtete Schmuller in einem Brief an Rosowsky. An diesem Abend sollte er zunächst einen Vortrag halten und anschließend Werke von Gnesin, Rosowsky, Achron, Alexander Krejn, Engel, Milner, Saminsky, Bloch, Ravel und Milhaud aufführen.[121] Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass gerade diese Konzerte bald einige junge Komponisten dazu animierten, sich der neuen jüdischen Musik zuzuwenden. Dazu gehörte beispielsweise Max Vredenburg, der auch als Musikschriftsteller und Musikorganisator in Erscheinung getreten ist.[122] Über seine Tätigkeit berichtete *Die Stimme* mehrmals.[123]

Auch nach Paris bestanden fruchtbare Kontakte. Der dortige Verlag Salabert gab eine eigene Reihe mit Werken neuer jüdischer Musik unter dem Namen Mizmor heraus. Der Verlag Maurice Sénart bildete mit dem Wiener Jibneh eine Interessengemeinschaft und vertrieb in Frankreich erfolgreich dessen Ausgaben.[124] Wolfsohn war mit Recht stolz darauf, dass der Wiener Verein zur Förderung jüdischer Musik auf diesem Gebiet „gewissermaßen zu einer Zentrale geworden" ist.[125]

Darüber hinaus organisierten die führenden Musiker des Vereins zahlreiche eigene Konzerte im Ausland, die ebenfalls beträchtlich zur europaweiten Verbreitung der Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule in jener Zeit beitrugen. In einer Korrespondenz mit dem Titel „Die ersten Konzerte jüdischer Musik in der Schweiz" berichtete *Die Stimme* über die von Stutschewsky initiierten Veranstaltungen am 6. Januar 1929 in Basel und drei Tage später in Zürich: „Die Säle

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[119] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Wie sieht es mit der neuen jüdischen Musik aus?, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 302, 28.9.1933, S. 9.

[120] Max Tak, Alexander Schmuller, in: De Vrijdagavond, Nr. 45, 30.1.1925, S. 301–303; sowie XYZ, Schmuller jubileert, in: De Vrijdagavond, Nr. 53, 30.3.1928, S. 840–841.

[121] Brief von Schmuller an Rosowsky, Amsterdam 23.9.1925, JTSA Archiv Rosowsky Addendum.

[122] Vgl. Brief von Vredenburg an Stutschewsky, Den Haag 8.4.1932, FBMC 3/2/4 (246).

[123] Nr. 227, 12.5.1932, S. 7; Nr. 302, 28.9.1933, S. 9.

[124] Juliusz Wolfsohn, Wie sieht es mit der neuen jüdischen Musik aus?, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 302, 28.9.1933, S. 9.

[125] Ebd.

wurden bis auf den letzten Platz ausverkauft. […] Zum ersten Mal wurde neue jüdische Kunstmusik geboten." Die Konzerte hinterließen den Wunsch, „daß Stutschewsky bald wiederkehre, um uns neue Proben der jüdischen Musik zu vermitteln."[126] Ein weiteres Konzert mit Musik der Neuen Jüdischen Schule fand in Zürich am 3. Februar 1934 statt. Stutschewsky spielte eigene Kompositionen und Werke von Engel, Brandmann und Bloch; die Sängerin Hanna Schwarz führte Lieder von Engel, Schkljar, Weinberg, A. Krejn und Milner auf.

Stutschewsky und Hanna Schwarz, begleitet von Rita Kurzmann bzw. Jakob Gimpel, bildeten damals ein festes Team, das in vielen ost- und mitteleuropäischen Ländern konzertierte. Wenn es möglich war, einen Klarinettisten und weitere Streicher am Ort einzubeziehen, wurden größere Ensembles von Engel, Krejn, Lewin, Achron u. a. gespielt, ansonsten beschränkte man sich auf Werke für Cello und Klavier, Klavier solo und Lieder. Der erste Teil des Programms präsentierte normalerweise folkloristisch geprägte Stücke, im zweiten Teil wurden anspruchsvollere Kompositionen aufgeführt.

Derartige Programmvorschläge unterbreitete Stutschewsky z. B. Dr. Josef Patai von der ungarisch-jüdischen Kulturzeitschrift *Múlt és Jövő* (*Vergangenheit und Zukunft*), die im Oktober 1931 in der Budapester Musikakademie ein Konzert neuer jüdischer Musik veranstalten wollte. „Ich bin gerne bereit," schrieb Stutschewsky, „im Interesse der Sache in meinen Honoraransprüchen mich äußerst zu bescheiden, und könnte auch dafür sorgen, dass die Sängerin und der Pianist in diesem Punkte weitgehendst entgegenkommen."[127]

Eine große Resonanz hatte ein Konzert am 8. November 1930 in Prag, an dem neben Stutschewsky, Hanna Schwarz und Jakob Gimpel noch die Tänzerin Gertrud Kraus teilnahm: „In Folge der zahlreichen Zugaben endete die Veranstaltung erst kurz vor Mitternacht. […] Der in Prag zum ersten Mal veranstaltete ‚Abend jüdischer Kunst' mit ausschließlich Wiener jüdischen Künstlern wurde von der Prager jüdischen wie auch nichtjüdischen Presse sehr gewürdigt."[128] Der Pianist Jakob Gimpel hatte in seinem Repertoire solch bedeutende Werke wie die Sonate von Alexander Krejn, die 2. Sonate und *Volkstänze* von Alexander Weprik, *Vier jüdische Tanzstücke* von Stutschewsky u. a. Er

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[126] Die Stimme, 24.1.1929, S. 11.

[127] Brief von Stutschewsky an Dr. Patai, Wien 11.2.1931, FBMC 3/2/4 (217/8). Über das Konzert vgl. Die Stimme Nr. 215, 30.10.1931, S. 7.

[128] Wiener jüdische Künstler in Prag, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 152, 20.11.1930, S. 10.

nahm sie auch in Programme seiner Solo-Gastspiele im Ausland auf, wie z. B. 1930 in Italien und in der Tschechoslowakei.[129]

Juliusz Wolfsohn, dessen jüdisches Repertoire vor allem aus eigenen Werken bestand, absolvierte besonders viele internationale Konzertreisen. Laut einem Zeitungsbericht gastierte er im Frühjahr 1934 in Griechenland, Jugoslawien, Polen und in der Tschechoslowakei, „wo er grandiose Erfolge als Pianist und Komponist erzielte und auch zahlreiche Vorträge über verschiedene jüdisch-musikalische Themen hielt."[130]

Ende Dezember 1931 wurde in Brünn ein großes symphonisches Konzert mit neuer jüdischer Musik organisiert. Anlass war das dreißigjährige Bestehen des Jüdischen Nationalfonds (Keren Kajemet Leisrael). Eingeladen wurden u. a. Wolfsohn, der als Solist mit seiner *Hebräischen Suite* für Klavier und Orchester auftrat, und Brandmann: „Zum Schluß wurde die bereits zu Recht berühmt gewordene sinfonische Dichtung *Hechaluz* von Israel Brandmann gespielt. Dem jugendlichen Komponisten, der dieses Standardwerk jüdischer Musik persönlich leitete, wurden ebenso wie Prof. Wolfsohn rauschende Ovationen bereitet."[131]

7. *Das Ende*

Nach dem Anschluss Österreichs ans Deutsche Reich am 13. März 1938 galten dort sofort dieselben Rassegesetze. Die Tätigkeit jüdischer Organisationen wurde verboten. Das bedeutete auch das gewaltsame Ende des jüdischen Musiklebens. Nachträglich bemühten sich die Nazis allerdings, dem Geschehen einen Anschein von Legalität zu verleihen. Am 17. Mai 1938 wurde ein „Gesetz über die Überleitung und Eingliederung der Vereine, Organisationen und Verbände" verabschiedet, das die formale Grundlage für die Auflösung und Enteignung jüdischer Institutionen lieferte. Während die Moskauer Gesellschaft für jüdische Musik buchstäblich sang- und klanglos von der Bildoberfläche verschwand, so dass ihr Ende nicht einmal genau datiert werden kann, ist die Auflösung ihres Wiener Pendants, dem Verein zur

[129] Die Stimme, 18.9.1930, S. 7.
[130] Die neue Welt, Nr. 356, 10.4.1934, S. 7.
[131] Prof. Wolfsohns und Israel Brandmanns Erfolg in Brünn, in: Die Stimme, Nr. 210, 14.1.1932, S. 9.

Förderung jüdischer Musik, dagegen gut belegt. Die mehr als zwei Dutzend Schriftstücke, die den entsprechenden Behördenvorgang dokumentieren, bilden ein wahres Glanzstück deutscher Bürokratie.[132]

Die Liquidierung jüdischer Organisationen in Österreich oblag dem „Stillhaltekommissar für Vereine, Organisationen und Verbände". Dieses Amt wurde nach dem Gesetz vom 17. Mai 1938 eingerichtet und dem „Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung mit dem Deutschen Reich" unterstellt. Der Name des Vereins zur Förderung jüdischer Musik taucht in den Unterlagen des Stillhaltekommissariats erst Anfang Februar 1939 auf. Obwohl das Schicksal des Vereins schon in diesem Dokument mit dem handschriftlichen Vermerk „einziehen und auflösen" besiegelt worden war, nahm die ganze Prozedur dann zwei Monate in Anspruch.

Das Interesse des Stillhaltekommissars galt vorrangig dem Vermögen des Vereins, dessen Verbleib schon die erste Nachfrage klären sollte. Es wurde festgestellt, dass der Verein seine Räume in der Universitätsstraße 4 mit fünf anderen jüdischen Vereinen geteilt hatte. Diese Räume wurden nach dem Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen zunächst als Kaserne benutzt: „Nach Schließung des Vereins hatte ein Unterabschnitt des Nachrichten-Dienstes dort seinen Sitz, der nach seiner Übersiedlung [...] sämtliches Mobiliar mitgenommen hat."[133] Man gab sich allerdings nicht gleich damit zufrieden und fragte zusätzlich bei der Familie Wolfsohn nach, die bestätigte, dass der Verein kein Vermögen mehr besaß.[134]

Am 17. Februar 1939 folgte das nächste Schreiben, dieses Mal an den „Polizeipräsidenten für Wien", mit der Bitte um die „ehebaldigste Bekanntgabe der Namen und Anschriften der Funktionäre obgenannten Vereins".[135]

Die letzte diesbezügliche Eintragung im Vereinskataster stammt aus dem Jahr 1932. Dort waren Prof. Dr. Max Graf als Präsident, Juliusz Wolfsohn als Vizepräsident, Israel Brandmann und Dr. Infeld als Administratoren und Maria Bernay als Sekretärin genannt. Alle diese Personen wurden dann für den 27. Februar 1939 in die Dienststelle

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[132] Ich bin Yukiko Sakabe für die Bereitstellung von Kopien dieser Dokumente zu Dank verpflichtet.

[133] Bericht vom 11.2.1939, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Stillhaltekommissar, IV Ac Dr/F. Ba. 31 P 8.

[134] Ebd., handschriftlicher Vermerk.

[135] Ebd., 17.2.1939.

des Stillhaltekommissars vorgeladen. Diese Vorladungen wären eigentlich nicht nötig gewesen, denn ihr einziges Ziel war normalerweise die endgültige Klärung der Vermögensverhältnisse. In diesem Fall stand aber von vornherein fest, dass es kein Vermögen gab. Ordnungshalber hat man trotzdem dem „Schlussbericht" vom 15. März ein riesiges, fünf Seiten langes Formular beigefügt, in dem nach allen denkbaren Vermögensarten minutiös gefragt wurde.

Schon vorher, am 3. März 1939, stellte der Stillhaltekommissar beim Polizeipräsidenten mit Berufung auf das Gesetz vom 17. Mai 1938 den Antrag auf Auflösung des Vereins. Auch diesem Dokument wurde ein leeres Formular über „bevorstehende Geldeingänge" beigefügt. Der Polizeipräsident stellte am 7. April 1939 seinerseits einen Antrag an den Wiener Magistrat auf Auflösung des Vereins und die Löschung aus dem Vereinskataster. Als Begründung führte er aus, dass „laut § 3 des Gesetzes über die Überleitung und Eingliederung von Vereinen, Organisationen und Verbänden, Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich Nr. 136/38 [vom 17. Mai 1938], der Auflösungsbescheid unanfechtbar und damit rechtskräftig ist."[136]

Den Rest der Arbeit erledigte dann der Wiener Magistrat. Mit der gleichen Begründung wurde der Verein für „behördlich aufgelöst" erklärt, sein Name wurde aus dem Vereinskataster gelöscht. Die entsprechenden Bescheide vom 21. April 1939 wurden an die Leitung des Vereins zu Händen Prof. Max Graf, an den Polizeipräsidenten von Wien und an den Stillhaltekommissar verschickt. „Es ist unstatthaft", hieß es unter anderem, „den organisatorischen Zusammenhang zwischen den Mitgliedern dieses hiemit aufgelösten Vereines weiterhin aufrecht zu erhalten."[137]

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[136] Wiener Staats- und Landesarchiv, Magistrat Wien, Abteilung 2, Z. 4558, Antrag auf behördliche Auflösung vom 7.4.1939.

[137] Ebd., 4558/39.

THE GRAPHIC WORK OF ISSACHAR BER RYBACK (1897–1935): AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF CHILDREN'S BOOK ART

Serge-Aljosja Stommels and Albert Lemmens

At the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia a modernist Jewish national style in art was achieved by artists of the Kultur Lige, when heritage and tradition were combined with modernist art trends. Children were the main focus of this development; the new national identity was taught in educational programmes. Old and new tales were collected and written down by Jewish authors. Several were illustrated by Jewish artists such as Marc Chagall (1887–1985), El Lissitzky (1890–1941) and Issachar Ber Ryback (1897–1935). While the first two are more famous, the latter artist should not be overlooked in this respect.

This paper will show Ryback's role in the development of Jewish-Russian art in general and illustrations for children's books in particular as well as the importance of these illustrations within the œuvre of Ryback. In the first part the life and works of the artist will be described. The second part focuses on the nine children's books for which he created illustrations.

Life and Work

Issachar Ber Ryback was born on February 2, 1897.[1] His birthplace was Yelisavetgrad (nowadays Kirovohrad),[2] in the government

[1] For general biographical information the following sources were used: Raymond Cogniat, *J. Ryback* (Paris: Edition de l'Amitié Francaise, 1934); A. Tscherikower (ed.), *Yissakhar Ber Ribak: zayn lebn un shafn* (Paris: Komitet tsu fareybikn dem ondenk fun Yissakhar-Ber Ribak, 1937); *I. Ryback 1897–1935.* [Announcement leaflet for:] *I. Ryback (His life and work)* (London: Heinemann, s.a. [c.1937]); Dmitri Ia. Severiukhin, Oleg L. Leikind, *Khudozhniki russkoi emigratsii (1917–1941). Biograficheskii slovar'* (St Petersburg: Chernysheva, 1994), pp. 402–404; Oleg L. Leikind, Kiril V. Makhrov, Dmitri Ia. Severiukhin, *Khudozhniki russkogo zarubezh'ia. Biograficheskii slovar'* (St Petersburg: Notabene, 1999), pp. 505–506; 'Biography', on: http://www.comite-ryback.org/Biography.php, the official website of the Issachar Ber Ryback Committee & Foundation established in Israel in 2007. N.B. The single source for the date of birth is the biographical sketch by the Issachar Ber Ryback Committee & Foundation. Other sources only state the year of birth.

[2] Founded as a fortress in 1754, it was named Yelisavetgrad for Empress Elizabeth

of Kherson. It was located in the South part of the Pale, the confined area of the Russian empire where Jews were allowed to live.[3] His father, from an important Chassid family, was a follower of the Haskalah movement[4] and an admirer of Russian culture. At the age of ten Ryback was sent to the local 'heder', the Jewish school for children. Rather than being occupied with regular Jewish teachings he mainly gave his attention, in secret, to the evening drawing classes for local factory workers taught by Kosachinsky.[5] In 1911, at the age of fourteen, he went to study at the Faculty of Painting of the Kiev School of Arts, from which he graduated in 1916. During this period Ryback joined the faculty's informal group of young artists seeking a modern Jewish culture. Among its members were Boris Aronson (1900–1980), Alexander Tyshler (1898–1980), Solomon Nikritin (1898–1965), Mark Epstein (1897–1949), and Isaac Rabinovich (1894–1961), all of whom would, like Ryback, become well known as painters, graphic artists, scenic designers or sculptors in the first half of the twentieth century. As well as being involved with the search for a Jewish national identity he was also very interested in new developments in art. In 1913–1914 he attended classes in the private studio of the avant-garde artist Alexandra Exter (1882–1949). There he encountered the art of Picasso and Braque. The following year Ryback for the first time participated in an exhibition in which he showed paintings with avant-garde influences. At the Kiev Spring exhibition of 1915 the paintings he showed in fact bore witness to a combination of both interests: although modernist in style their content was inspired by life in the shtetl.

Between 1881 and 1919 it was the scene of several pogroms. It was renamed Zinov'evsk in 1924, Kirovo in 1936, and Kirovograd (Kirovohrad) in 1939. (from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., 2008, on: http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Kirovohr.html).

[3] The Jewish Pale of Settlement was the confined part of the Russian empire where Jews were allowed to live after having been expelled from the empire by laws of 1795 and 1835. Its region stretched from the Western border with Europe to the cities of Pskov, Smolensk, Kursk, and Kharkov and included Russian Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. See the map in Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (New York: YIVO Institute, 1988), p. 3. For a short discussion of its history, ibid., pp. XI–XV.

[4] Followers of the Haskalah movement (called Maskilim) abandoned the exclusiveness of Jewish culture and sought to acquire the knowledge, manners, and aspirations of the nations among whom they dwelt. See: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=350&letter=H.

[5] Adolph Behne, in: *Austellung J. Ryback*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: [Twardy], 1923), unpaginated; Bruno W. Reimann, 'Issachar Ryback', *Menorah. Illustrierte Monatsschrift für die Jüdische Familie*, vol. II, no. 6 (June 1924), 15.

The search for a more modernist national, Jewish, style continued when in 1916 he participated, with El Lissitzky amongst others, in an expedition, financed by the Jewish Historical and Ethnographical Society, through the surrounding Ukrainian villages to study Jewish folk art.[6] Most notable was their visit to the eighteenth-century synagogue of Mohilev on the banks of the Dnepr, where they copied the murals and the architecture, as later described by Lissitzky.[7] Furthermore, Ryback copied the tombstones in Orsha, in the provinces of Podolia and Volynia.[8] During the trip he also collected *lubki*. Following this trip he created some of his key works, painting the synagogues of Dobrovna and Chiklov in a style strongly influenced by cubism.[9] As is true for many of his contemporaries, Ryback's use of cubism is limited to the cubist procedures of geometricization, distortion and abstraction of the object rather than its dismantling and reassembling. Even though he does not show the synagogues simultaneously from different points of view, he achieves a great dramatic effect by monumentalizing them, lifting them to mythical proportions, so creating a striking expression of Jewish life in upheaval. Even though his style is not as innovative as, for example, that of Marc Chagall, the great forerunner of the modern Jewish style, Ryback made an important innovation here: he painted synagogues, introducing them for the first time to modern Jewish iconography.[10] Besides creating paintings in this more expressionist than cubist style, Ryback also made a series of drawings based on contemporary life in the shtetl. In those drawings buildings and objects have the same monumentality as seen in the paintings. The drawings showing the people of the shtetl have a very straightforward, narrative

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[6] Seth L. Wolitz, 'The Jewish National Art Renaissance in Russia', in Ruth Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution. The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art 1912–1928*, exhibition catalogue (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1988), p. 29.

[7] E.L. Lissitzky, 'Vegn der Molever shul. Zikhroynes', *Milgroim*, no. 3 (1923), 9–13; published simultaneous in a Hebrew translation: *Rimon* no. 3 (1923), 9–13; for an English translation see: El Lissitzky, 'Memoirs of the Mohilev Synagogue', in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, pp. 233–234.

[8] Boris Aronson, *Sovremennaia evreiskaia grafika* (Berlin: Petropolis, 1924), p. 68.

[9] The painting 'Old Synagogue' (97 × 146 cm), identified as the synagogue of Dobrovna, a town near Mohilev, was painted in May 1917. Some months later, in August 1917, he painted 'Synagogue of Chiklov' (54 × 73 cm). Both paintings are now in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. See: Avram Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj. Jewish Experience in 20th Century Art* (London: Lund Humphries and the Barbican Art Gallery, 1990), pp.18–19 and cat. 291–292.

[10] Ziva Amishai-Maisels, 'The Jewish Awakening: A search for National Identity', in Susan Tumarkin Goodman (ed.), *Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change 1890–1990* (Munich-New York: Prestel, 1996), pp. 54–70 (60).

manner, free from sentimentality. In each case the movement created by Ryback's expressive translation of the cubist style and composition is present. A number of these drawings he would later rework as lithographs for his album *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish* [Shtetl. My destroyed home, a recollection].[11] This gloomy connotation was given to the drawings when, during the pogroms of 1917–18 under General Denikin and the Ukrainian nationalist Petliura, his home town was destroyed and his father was killed.

During this period the February Revolution of 1917 resulted not only in the abdication of the Tsar, but also in the lifting—by the provisional government in April 1917—of all restrictions imposed on national and religious groups, including the ban against publishing in Hebrew and Yiddish.[12] Finally it was possible to publish the Jewish folk tales collected during the expeditions of An-sky and his followers,[13] as well as the contemporary writings of Jewish authors. These publications were illustrated with drawings by the likes of Chagall and Lissitzky. Societies for the promotion of modern Jewish art were established. The most important was the Kultur Lige in Kiev, founded in January 1918.[14] Together with Joseph Tchaikov (1888–1986) and Lissitzky, Ryback was one of the founders of its art section, organized in June 1918. Their objectives were formulated by Ryback as follows: 'to create a modern Jewish Plastic art which seeks its own organic national form, color and rhythm'.[15] The art section organized exhibitions, created art classes and published books. The importance of children's books was stressed from an aesthetic and pedagogical point of view and children's drawing, understood as a manifestation of folklore, formed the basis.[16] This, and the fact that Ryback taught drawing to groups of

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[11] Issachar Ryback, *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Shveln, [1923]). 340 × 500 mm. Cover and 30 lithographs. Edition: unknown. Reprinted as a facsimile 70 years later: Y. Ber Ryback, *Mestechko. 'Shtetl-Township'* (Moscow: Kliuch-Vneshsigma, 1994).

[12] Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*, pp. 89–90; Amishai-Maisels, 'The Jewish Awakening', p. 60.

[13] Wolitz, 'The Jewish National Art Renaissance', pp. 25–26.

[14] For a discussion of the history of the Kultur Lige see the chapter 'What is the Kultur-Lige?' in the bilingual (English-Russian) publication: Hillel (Gregory) Kazovsky, *The Artists of the Kultur-Lige / Khudozhniki Kul'tur-Ligi* (Jerusalem: Gesharim and Moscow: Mosty kul'tury, 2003), pp. 16–40.

[15] cited by Wolitz, 'The Jewish National Art Renaissance', p. 35.

[16] Kazovsky, *Artists of the Kultur-Lige*, pp. 76–78.

small children, gave great incentives for his later illustration activities for these age-groups.[17]

With Aronson he wrote the key article, 'Paths of Jewish Painting', first published in Yiddish in 1919.[18] Proclaiming 'Jewish art is here: it is awakening',[19] they continued the line of reasoning set out a year earlier by the art critic Abram Efros (1888–1954), who had written that the new Jewish style should be based on the creative reshaping of tradition, not on merely copying it. The principles of Jewish folk art included flatness, ornamental design, symmetry and abstraction, subdued colours, and the autonomy of the Hebrew letters.[20] In their discussion they recognize the importance of the work of Marc Chagall. Some of the work of Nathan Altman (1889–1970) they criticize, however, as he did not recreate but merely copied folk art. That year Ryback also moved from Kiev to Moscow. There, during two difficult years, suffering from shortages of artist's materials as well as food because of the civil war, he mainly occupied himself as a scene designer. He was chairman of the first Jewish art exhibition, organized in Kiev in February 1920, and had some loose connections with Suprematist and Constructivist artists.[21] In the few paintings he created around this time it can be seen that Ryback moves more and more towards abstraction, incorporating Yiddish texts and Hebrew letters. This continued and ended during his stay in Berlin, where he went to survive like many other Russians.[22]

One of the main events for Ryback during his stay in Berlin was the major one-man show held at the Twardy gallery in the Winter of 1923–24. In the bookshop annex gallery of Twardy, where the

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[17] Behne, see note 5.

[18] I. Ryback, B. Aronson, 'Di vegn fun der yidisher molerey (Rayoynes fun kinstler)', *Ufgang. Erster zamlbukh*, Kiev: Kultur Lige, 1919, pp. 99–124; partially reprinted (parts 1 and 2) as 'Di vegn fun der yidisher molerey', in Tscherikower (ed.), *Yissakhar Ber Rybak*, pp. 85–94; excerpts translated into English as I. Ryback and B. Aronson, 'Paths of Jewish Painting', in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, p. 229.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Amishai-Maisels, 'The Jewish Awakening', p. 61.

[21] Behne, see note 5.

[22] Adolph Behne writes: 'In Berlin (seit Oktober 1921) entstanden einige zeichnerische Arbeiten […] Als neue Arbeit des Malers ist nur das "Stilleben mit der silbernen Pokal" anzusehen.' (Behne, *Austellung J. Ryback*); the painting mentioned is depicted in the catalogue. Of the paintings created in Berlin Bruno W. Reimann says: '[…] es entstehen ferner einige abstrakten Kompositionen von logischer Durchgeistung.' (Reimann, 'Issachar Ryback', p. 15).

Russian artist Elena Liessner (1897–1987) was an employee,[23] several exhibitions of Russian artists were shown.[24] There Ryback exhibited twenty-seven paintings, eleven watercolours, thirty-three drawings, as well as an unidentified number of drawings for children.[25] The main body of work at the exhibition was from the period 1915–1918 and included paintings and drawings from the shtetl series as well as a series of portraits of Ukrainian Jews, which were subsequently published as a series of lithographs.[26] The publication of graphic works can be said to have been the main activity during his stay in Berlin. Within a two-year period nine books and portfolios with his drawings and lithographs were published.[27] His fame was such that not long after his arrival Ryback became a member of the Novembergruppe and started to participate in their group exhibitions.

Upon being invited by the Jewish studio of the Byelorussian Theatre to design some of their plays, Ryback returned to Moscow in December 1924.[28] Besides being active as a scene designer for the theatre he also undertook a trip along the Jewish kolkhozes in the Ukraine and the Crimea in the Summer of 1925. As when he went on the expedition in 1916, he returned with numerous sketches, on this occasion sketches of contemporary, Soviet, life. The drawings and paintings inspired by this trip mark a change in style which he later explained as follows:

> At that time I had to paint in that way. I saw so much horror after the revolution of 1917—the frightful pogroms in the Ukraine, my father murdered, my birthplace destroyed—that I had to find a medium suitable to portray the dreadful experiences through which I had lived, and the emotion under which I worked.

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[23] Elena Liessner, 'Aus meinem Leben', in Gerhard Wolf (ed.), *Elena Liessner-Blomberg oder die Geschichte vom Blauen Vogel* (Berlin: Buchverlag der Morgen, 1978), pp. 60–62.

[24] In 1922 there were exhibitions of Russian children's drawings and works by Kseniia Boguslavskaia and Ivan Puni. In 1923 exhibitions with works of Vasili Kandinsky, Alexander Archipenko, and Max Band were shown. See: http://www.kunsthandel-der-moderne.eu/content/view/21/36/.

[25] See the detailed listing in Behne, *Austellung J. Ryback*. For the exhibition catalogue Ryback made an abstract cover design.

[26] Issachar Ryback, *Jüdische Typen aus der Ukraine* (Berlin: Essem, 1924). 610 × 450 mm. A portfolio of 12 lithographs. Edition: 150 numbered copies.

[27] These are apart from the six children's books and the collection of poetry, which will be discussed later, and the two portfolios of lithographs already mentioned before.

[28] His designs for a play by Rafalsky were favourably discussed in the popular magazine *Krasnaia Niva* [The Red Cropland]: S[amuel] M[arshak], 'K postanovke "Na pokoiannoi tsepi" v Gos. Belorussk. Evreiskom teatre', in *Krasnaia Niva*, vol. III, no. 31 (26 July 1925), 734.

His earlier, abstract, works were thus inspired by horror; the positive experiences enhanced a more naturalistic depiction. The following year he published these works, together with a text describing contemporary country life, in an impressive album.[29] The great expectations of the young Soviet country were shared by others and excerpts of the album were soon widely circulated.[30] This propagation of modern Jewish life in the Soviet Union was short lived though, and Ryback went back to depicting the vanished world of bygone days within a few years after he left the Soviet Union.

Ryback returned from the Ukraine and settled in Paris in 1926. After an initial enthusiasm for contemporary Jewish life he soon returned to the Jewish world he knew as a child, this time depicting it with more colour, in a painterly style close to that of other Jewish artists of the so called École de Paris.[31] In thicker layers of paint, using more colours, the paintings are also more joyful and friendly in appearance. The depicted themes are a celebration of the Jewish world of his childhood. This can also be seen in the *Shadows of the past* series of etchings he made in 1932, in which the Jewish figures have friendly, smiling faces,[32] and in the coloured translation of his earlier shtetl drawings and lithographs that he published as *Mon Village*.[33] The joy and celebration are also visible in the burlesque ceramics Ryback made in the early 1930s. In Paris the more pleasant style made him a celebrated artist. At the end of the 1920s he had several exhibitions in the French capital. These were soon followed by exhibitions in the

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[29] Published with a preface by André Salmon in late December 1926: Issachar Ryback, *Sur les champs juifs de l'Ukraine* (Paris: A. Simon, 1926). 390 × 286 mm. 16 pages plus 26 plates. Edition: 350 numbered copies, of which the first 50 on Hollande paper signed by the artist. Published simultaneous in a Yiddish edition: Issachar Ryback, *Oyf di yiddisher feld fun Ukraina* (Paris: A. Simon, 1926).

[30] A short text and 8 plates were published in the United States: I.B. Ryback, 'Jews, sunburnt, windbeaten', *The Menorah Journal*, vol. XII, no. 2 (April 1927); 'Scenes in the Ukrimea' by I.B. Ryback', ibid, art insert.

[31] For an overview of the great number of Jewish artists, including Ryback (pp. 296–297), see Nadine Nieszawer, Marie Boyé, Paul Fogel, *Peintres juifs à Paris 1905–1939: École de Paris* (Paris: Denoël, 2000).

[32] Issachar Ryback, *A l'ombre du passé* (Paris: Oreste Zeluk, 1932). A portfolio of 12 etchings. Edition: 100 numbered copies.

[33] Issachar Ryback, *Mon Village* (Paris, s.a. [ca.1935]). A portfolio of 16 coloured lithographs. 525 × 685 mm. Edition: 250 numbered copies. The year of publication is either 1934 or 1935. It is not mentioned in the listing at the end of the monograph written by Cogniat, *J. Ryback* (unpaginated) published sometime in 1934 (terminus post quem) and the lithographs are signed by the artist, who had died by the end of 1935 (terminus ante quem).

Low Countries at the beginning of the following decade.[34] At the same time his paintings found their way to private collections and museums. Between February and May 1935 he travelled in England, first stopping in London, where a small exhibition was mounted at the house of Leah L. Gildesheim. From there he travelled to Cambridge, where he was invited by the University Artistic Society to organize a major personal exhibition in April. In December 1935 a similar major show was organized at the Wildenstein Gallery. Ryback, however, was not able to enjoy the success. After his trip to England his health was worsening and during the preparations for the Paris exhibition he was in hospital; he died soon after the exhibition closed, on 22 December 1935.

In 1937, almost two years after his death, a committee celebrating the memory of Ryback's art published a monograph with a collection of articles in Yiddish, but his fame rapidly faded and his work more or less disappeared from sight.[35] In 1962 his widow donated her collection for the establishment of the Ryback Museum in Bat Yam, Israel, where his paintings, drawings, prints and ceramic figures were put on permanent display; only recently has the artist gained renewed attention.

Illustrations for Children's Books

As far as can be determined now, nine children's books with illustrations by Ryback were published over the period of a decade. In 1919 the first, collected by the artist himself, was published by the Kultur Lige in Kiev. In 1922, while in Berlin, Ryback executed illustrations for six children's books, three by Miriam Margolin (1896–1968), two by Leib Kvitko (1890–1952), and one by Ber Smoliar (1897–1986). The three books by Margolin were published by the Jewish section of the Petrograd commissariat for peoples' education. Like many other titles published by the Soviet State publishers in the years 1922–1923,

[34] In 1928 his works were shown at the Galerie aux Quatre Chemins and in 1929 at the Galerie L'Art Contemporain. In 1930 his one-man show took place in The Hague, in 1931 in Rotterdam, in 1932 in Brussels and Antwerp, and in 1933 again in Paris at the Galerie Billiet. In 1935 his ceramics were shown at and purchased by the Musée National Céramique de Sèvres.

[35] Tscherikower (ed.) *Yissakhar Ber Rybak*; the monograph was published in an edition of 450 numbered copies, of which 100 on Japon paper, bound in vellum. An English translation of the album was projected (see announcement leaflet, note 1 above), but was never realized.

these books were made and printed in Berlin.[36] The two books by Kvitko and the one by Smoliar were published by the Charlottenburg (Berlin)-based publisher Shveln (Yiddish for 'Thresholds'), for which Ryback also designed the logo.[37] Finally Ryback made illustrations for at least two titles in the series *Pionern Bikhl* (Little books for pioneers), written by Kvitko, during his one-year stay in the Soviet Union, which were published in 1927–28.

Unfortunately we have not been able to locate a copy of Ryback's first children's book *Vinter mayses* [Winter stories] from 1919.[38] Of the six children's books published in Berlin it is first of all interesting to note that they were all supposedly published in 1922; that is, the three books published by Shveln do not contain a year of publication.[39] Therefore we start with the three books *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh* (Little stories for little children) published by the Jewish section of the Petrograd commissariat for peoples' education. Despite the fact that it was mentioned by the German critic Adolph Behne in the 1923 catalogue,[40] it was, until recently, not recognized by scholars that there were in fact three volumes in this series, mainly because the colourful covers are identical, apart from a small roman numeral in the lower right corner, but also because only single volumes of the series were exhibited or available.[41] Volumes I and II of the series contain ten

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[36] For the importance of Berlin as a centre of Russian émigré as well as Soviet state printing in the early 1920s see Thomas R. Beyer, Jr., Gottfried Kratz, Xenia Werner, *Russian Berlin: Publishers and Writers. Russische Autoren und Verlage in Berlin nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1987).

[37] The logo can be found only on the first page of *Shtetl*. It is not present in the three children's books Ryback illustrated nor in another known children's book by the publisher, *Elfandl* [The little elephant], illustrated by Lissitzky.

[38] *Vinter mayses* is mentioned by Wolitz, 'The Jewish National Art Renaissance', p. 35 and listed in the bibliography, ibid. p. 258. No further references could be found.

[39] That all three volumes of the Margolin series indeed were published before the end of the year can be proved by the copies of volumes II and III from the library of Adolph Behne that carry presentation inscriptions to him by the artist, dated December 1922. (LS-collection)

[40] 'An Veröffentlichungen erschienen drei "Hefte Märchen für kleine Kinder" [...]', Behne, *Ausstellung J. Ryback* (unpaginated).

[41] YIVO published a bilingual Yiddish/English edition of volume 1 with the original illustrations in 1986; see Miriam Margolin, *Little Stories for Little Children* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Ltd., 1986). Copies of volume 1 were exhibited in Moscow in 1997 as part of the Mark Rats collection, and in New York in 2002, as part of the Judith Rothchild Foundation collection; see Iurii Molok (comp.), *Staraia detskaia knizhka, 1900–1930e gody: Iz sobraniia Professora Marka Ratsa. Opisanie sobraniia* (Moscow: AiB, 1997), cat.79, ill.144-p.185; Margit Rowell, Deborah Wye, *The Russian Avant-Garde Book 1910–1934* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), cat. 434; illustration

stories each; the third and last volume contains eleven stories, totalling thirty-one stories written for pre-school children by Miriam Margolin, daughter of a Jewish newspaper editor, who became an inspired educator of pre-school children, teaching kindergarten after her emigration to Israel in 1924.[42] All thirty-one stories are printed on the right-hand page and are illustrated by a drawing by Ryback on the left-hand page. Even though his style is usually described as sombre, serious, and enigmatic, rather than playful, these illustrations fit the world view of pre-school children perfectly. As his widow has stated:

> He was faithful to the principle that children must be given drawings that they themselves should be able to make. And children did accept his drawings as their own. It was a great joy for Ryback when Leyvik, Dovid Bergelson's small son, once said: 'Papa, I, too, can draw like Ryback'. Children understood him in art and loved him in life.[43]

In the illustrations he stays very close to the short texts, showing the different stages of the story in the same picture. Ryback seems to have been not altogether fluent in Yiddish (maybe the little attention he paid to his lessons, apart from his drawing classes at the 'heder', caught up with him). In volume I for example, he mistook the Yiddish word 'Zummerfeygele' [literally: Summer bird], for bird, whereas it actually means 'butterfly'.[44] So in the accompanying drawing he included an image of a bird rather than a butterfly. The Indian ink drawings have a strong emphasis on the black and white contrast fitting for the Jewish tradition. All drawings have clear borders, which can be said to be typical of Jewish illustrations for children's books too. In most instances the borders are lines but around the illustration for the tale 'A snake' it is the snake itself.

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p. 167. A copy of volume 2 was exhibited in Jerusalem in June 1987; see Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, cat. 136. The three separate volumes as such were identified by us in 2005; see Albert Lemmens and Serge-Aljosja Stommels (eds), *Russian Book Art 1904–2005: A Selection from the LS Collection*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Bibliotheca Wittockiana in Brussels (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2005), cat. 44.

[42] Margolin, *Little Stories* (unpaginated).

[43] Hillel (Gregory) Kazovsky, 'Issachar Ber Ryback: "Children's drawings"', in Elli Sahar (ed.), *Issachar Ber Ryback: Original Illustrations for Children Tales* (Tel Aviv: Minotaure Gallery), 2008, p. 9. For the original Yiddish text see: Sonya Ryback, 'Zayn lebns-veg', in Tscherikower (ed.), *Yissakhar Ber Ribak*, p. 19.

[44] Margolin, *Little Stories*.

Recently a series of twenty illustrations very similar to those of the Margolin books, both in size and appearance, have come to light.[45] As well as Jewish stories they illustrate Russian folk tales; for example, there are two drawings illustrating the well-known tale of 'The Turnip' [Repka],[46] thus refuting the claim by the scholar Chimen Abramsky that 'all his paintings, drawings and illustrations are on Jewish subjects'.[47] Hillel Kazovsky tries to confirm the claim by adding that in the drawings non-Jewish characters and plots are adapted to Jewish folklore 'judging by their clothing and general appearance',[48] which seems rather far-fetched when looking at the farmers and children depicted in the stories, who are by no means recognizable as typically Jewish.

Close to the illustrations of *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh* are the fourteen illustrations for Smoliar's *Kindervelt* [The child's world] published by Shveln.[49] Ber Smoliar (or Boris Smolar) was a European correspondent for the Jewish Telegraph Agency in New York.[50] As well as writing articles he also wrote several stories and plays for

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[45] See the exhibitions 'Kultur-Lige. Artistic avant-garde of the 1910's and 1920's' at the National Museum of Art Of Ukraine, Kiev, 20 December 2007–20 January 2008; 'Issachar Ber Ryback. Original illustrations for Children Tales' at the Minotaure Gallery, Tel Aviv, 13 July–10 September 2008. Like the original drawings for the published Margolin books these 20 drawings all are around 27 × 35 cm. See Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, cat. 130–133; Kazovsky, *Artists of the Kultur-Lige*, pp. 25–65; http://www.comite-ryback.org/Catalogue_Raisonne_Details.php?id=catalogueRaisonne8.

[46] The titles of the stories for which the drawings were intended are given in Yiddish under the illustration. In all there are 8 stories. Kazovsky, 'Issachar Ber Rybak', p. 5.

[47] Chimen Abramsky, 'Yiddish Book Illustrations in Russia 1916–1923', in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, p. 66.

[48] Kazovsky, 'Issachar Ber Rybak', p. 5.

[49] For this discussion we used the reproductions in Andrej Jendrusch (ed.), *Der Galaganer Hahn: Jiddische Kinderbücher aus Berlin* (Berlin: Edition Dodo, 2003), pp. 103–118; and the pictures of the copy of the Israel Museum reproduced in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, pp. 202–203.

A second edition of *Kindervelt* was published as part 3 in the series Kinderfraynd: Bibliotek beys, in Warsaw in 1938; see Catherine Madsen (ed.), *Annotated Bibliography. The Noah Cotsen Library of Yiddish Children's Literature from the Collections of the YIVO Institute and the National Yiddish Book Center* (Amherst, MA: National Yiddish Book Center, 2003), p. 87.

[50] Ber Smoliar (Boris Smolar), born in 1897 in Rovno, emigrated to the United States in 1920. He became journalist and later editor in chief of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, New York. In the 1920s and 1930s he was a correspondent reporting from various places in Europe. He died in New York on January 31, 1986. See: Jendrusch (ed.), *Der Galaganer Hahn*, p. 6; and his obituary: 'Boris Smolar, Retired Editor of Jewish Telegraphic Agency', *The New York Times*, February 14, 1986. His archive, covering the period 1913–1985, is kept at the Center for Jewish History, New York; see http://www.cjh.org/nhprc/SmolarBoris.pdf.

children. The main difference from the Margolin books is the format; the Margolin drawings are in landscape format (oblong) whereas the Smoliar drawings are vertical; the text is printed on the same page as the illustration. In narration and style these drawings are identical. The frames, or borders, however, do not surround the image completely. At the bottom they are open, giving them a window-like appearance. Also published by Shveln and the same size as the Smoliar book but again oblong in format are the two books by Kvitko. Where the earlier stories are related to folk tales, Kvitko's two rhyming tales deal with animals.[51] In *In vald* (In the forest) he presents tropical animals, ranging from kangaroo to elephant, and in *Foyglen* (Birds) different birds, ranging from birds of prey to songbirds. In both books the animals presented in the text are also illustrated in pictures: thirteen tropical animals and fourteen birds. The painted elephant on the cover of *In vald*, with its stylised background of trees and a human figure held aloft in the elephant's trunk, still offers narrative possibilities. In this it is close to the playful illustrations in the Margolin and Smoliar books, yet the drawings inside are very different from the previous books. All are drawn in thick black lines and heavy black planes, in a very straightforward manner and free from sentimentality, thus making them emblematic rather than narrative. They are reminiscent of nineteenth-century Russian woodcuts (*lubok*), interspersed with Cubist influences, as well as motifs copied from Jewish tombstones and other traditional pictures.[52] Reworking the influences in this way Ryback also places the images firmly in the Jewish folk tradition. This is most likely the reason for Aronson claiming that Ryback modernized the Russian *lubok*.[53] A further example of this can be found on the cover of *Foyglen* where a drawing of the peacock in red, blue and green against an orange background is reminiscent of medieval Jewish manuscripts. The vase of flowers on the back cover is a motif copied from Jewish cemeteries. Similar emblematic illustrations, more obviously based on

[51] For a parallel Yiddish-German translation with reproductions of the pictures see Jendrusch (ed.), *Der Galaganer Hahn*, pp. 71–86 (*Foyglen*) and pp. 87–102 (*In Vald*). A black and white facsimile of *Foyglen* in an edition of 500 copies was published in Israel in 1983: Leib Kvitko, *Foyglen* (Jerusalem: Universitah haIvrit bi Yerushalayim, 1983).

[52] Apart from the pictures of copied drawings in several of the sources already mentioned is clarifying to see the photographs Monika Krajewska took of the remains of ancient tombstones in the Western, Polish, part of the pale. From these it can be clearly demonstrated that Ryback's animals are based on these Jewish motifs. See Monika Krajewska, *Time of Stones*, Warsaw: Interpress, 1983.

[53] Aronson, *Sovremennaia evreiskaia grafika*, p. 72.

Jewish tombstones and synagogue carvings, were made by Ryback for Kvitko's book of a collection of poems *Gringroz* (Green Grass) around the same time.[54] The emblematic illustrations for the children's books and the poetry collection are a step forward from the more literal and decorative use of Jewish motifs by Ryback two years earlier on the cover and table of contents of the second issue of the almanac *Eygns* (Native).[55]

The collaboration between Ryback and Kvitko on children's books continued when they were both in Kiev. In 1925 Kvitko, who had lived in Germany since 1921, following a threat of arrest in Germany, returned to the Soviet Union.[56] Within a couple of years Kvitko proved to be a prolific author for children, publishing over a dozen titles in 1928 alone.[57] It is very likely that among these titles are those from the Yiddish language series *Pionern bikhl*. How many books this series consisted of is unknown, but at least two titles, both illustrated by Ryback, can be identified: *Karl un Mizra* [Karl and Mizra] and *Me shlist oys derfar* [You can be dismissed for this].[58] Though published circa 1928, we may assume they were conceived earlier. The cover of the series is a design in two colours (red and blue), which uses the Yiddish letters of 'pionern' (pioneer's), the first word of the series title, to depict working tools and a factory.[59] Within the Hebrew capital letter P is a picture of a pioneer blowing a trumpet. Hanging by a red pioneer scarf from

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[54] Leib Kvitko, *Gringroz* (Berlin: Idisher literarisher farlag, 1922). 186 × 130 mm, 210 pages. Edition unknown. For this poetry-collection Ryback designed the cover (a design which is repeated on the title page) and 10 illustrations.

[55] *Eygns*, II (Kiev: Kultur Lige, 1920). 245 × 164 mm, 140, 80, 78 pages (three parts). Edition unknown. For this collection Ryback designed the cover and the table of contents.

[56] Leib Kvitko lived in Germany in the period 1921–1925, returning to Kiev in the Soviet Union in 1925. From 1936 he lived in Moscow, where he was arrested in 1949 and executed on August 12, 1952. See Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*, p. 237; 'Evreiskii poet Lev Kvitko. Biograficheskaia spravka', on: http://www.languages-study.com/yiddish/kvitko.html.

[57] Ibid.

[58] A copy of *Karl un Mizra* can be found in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (see Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, cat. 140); copies of *Me shlist oys derfar* can be found at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York (see Goodman (ed.), *Russian Jewish Artists*, p. 256) and the Yale University Library (see: http://www.library.yale.edu/judaica/newacquisitions2007.html). As for the indication of the measurements of the books there is some indistinctness. Goodman (ed.) gives the measurements as 260 × 178 mm. In Apter-Gabriel (ed.) the measurements are given as 257 × 322 mm. which is correct for the double page spread.

[59] On the cover the author is identified on the top left side, the illustrator on the lower left side.

the same letter is a drum in which the title of the book is written. The word 'bikhl' (little books) is printed on the picture of a red book. This cover design is very close to those of the many children's books celebrating the Soviet state and achievements that were published from the second half of the 1920s, as is described in part 1 of this study. Some of the illustrations in the books have a more caricatural quality, as opposed to the more character-led quality of his earlier drawings. Here the influence of George Grosz can also be discerned. This can be demonstrated most clearly with the picture of a poor man in Berlin from *Karl un Mizra* in which Ryback quotes some typical Grosz faces sitting in a restaurant. But some typical elements of his earlier narrative illustrations are also present, including the border around some of the illustrations as well as the puppet-like people.

Conclusion

When dealing with the artistic œuvre of Ryback, authors rarely mention his illustrations, let alone his children's book illustrations.[60] Even in the seminal catalogue of the Jerusalem exhibition *Tradition and Revolution. The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art 1912–1928*, in which the graphics of Lissitzky and Chagall are extensively discussed and in which a number of Ryback's books are fully depicted,[61] there is only a single paragraph discussion by Chimen Abramsky.[62] The 1934 monograph by Raymond Cogniat completely fails to men-

[60] As research for this paper was concluded for a conference held in Portsmouth in February 2009, this discussion does not include the catalogues for two exhibitions that opened in Portsmouth and Paris in February 2009: *Russian Jewish Artists and Book Design 1919–1928. Berlin as a showcase of the old and the new Russia*, Exhibition catalogue Portsmouth: Portsmouth University (Nijmegen: LS, 2009); *Futur antérieur: L' avant-garde et le livre yiddish (1914–1939)*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, 2009).

[61] Almost all illustrations of the following books illustrated by Ryback are given in the section 'Catalog of the Exhibition', in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, pp. 199–211:

- cat.134$_1$–134$_{10}$: Miriam Margolin, *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh*; N.B. depicted is a copy of the second volume of the series;
- cat.135$_1$–135$_{14}$: Ber Smoliar, *Kindervelt*;
- cat.136$_1$–136$_{30}$: Issachar Ryback, *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish*;
- cat.137$_1$–137$_{13}$: Leib Kvitko, *Foyglen*, depicting 13 out of 14 illustrations;
- cat.138$_1$–138$_7$: Leib Kvitko, *Gringroz*, depicting 7 out of 10 illustrations;
- cat.140$_1$–140$_4$: Leib Kvitko, *Karl un Mizra*, depicting 4 out of 5 illustrations.

[62] Abramsky, 'Yiddish Book Illustrations', in Apter-Gabriel (ed.), *Tradition and Revolution*, pp. 66–67.

tion the graphic works of the artist, apart from a listing of the four graphic series published up to that time, and focuses on his paintings.[63] Ten years earlier, in the short introduction to the catalogue for the 1923–24 personal exhibition, Adolph Behne does mention, next to the shtetl portfolio, all children's books published in Berlin.[64] In 1989 Ryback's children's books received limited attention from Christiane Schütz in the section on Jewish publishing in Berlin as part of an extensive exhibition on publishing held in Berlin.[65] Another short mention of the children's books published in Berlin can be found in the biography for the 1996 New York exhibition *Russian Jewish Artists*.[66] A recent exception to the little attention given to Ryback's children's book illustrations can be found in the activities of the Issachar Ber Ryback committee and foundation. On its website the children's books are given a separate section and receive the same attention as paintings and drawings.[67] The foundation also supported the publication of *Issachar Ber Ryback. Original illustrations for children tales*, in which Hillel Kazovsky discusses at length the recently found unpublished drawings in the context of Ryback's œuvre.[68]

Despite the little attention paid to them by scholars, Ryback's children's book illustrations form a small but indicative, if not important, part of his œuvre. Illustration is what consumed most of his energy in 1922, around the peak of his so-called abstract period. Also the illustrations from that year are the most simple, direct and accessible translation of what he himself formulated as the goals for a new, contemporary, Jewish art in 1918. The last children's book illustrations, executed in 1925, are the first evidence of his transformation to a more naturalistic style.

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[63] Cogniat, *J. Ryback* (unpaginated).

[64] Behne, *Ausstellung J. Ryback* (unpaginated).

[65] The complete mention of Ryback's activities is limited to: 'Issacher Ber Ryback kommt im Jahre 1921 nach Berlin. Hier illustriert er Kinderbücher für den Schwellen-Verlag. In Berlin veröffentlicht er außerdem zwei Mappen mit Lithographien.' See Christiane Schütz, 'Kunst aus jüdischen Verlagen', in Lutz S. Malke (ed.), *Europäische Moderne. Buch und Graphik aus Berliner Kunstverlagen 1890–1933*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Reimer, 1989), p. 150. The cover and an illustration to one children's book are depicted though: ibid., Abb. 158a,b.

[66] 'There [in Berlin] he completed his series of lithographs depicting scenes of Jewish life in the shtetl and illustrated Yiddish children's books and poetry by Leib Kvitko', see Goodman (ed.), *Russian Jewish Artists*, p. 258.

[67] See: http://www.comite-ryback.org/Biography.php.

[68] Kazovsky, 'Issachar Ber Ryback', pp. 4–12. In the same book parallel translations of the text are given in Russian (pp. 13–23) and Hebrew (pp. 71–67).

Appendix: Catalogue of Illustrated Editions by Issachar Ber Ryback
(* indicates children's books)

Vinter mayses (Kiev: Kultur Lige, 1919). *
Vokal-Syuite oyf Peretz's Tsen Kinder-Lider (Warsaw: Kultur Lige, 1919). (cover only)
Oyfgang (1919) (Kiev: Kultur Lige). (cover only)
Eygns, no. 2 (1920) (Kiev: Kultur Lige). (cover only)
Miriam Margolin, *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh*, I (Petrograd: Idisher sektsye bam Komisaryat far folksbildung, 1922). *
Miriam Margolin, *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh*, II (Petrograd: Idisher sektsye bam Komisaryat far folksbildung, 1922). *
Miriam Margolin, *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh*, III (Petrograd: Idisher sektsye bam Komisaryat far folksbildung, 1922). *
Ber Smoliar, *Kindervelt* (Berlin: Shveln, s.a. [ca.1922]); 2nd ed. (Warsaw, 1938). *
Leib Kvitko, *Foyglen* (Berlin: Shveln, s.a. [ca.1922]). *
Leib Kvitko, *In vald* (Berlin: Shveln, s.a. [ca.1922]). *
Leib Kvitko, *Gringroz* (Berlin: Idisher literarisher farlag, 1922).
Issachar Ryback, *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Shveln, [1923]).
Boris Aronson, *Sovremennaia evreiskaia grafika* (Berlin: Petropolis, 1924). (cover only; edition 300)
Issachar Ryback, *Jüdische Typen aus der Ukraine* (Berlin: Essem, 1924). (12 lithographs; edition 150)
Issachar Ryback, *Sur les champs juifs de l'Ukraine* (Paris: A. Simon, 1926). (edition 350)
Issachar Ryback, *Oyf di yiddisher feld fun Ukraina* (Paris: A. Simon, 1926).
Leib Kvitko, *Karl un Mizra* (Kharkov: Knihaspilka, s.a. [ca.1928]). [Pionern Bikhl] *
Leib Kvitko, *Me Shlist Oys Derfar* (Kharkov: Knihaspilka, s.a. [ca. 1928]). [Pionern Bikhl] *
Issachar Ryback, *A l'ombre du passé* (Paris: Oreste Zeluk, 1932). (12 etchings; edition 100)
Issachar Ryback, *Mon Village* (Paris, s.a). (16 lithographs; edition 250)
(facsimile) Leib Kvitko, *Foyglen* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1983). (edition 500)
(facsimile) Miriam Margolin, *Little stories for little children* (Mt Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Ltd., 1986).
(facsimile) Issachar Ryback, *Mestechko. 'Shtetl-Township'* (Moscow: Klyuch-Vneshsigma, 1994).

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The Issachar Ber Ryback Committee & Foundation: http://www.comite-ryback.org.

Lev Kvitko: http://www.languages-study.com/yiddish/kvitko.html.

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Figure 1. Cover illustration for Miriam Margolin, *Mayselekh far kleynike kinderlekh, III* (Petrograd: Idisher sektsye bam Komisaryat far folksbildung, 1922), 215 × 275 mm.

Figure 2. Cover illustration for Leib Kvitko, *Foyglen* (Berlin: Shveln, s.a. [ca.1922]), 236 × 310 mm.

Figure 3. Plate 6 from Issachar Ryback, *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Shveln, [1923]), 340 × 500 mm.

Figure 4. Plate 26 from Issachar Ryback, *Shtetl. Mayn khoyever heym, a gedenknish* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Shveln, [1923]), 340 × 500 mm.

Figure 5. 'Paysanne aux épis', plate 5 from Issachar Ryback, *Sur les champs juifs de l'Ukraine* (Paris: A. Simon, 1926), 390 × 286 mm.

'A BEAUTIFUL LIE'—*ZHAR-PTITSA* (*THE FIREBIRD*): SUSTAINING JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY AND SHOWCASING RUSSIA IN 1920s BERLIN

Susanne Marten-Finnis

Outsourcing Culture: From the Centre to the Periphery

Journalism was the most vivid form of communication at the disposal of the diverse Diaspora communities from Russia, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who frequented Berlin during the early 1920s. It is their very diversity, the kaleidoscopic flux of migrating people and ideologies, and the transitory nature of their initiatives that makes the study of the literary activities they sustained in Berlin such a challenge.

The study of those activities implies two considerations: firstly, that the status of their agents was largely undefined, depending on their varying degree of resistance or conformity to the new governing elites in Soviet Russia, and secondly, their experience in pre-revolutionary Russia, including the languages they had used for the dissemination of their writings—Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew—which they would normally sustain.

Such a study could take as its point of departure the juxtaposition of various pairs of parameters, as e.g. 'high-culture' and 'low-culture journalism', 'cultural contact' and 'cultural distance', 'centre' and 'periphery', as put forward by Boldt et al.[1] If we decide to prioritize the 'centre' and 'periphery' parameters, we have to realise that the centre of creativity had moved from Metropolis to Diaspora, from Russia to Berlin, the first capital of Russian Emigration, where between 1921 and 1925 most of the creative forces of pre-revolutionary Russia had gathered and established for themselves a space of communication outside their home country. This communication relied on a periphery that consisted mainly of three groups of recipients: those residing in Russia, the Russian communities scattered around at the time in

[1] F. Boldt, D. Segal', L. Fleishman, 'Problemy izucheniia literatury russkoi emigratsii pervoi treti XX veka: Tezisy', *Slavica Hierosolymitana*, no. 3, 1978, 75–88.

Berlin and other centres of Russian emigration, and the foreign audiences, as many groups had chosen the German capital as a hub for proclaiming their manifestos. Some Russian reviews, especially those dealing with Russian visual and performing arts, addressed in their German, English or French supplements members of other speech communities.

During the years 1921–1926, three artistic reviews were released in Berlin addressing both Russian readers and foreign target groups. The first to appear was *Zhar-Ptitsa* [The Firebird], an elegant review focusing on the artistic and theatrical life of Russia abroad; it was published between 1921 and 1926 by Alexander E. Kogan in Russian with German and English supplements. Next was the monthly *Teatr i zhizn'* [Theatre and Life],[2] published by Griunberg and Klopotovskii (Leri) between 1921 and 1923 in Russian with German, French and English subtitles; it had a twofold mission: a) the promotion abroad of the Russian performing arts, such as theatre, ballet and cinema, and b) informing readers in Russia Abroad and Russia at Home about the professional life of their protagonists.[3] Articles were well complemented by illustrations and the magazine's external appearance started in a modest layout but became more elegant with every new issue.[4] The multilingual subtitles suggest that the pictures were meant to be enjoyed by foreign target groups beyond the Russian communities.

The third of these reviews was the ephemeral *Zlatotsvet* [Chrysanthemum], which in its content and layout followed in the footsteps of *Zhar-Ptitsa*. It was published in 1924 in Russian, with an almost parallel German edition, by Nikolai Berezhansky, a newcomer to the art publishing scene,[5] who adopted the business practices of his more senior artist-editor colleague A.E. Kogan, far less successfully though, as by 1924 the publishing conditions for foreign investors in Germany had deteriorated, and most Russian readers had moved on.

There were three characteristic features that *Zhar-Ptitsa*, *Teatr*, and *Zlatotsvet* shared:

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[2] After the first ten issues, the review was revamped. From no. 11 (June 1922) it appeared under the title *Teatr*.

[3] I. [sic], '"Teatr". Dvukhnedel'ny zhurnal. Redaktor-izdatel' E.Iu. Griunberg', *Novaia Russkaia Kniga*, no. 10 (October 1922), 17–18 [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

[4] Ibid.

[5] 'N.G. Berezhansky [Obituary]', *Vozrozhdenie* (Paris), no. 3734 (24 August 1935), 4.

All their editors were Russian Jews in the sense of the pre-Revolutionary,[6] pre-soviet Russian Empire, who had a secular education, and whose preferred language was Russian because it was their primary language for making knowledge accessible to the non-Jewish reader.

They all followed the aesthetic programme of the *Mir Iskusstva* [World of Art] group, looking towards the past and attempting to preserve the 'eternal values' of Russian classical artistic heritage. It was this retrogressive mood that distinguished *Zhar-Ptitsa, Teatr* and *Zlatotsvet* from other artistic reviews published in Berlin at the same time.[7]

As showcases of Russian artistic heritage in the performing and visual arts, they all demonstrated what Alexandre Benois once called 'a mania for the theatre'.[8] In the present context this means that they not only focused on the visual and performing arts of Russia in Russia and Russia Abroad; they also adhered to the tradition of cultivating and exploiting Western admiration for Russian art that had been initiated more than a decade earlier by Sergei Diaghilev, the master facilitator of Russian artists, composers, dancers, choreographers, theatrical costume and stage designers, in his *Russian Seasons* in Paris.

To demonstrate how this tradition of showcasing Russian art for a foreign audience was loaded with an entire new purpose I will discuss Alexander E. Kogan's review *Zhar-Ptitsa* [The Firebird] as an example for both outsourcing Russian culture[9] from Metropolis to Diaspora while sustaining journalistic and publishing activities that had started in Russia during the years 1918–21 and continued in Berlin during the years 1921–25. The main language of these activities was Russian.

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[6] Fran Markowitz, 'Criss-Crossing Identities: The Russian Jewish Diaspora and the Jewish Diaspora in Russia', *Diaspora*, vol. 4, 1995, no. 2, 201–210.

[7] E.g. Alexander Drozdov's popular journal *Spolokhi* [Northern lights], directed exclusively towards an émigré public, while trying to ignore their diverse political splinter groups; Rachel Wischnitzer's Yiddish art review *Milgroym* with its cognate Hebrew issue *Rimon*, a laboratory of new emerging Jewish modernist art, targeted at the Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe, Palestine and America; and the international review *Veshch'—Gegenstand—Objet*, published by El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg who wanted to create an international community of avant-garde artists, united by a commitment to constructivist art and by a common desire to build a better world in the future.

[8] Alexandre Benois, *Memoirs* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), pp. 2–26.

[9] Susanne Marten-Finnis, 'Outsourcing Culture: Soviet and Émigré Publishing in Berlin, and A.E. Kogan's Illustrated Magazine *Zhar-Ptitsa*, 1921–26', in *Presse und Stadt. Zusammenhänge – Diskurse – Thesen*, eds. Susanne Marten-Finnis and Markus Winkler (Bremen: edition lumière 2009), pp. 61–82.

I have chosen *Zhar-Ptitsa* as it was the longest lasting of all reviews, vividly remembered and, despite its small circulation of 300,[10] perhaps the most influential one.[11] My study relies on a model of juxtaposing centre and periphery that allows me to examine the sustaining journalistic activities of agents, their broad ideological spectrum, and the preliminary character of their output. Moreover, this model provides a fine instrument for a more comprehensive analysis of the journalistic activity of Russian Berliners during the period under discussion, both Soviet and émigré, Jewish and non-Jewish. It could thus serve several purposes. One is to analyse sustaining literary activity as a product of assimilated Russian Jews expanding into writing in Russian such as *Zhar-Ptitsa*. A second is to analyse the literary activity of those dissimilating by turning to the medium of Yiddish and Hebrew. In this way we are able to compare and contrast the products released in Berlin by assimilated Russian Jews with those of Yiddish modernist groups or pioneering Hebrew writers.

The Review Zhar-Ptitsa: *Advocates and Adversaries*

Most people know the firebird as a legendary creature from a Russian fairytale, whose feathers glowed red, yellow and orange; they shone like fire and warned people before dangerous ventures. In the Russian tradition, the firebird appears as a female figure [illustration 1] who is equipped with magic power to safeguard people from malicious deeds. Others associate the firebird with the famous ballet, composed by Igor Stravinsky and performed by the *Ballets Russes*. '*The Firebird* is very well suited for dance performance', suggested ballet master Michael Fokine,[12] when it was put to members of the Diaghilev company that a ballet of national character was missing from their repertoire. According to Fokine, many picturesque figures of Russian folkloric fantasy

[10] Feliks Moiseevich Lur'e, *Zhurnal "Zhar-Ptitsa": Annotirovannaia khronologicheskaia rospis'* (St. Petersburg: Barguzin, 1999), p. 6.

[11] To what extent *Zhar-Ptitsa* contributed to the transformation of western savoir-vivre will be discussed in a separate publication.

[12] 'L'Oiseau de Feu (The Firebird): Synopsis', in Alexander Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes: The Serge Lifar Collection of Theater Designs, Costumes, and Paintings at the Wadsworth Atheneum* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 212–216 (212).

Figure 1. Bakst, The Firebird as Female Figure.

had already been used for stage productions, but *The Firebird* had not.[13] In fact, the role of the Firebird in Russian folklore is derisory, and may not be of Slavic origin at all but introduced into Russian folklore from the Persian or Hindu folklores. After at least one aborted attempt to commission an established composer, it fell to the young Stravinsky to write what was to become his breakthrough composition. Its world premier at the Paris Opéra a hundred years ago was a triumph for Sergei Diaghilev and his *Ballet Russes*.

Alexander Golovin created the stage décor and costumes for the 1910 performance; the costumes for the ballet's main figures were, however, later on replaced by Léon Bakst. During the following decade *The Firebird* was performed regularly. By 1921, after it was staged in London, its original costumes and décor were completely worn out, so that Diaghilev decided to launch a second production and invited Natalia Goncharova to create a new stage design. But it was restaged only in 1926.[14] Nevertheless, between 1921 and 1926, *The Firebird* was not dead; it lived on in the form of an illustrated review under the name *Zhar-Ptitsa*, launched by Alexander E. Kogan in his publishing house *Russkoe Iskusstvo* [Russian Art] in Berlin. Whereas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the firebird had, among Russian artists, enjoyed a renewed celebrity as an embodiment of unattainable beauty, it was through Kogan's 1920s review in Berlin that the Russian firebird, or *Zhar-Ptitsa*, whether Russian in origin or not, became a symbol for Russianness *par excellence* among both émigré Russians and western Europeans. This review is the main topic of the present paper although it can be completely separated neither from the glowing bird of the fairytale nor from Stravinsky's ballet, as we shall see.

Over the past forty years, both Russian and American academic presses referred to *Zhar-Ptitsa* as 'the most impressive review of the Russian emigration',[15] unequalled in its perfection[16] and unsurpassed in the elegance of its brilliantly coloured reproductions of works by

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[13] Michael Fokin, *Gegen den Strom. Erinnerungen eines Ballettmeisters*, eds. Lydia Wolgina and Ulrich Pietzsch (Berlin: Henschel, 1974), pp. 193–216 (193).

[14] Boris Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 55.

[15] John E. Bowlt, '*Zhar-Ptitsa*. No. 1, 1921', *Slavic Review*, vol. 43, 1984, no. 1, 159–160.

[16] I.D. Levitan, 'Russkie izdatel'stva v 20–kh g.g. v Berline', in *Kniga o Russkom Evreistve*, 1917–1967, eds. Ia.G. Frumkin, G.Ia. Aronson, and A.A. Goldenweiser (New York: Soiuz russkikh evreev, 1968), p. 449.

outstanding Russian artists.[17] But was it really a review of the Russian Emigration? Yes and no. From its illustrative and textual material it is clear that its main contributors were Russian artists and critics who, under the pressure of circumstances had flocked to Germany and France. But neither its instigators nor its chief target group were Russian emigrants.

From the Russian press published at the time in Berlin, we learn that *Zhar-Ptitsa* provoked annoyance rather than delight among the emigrant community who harshly criticized the review for its lack of concept and random juxtaposition of illustrative and literary material. Poems and articles in its literary section, they claimed, were unrelated to the material exhibited in the visual arts section, and hardly explained or commented on it. Moreover, they pointed out that *Zhar-Ptitsa* was 'disappointing, demotivating, and incomprehensible'.[18] According to a contemporary reviewer in *Novaia Russkaia Kniga* [The New Russian Book] its magnificent layout was the product of the latest technical standards and exhibited fine craftsmanship in book ornamentation and decorative art, but 'the most important thing was missing: the magazine did not serve art in general, it did not proclaim any convictions and made no attempt to take an ideological lead.'[19] *Nakanune* [On the Eve],[20] another Russian journal, was equally scathing of *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s low-quality literary output and stated: 'Beyond the magnificent binding and wonderful technical quality, we seek in vain a literary page that could as much delight us, move us and remain in our memories.'[21]

Only Alexander Drozdov's thick journal *Spolokhi* [Northern Lights] praised *Zhar-Ptitsa* as 'deeply comforting for all those believing in the restorative power of Russian creativity'.[22] Unintentionally, perhaps,

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[17] Bronislav Kodzis, *Literaturnye Tsentry Russkogo Zarubezh'ia, 1918–1939: Pisateli. Tvorcheskie Ob"edineniia. Periodika. Knigopechatanie* (Munich: Otto Sagner, 2002), pp. 82–83.

[18] Levitan, '*Zhar-Ptitsa*, No. 6. Izd. A.E. Kogana "Russkoe Iskusstvo" Berlin, 1922', *Novaia Russkaia Kniga* (Berlin), no. 3 (March 1922), 9–10 [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

[19] Ibid.

[20] Between 1922 and 1924 a leading newspaper of Russian Berliners, whose editors believed in a rapprochement between the Russian Emigration and Soviet Russia.

[21] I. Vasilevskii, "Tsvety emigratsii. *'Spolokhi',—'Zhar-Ptitsa'.—'Teatr i zhizn'', Nakanune* (Berlin), no. 5 (1922), 7–10 [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

[22] A.G. Levenson, '*Zhar-Ptitsa*', *Spolokhi*, no. 1 (November 1921), 43 [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

Spolokhi, revealed here one aspect of *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s ambition that did serve the emigrant community, namely that it reminded them of their great artistic heritage and thus offered them comfort and encouragement in a period of crisis and dejection.[23] This mission was also pursued by the other two reviews *Teatr i zhizn'* and *Zlatotsvet* that saw themselves as 'a bridge from a painful present to a joyful past'.[24]

The idea—art as a refuge from the depressing reality of everyday emigrant life—is conveyed in a poem that forms the prelude of *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s Russian part. In his poem *Art*, Alexander (Sasha) Cherny evoked a dramatic picture of art as a dream and as redemption from the troubled days of the present.[25]

> God, our awesome father, tempted us with Eden
> And then betrayed us to the Dogs and expelled us to darkness
> And only the muses with their tender harem
> Like signs of paradise come down to our prison-house.[26]

Cherny's poem can be seen as a mission statement directed to Russian emigrant readers. Now we can understand why *Zhar-Ptitsa* displayed in a retrospective mood, often uncommented, all those popular images and reproductions: Russian fairytale scenes by Bilibin [illustration 2], life in the Russian province by Kustodiev [illustration 3], burlesques by Somov [illustration 4], fairground scenes by Larionov [illustration 5], the four seasons, and many other works by artists formerly part of the *Mir Iskusstva* group. They were to remind Russian emigrants of better times, and give them self-confidence in an environment that many of them experienced as indifferent and hostile. Yet these readers did not form *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s main target group. This becomes clear not only from its content, but also from the mission statement of its international part, its distribution practice, and a public announcement made by Kogan two months before he launched *Zhar-Ptitsa*, in June 1921.

The mission statement introducing *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s international part differs from the idea of art as a refuge from reality, established by

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[23] 'Editorial', *Teatr i zhizn'*, no. 1–2 (October 1921), 1–2 [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

[24] *Spolokhi*, no. 1 (November 1921), 1.

[25] Sasha Cherny, 'Iskusstvo', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 1 (August 1921), 6.

[26] Ibid., translation by Igor Dukhan. See: Susanne Marten-Finnis and Igor Dukhan: 'Dream and Experiment. Time and Style in 1920s Berlin Émigré Magazines: *Zhar-Ptitsa* and *Milgroym*', *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 2, December 2005, 225–244.

Figure 2. Bilibin, Scene from a Russian Fairy Tale.

Figure 3. Kustodiev, Life in the Russian Province.

Figure 4. Somov, Burlesque.

Figure 5. Larionov, Fairground Scene.

Cherny's poem. Instead it points out that it wants to give a voice to the Russian artists now scattered around the globe.[27]

> Russian arts, above all the Russian ballet and theatre, are world famous [...] but, unfortunately, not very well known in Europe, particularly in Germany. This Russian review will be supplemented by a short, explanatory German text to summarise those Russian essays in the form of a German translation or précis, illustrating Russian life in art, above all Russian painting, ballet and theatre.[28]

Yet this is not the entire truth, as the targeted audience came to embrace more than German readers. Although there is no mention of an English speaking audience at this initial stage, English supplements soon came to complement the German ones or were released in separate issues. Moreover, the frontispieces of the late 1921 and 1922 issues indicate *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s growing distribution and readership in France, Belgium, Holland, England, the USA and Argentina, besides Germany. As it enjoyed journal status, it could be sent to all those countries without incurring the export fees normally imposed on edited volumes and books printed in Germany, which cost up to 100 percent of the retail price,[29] thus providing also an economic explanation for its wide dissemination through publishing outlets in Western Europe and America. This distribution practice corresponds with Kogan's statement of June 1921, when he announced in public that he would soon release an illustrated review entitled *Zhar-Ptitsa* to facilitate the reception of the 1921 Paris *Mir Iskusstva* exhibition[30] and to promote the monographs he published on *Mir iskusstva* artists in German, English, and French in his newly-founded Berlin publishing house *Russkoe Iskusstvo*.[31]

Now we also understand why each of *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s fourteen issues acquainted the reader with another artist: No. 1: Sudeikin;[32] No. 2:

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[27] 'Zum Geleit', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 1 (August 1921), international part, 1 (unpaginated) [Translation from the German: Sm-f].

[28] Ibid.

[29] 'Usloviia eksporta knig iz Germanii', *Novaia Russkaia Kniga* (Berlin), no. 5 (May 1922), 26.

[30] "Enfin, pour l'illustration plus complète de la vie artistique, il sera publié le journal 'Jar Ptitza' (L'Oiseau de Feu)...", in: Alexandre Kogan and George Loukomsky (eds), *L'art Russe à Paris en 1921. Exposition des Artistes Russes à Paris en 1921, organisée par les membres et exposants de la société Mir Isskousstva (Monde artistes) à la Galerie 'La Boëtie'* (Paris, 1921), unpaginated.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Aleksei N. Tolstoi, 'Pered kartinami Sudeikina', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 1 (August 1921), 23–28; 'Vor den Bildern Sudejkins', ibid., 2–4 (international part).

Bilibin;[33] No. 3: Somov;[34] No. 4–5: Roerich;[35] No. 6: Vrubel;[36] No. 7: Goncharova and Larionov;[37] No. 8: Sorin;[38] No. 9: Bakst;[39] No. 10: Korovin, Golovin, Maliavin;[40] No. 11: Chagall;[41] No. 12: Larionov;[42] No. 13: Pasternak;[43] No. 14: Benois.[44] Many of them were artists of stature, whose greatest creative power lay not so much in oil painting but rather in book ornamentation, graphic design and, above all, costume design and stage décor for Diaghilev's famous *Ballets Russes* productions.

Transformation: From Studio to Stage, from Realism to Symbolism, from Russia to the West

The majority of these artists had come to the stage by way of studio painting.[45] One of the attractions the stage offered them was the possibility of exploring a large decorative space, a graphic area that,

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[33] G[eorgi]. L[ukomskii]., 'Kak zhivet i rabotaet I. Ia. Bilibin', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 2 (September 1921), 22–23; 'Wie I. J. Bilibin lebt und arbeitet', ibid., IV–V (international part).

[34] Andrei Levinson, 'Somov', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 3 (October 1921), 17–22; 'Somov', ibid., 7–8 (international part).

[35] Leonid Andreev, 'Derzhava Rericha: Posledniaia, napechatannaia 29 marta 1919 g. stat'ia L.N.A. k otkrytiiu vystavki N. Rericha v Gel'singforse', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 4–5 (December 1921), 17–20; 'Aus Roerichs Reich', ibid., 1–2.

[36] Sergei Makovskii, 'Vrubel', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 6, 1922 (month of the issue not indicated), 21–26; 'Wrubel', ibid., 1–3.

[37] E. Eganbiuri, 'Goncharova i Larionov', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 7 (month not indicated), 1922, 39–40; this article does not appear in the international part.

[38] Sergei Makovskii, 'Portrety S.A. Sorina', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 8, 1922 (month not indicated), 2–6; this article does not appear in the international part.

[39] Andrei Levinson, 'Bakst', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 9, 1922 (month not indicated), 2–5; 'Monografiia o L. Bakste', ibid., 6–8; 'Baksts Rückkehr', ibid., 1–3; 'L. S. Bakst. Eine Monografie', ibid., 3.

[40] 'Vystavka kartin Korovina v Berline', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 10, 1922 (month not indicated), 9–10; 'K.A. Korovins Gemäldeausstellung in Berlin', ibid., 5–6 (international part); Sergei Makovskii, 'Maliavin', ibid., 2–5; this article does not appear in the international part; 'A.Ia. Golovin', ibid., 15–16; 'A.J. Golovin', ibid., 5–6 (international part).

[41] Max Osborn, 'Marc Chagal', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 11, 1923 (month not indicated), 13–20; 'Marc Shagal', ibid., 34–35.

[42] G.I. Isarlov, 'M. F. Larionov', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 12, 1924 (month not indicated), 26–30; 'M.F. Larionov', ibid., 2–4 (international part).

[43] Max Osborn, 'L.O. Pasternak', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 13, 1925 (month not indicated) 2–8; 'Pasternak', ibid., 37–39 (international part).

[44] Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, 'Alexandre Benois', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 14, 1926, 10–16; 'Alexandre Benois', ibid., 42–44 (international part).

[45] John E. Bowlt, 'From Studio to Stage: The Painters of the Ballets Russes', in *The Art of Enchantment: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, 1909–1929*, ed. Nancy van Norman Baer (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1988), pp. 44–59 (49).

traditionally, fresco and other wall painting had provided. Since there were few opportunities to decorate public spaces, Bakst, Benois, Roerich, and the others welcomed the theatre as an environment for the wider display of graphic ideals.[46] For the most part trained as painters, rather than as craftsmen, they brought their personal interpretative vision to each production. Schouvaloff, an expert on theatre décor, confirms that

> The ballets produced before the First World War were designed by Russian painters with the work generally being allocated [...] according to the [...] individual talent of the painter. Ballets in a classical or romantic mood were given to [...] Benois and [...] Dobuzhinsky. The exotic oriental, the fantastic, [...] and the Biedermeier romantic were the moods for which [...] Bakst excelled. The barbaric Russian and the peasant Russian were the specialties respectively of [...] Roerich, and [...] Goncharova or [...] Larionov.[47]

Illustrations, photographs, sketches, and drawings produced by those artists for *Ballets Russes* performances prior to the First World War dominate the covers and pages of *Zhar-Ptitsa*. To study them implies not only to consider their transformation from studio to stage but a previous transformation from Realism—the dominant aesthetic tendency of the Russian and European theatre during the second half of the nineteenth century—to Symbolism, prevailing during the 1890s until ca. 1910. While Realism stressed the relevance of an artifact to its social and political environment, as a result of which the theatre was viewed as a vehicle for commentary on everyday life,[48] Symbolism provided an escape from everyday reality; it was concerned with the evocation of mood and subjective vision and used the intrinsic elements of painting such as colour, line, and light, besides fabrics, for highly emotional, psychological expression. Most relevant in that respect were the contributions of Léon Bakst and Nikolas Roerich to the productions of the Greek ballets such as *Daphnis and Chloë* (1910/11), *Narcisse* (1911), *L'après-midi d'un Faune* (1912), and the Oriental ballets *Thamar* (1912) [illustration 6], *Cleopatra* (1909), *Le Dieu Bleu* (1912), *Les Orientales* (1910), the *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor* (1909) and above

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Alexander Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes: The Serge Lifar Collection of theater designs, costumes, and paintings at the Wadsworth Atheneum* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 6.

[48] John E. Bowlt, *Russian Stage Design. Scenic Innovation, 1900–1930: From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Nikita D. Lobanov-Rostovsky* (Jackson: Mississippi Museum of Art 1982), p. 16.

all *Shéhérazade* (1910), with their portrayal of harems [illustration 7] and provocative temptresses, in which the genius of Russian composers, dancers, choreographers, and theatrical designers merged to create the opulent, decadent world of a legendary and exotic East. These ballets, all of them produced before 1917, feature prominently in *Zhar-Ptitsa*; they supported the symbolist aesthetic that sought to expand the mind and senses, and intensify emotions in the quest of a heightened, superior reality.[49]

There is a third dimension to be considered, as this visual culture displayed on the pages of *Zhar-Ptitsa* was not just the result of their creators' transformation from studio to stage, from Realism to Symbolism, but also the transformation from their old to a new self, from Russia to the West, from the loss and alienation to excitement and anticipation.

Marc Chagall: 'An Entire Bunch of Flowers Originating from Another Culture'

A vivid demonstration of these three types of transformation can be observed in the work of Marc Chagall, perhaps the artist best known in the West, whose work was extensively displayed in the eleventh issue of *Zhar-Ptitsa*. Chagall arrived in Berlin in 1922 and spent about a year there before he moved on to Paris. His sojourn in the German capital coincided with the launch of the eleventh issue of *Zhar-Ptitsa* that devoted most of its artistic part to Chagall's work, both in painting and theatre design. In his article on Chagall's work, the German art critic and writer Max Osborn writes:

> There is no-one in the rejuvenated Russia of our day who is endowed with the same power as Shagal [sic] for transforming the elements of the immeasurably rich and deep artistic culture of the people into variegated whimsical visions which strike the imagination. The traditions of the Slav and of the Jew are here blended in their vast complexity.[50]

In his comment on Chagall's *Over the town* [*Les amoureux*, illustration 8], Osborn states that the painting 'is bathed in tender purple, blue and

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[49] Nancy van Norman Baer, 'Design and Choreography: Cross-influences in the Theatrical Art of the Ballets Russes', in: *The Art of Enchantment: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 1909–1929, ed. Nancy van Norman Baer (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1988), pp. 60–77 (63).

[50] Max Osborn, 'Marc Shagal', *Zhar-Ptitsa*, no. 11, 1923, 13–20; Max Osborn, 'Marc Shagal', ibid., 34–35.

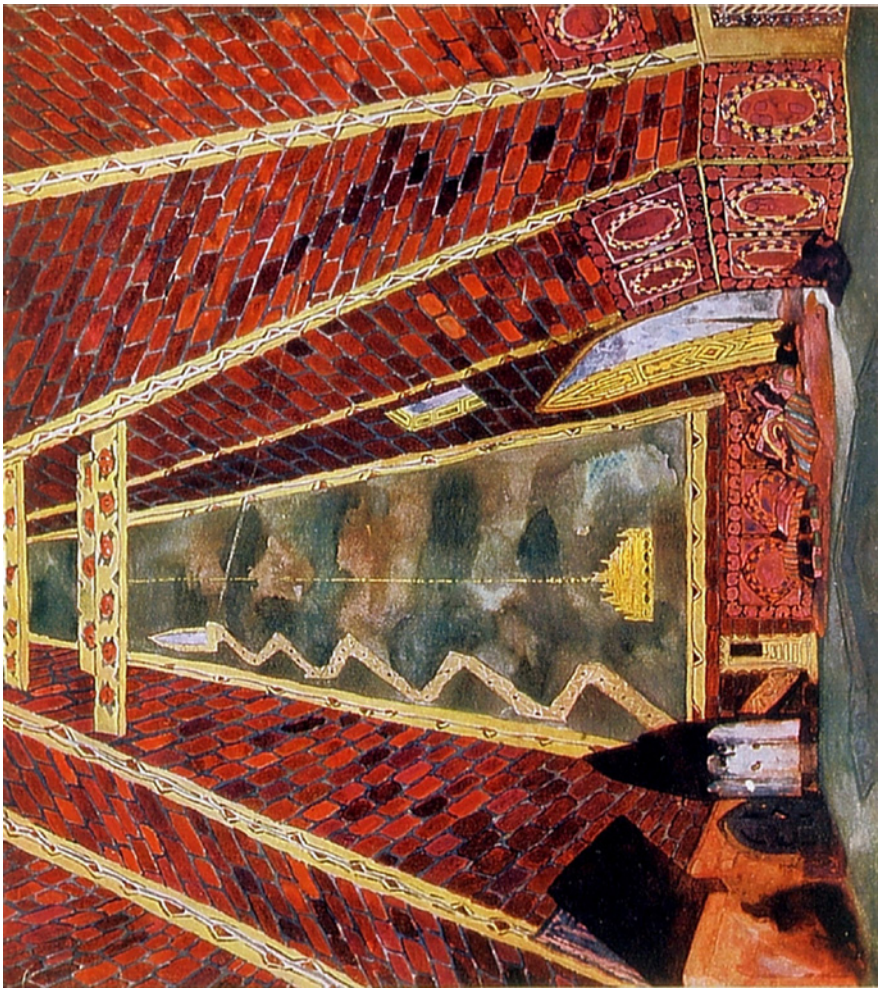

Figure 6. Bakst, Scene from *Thamar*.

Figure 7. Bakst, Scene from *Shéhérazade.*

Figure 8. Chagall, Over the Town.

green colours. This is pictorial lyricism pure and simple. It is modern romanticism, rendered in the Parisian style of colouring, but permeated by the Slavic and Hebraic motives of yearning and expectancy.'[51] Osborn regards Chagall's work for the stage being fuelled by two sources, firstly his encounters with Léon Bakst who had encouraged him and other artists to increasingly commit themselves to the world of the theatre,[52] and secondly, his pride to be part of a modern Jewish culture in revolutionary Russia, which however, was soon to mingle with his frustration over the role this culture would occupy in Soviet Russia.[53]

Osborn's commentary sounds almost naïve when compared to an essay on Chagall's work published shortly before in *Spolokhi* by the artist Boguslavskaia who pointed out that '[…] there is hardly another artist with such a range of colours, one can simply sense the Orient, an entire bunch of flowers originating from another fairytale-like, magical and centuries-old culture.'[54] 'The painters subscribing to that kind of colour,' she goes on, 'have been born in the South, and they have an affirming, direct understanding of colour. Only the people in the Orient are able to extract from colour not only the glare and glimmer, but also its inner tone, its sharpness. E.g. Chagall's green […] is not merely colorful but also carries something poisonous. [Note the contrast to Osborne's comments!] The blue is spicy. […] The green—doesn't one want to compare it with nothing so much as the green silk displayed in a lady's fabric shop?'[55]

Boris Aronson of the Kiev *Kultur-lige* confirmed that Chagall's preference for special combinations of colours—the velvety black or violet, transforming itself into dark bordeaux—derives from his childhood memories in the Jewish shtetl: atlas and silk of gowns, the tefillin bags, pathos and adoration of objects for ritual use, vibrating a strong contrast to the grey, blue and reddish bordeaux.[56]

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Werner Hanak, '"Wer ist hier Regisseur, Sie oder ich?" Notizen zu Chagalls Malerei im Raum', in *Chagall. Bilder, Träume, Theater 1908–1920* (Wien: Jüdisches Musum der Stadt Wien, 1994), pp. 58–72.

[53] Ziva Amishai-Maisels, 'Chagalls Wandgemälde für das Staatliche Jüdische Kammertheater', in *Chagall. Bilder, Träume, Theater*, pp. 22–56.

[54] K[senia] Boguslavskaia, 'Marc Chagall', *Spolokhi* (Berlin), no. 2, December 1921, 33–34, [translation from the Russian: Sm-f].

[55] Ibid.

[56] Boris Aronson, 'Marc Chagal [sic]', *Marc Chagall* (Berlin: Petropolis, 1924), pp. 24–26.

Chagall was not the only one whose work was popularized through *Zhar-Ptitsa*. Likewise, the spectacular and unusual colour combinations of Léon Bakst, the portraits and sketches of Leonid Pasternak, the return to primitive forms (*lubok*, *vyveska*, and icon) of Natalia Goncharova or the Rayonism of Mikhail Larionov, as they were displayed in the various issues of *Zhar-Ptitsa*, intrigued its readers and featured prominently in their memories ever since. These artists were the heroes of *Zhar-Ptitsa*. Their creations were presented for the delight of mainly western audiences whose admiration and buying power were to be transformed into support for the young Soviet state: they were to raise funds for Soviet book production.

The Transportation of Admiration: Zhar-Ptitsa*'s Hidden Agenda*

The person behind this strategy was Maxim Gorky who was well aware of western admiration for Russian art and had thus devised the plan that the funds raised from the books printed and distributed abroad, among them *Zhar-Ptitsa*, were to boost Soviet book production. In February 1921 he suggested to the *Sovnarkom*,[57] the Council of National Commissars, to move the printing of his Petrograd-based publishing house *Vsemirnaia Literatura* to Berlin. This way, he argued, books could be produced not only for the Soviet market, but also for the Russians living abroad. Those books should be distributed in estimated numbers of 5,000–10,000 by the publishing houses Ladyzhnikov in Berlin and Bonner in Stockholm.[58] According to the publisher Grzhebin, Gorky claimed, the costs of printing a book amounted to five German marks only, whereas the sold book could raise up to twenty marks, which, even if 50 percent of the gain had to be shared with book sellers and distributors, still resulted in a good profit. Consequently, with every book sold abroad, a copy could be sent to Russia free of charge. Once this business took off, it could include the United States and Czechoslovakia, with the number of books produced abroad increasing. As a

[57] Acronym for 'Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov', later to be turned into the Council of Ministers.

[58] 'Tezisy doklada A.M. Gor'kogo o pechatanii za granitsei izdanii "Vsemirnoi Literatury"', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1958, no. 2 (March–April), 67–95 (91–92).

result, Soviet Russia could obtain free of charge 10,000– 15,000 copies of every book printed abroad.[59]

A representative of Gorky's publishing house *Vsemirnaia Literatura* was to be sent to Berlin to secure German support for the entire business and organize, in collaboration with the existing Soviet publishing apparatus, the printing and distribution of *Vsemirnaia Literatura* editions.[60] This representative turned out to be A.E. Kogan, an expert on graphic design and book art who spoke German, besides being a clever businessman and between 1908 and 1918 the proprietor of the *Kopeika* publishing house, whose typographic facilities Gorky had made use of after he founded his publishing house *Vsemirnaia Literatura*.[61]

Gorky's proposal convinced the *Sovnarkom*. In April 1921 he was assigned a floating fund that enabled him to have the book production of his publishing house moved to the German capital. In late April 1921 Kogan arrived in Berlin and established the publishing house *Russkoe Iskusstvo*, where four months later, he launched *Zhar-Ptitsa*.

The mission of *Zhar-Ptitsa* was thus threefold: officially, it was to facilitate the reception of the Paris *Mir Iskusstva* exhibition that took place in 1921, and to promote the art monographs launched by Kogan through *Russkoe Iskusstvo*. Unofficially, it was to comfort Russian emigrants and provide shelter from the hardships of their alienated life away from home. Its hidden agenda was, however, the chief reason why it had been called into existence in the first instance: for the patronage of Soviet book production. Hence, *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s random choice of textual illustrative and material, uncommented as it often appeared, was not just due to the editorial staff scattered between Berlin and Paris. While the literary section was composed in Berlin by Sasha Cherny, the visual art section was prepared in Paris under the editorship of Georgi Lukomskii. As chief editor and art director it would have been Kogan's task to coordinate the editorial work of the Paris and Berlin affiliates. Instead he didn't seem to care about a consistent whole and focused on material relating to the Russian past: scenes of fairytales and décors of the *Ballet Russes* productions, the former to provide comfort to the dispersed Russian communities, to whom the displayed art works offered a shelter or even a substitute from reality, the latter for

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] I. Ziuzenkova, T. Kalmykova, A. Novikova, 'Maksim Gor'kii—Komissar tipografii "Kopeika"', *Voprosy Literatury*, no. 3 (March 1958), 63–66.

the delight of western audiences who could relive the *Ballets Russes*' art of enchantment, or at least such as remains after the performances: the sketches, memoirs and photographs of costumes and stage designs.[62] For them *Zhar-Ptitsa* thus became a shop window through which they could admire the treasures of Russian art.

Conclusion

In its uncommented and arbitrary way of picturing the past, *Zhar-Ptitsa* rarely stepped outside the tone of nostalgia. This was, however, not due to its lack of concept or negligence of the present, as criticized by the Russian contemporary press in Berlin, but rather a strategy that held for its editor a fabulous and harmless way of serving both target groups, as it enabled him to transport both groups of recipients into a neutral, ideology-free zone: the unchanging magic of (danced) fairytales, in which, detached from the threats of the present, princes and fairies ruled and good defeated evil,[63] the kingdom of the Firebird. Unlike one contemptuous art critic in March 1922[64] we can now easily understand *Zhar-Ptitsa*'s inability to react to contemporary issues and why the review had to refrain from politics: it could neither be anti-Bolshevik, as it was launched on Bolshevik funds, nor could it be pro-Bolshevik, as it relied on the contributions of emigrant artists and critics, and on the buying power of western audiences, whose attitude towards Soviet Russia was marked by critical distance and open hostility, rather than by a sympathetic sponsoring mood.

I have revealed *Zhar-Ptitsa* as a product of both sustaining and emerging journalistic activity originating from agents who had gathered in Berlin during the early 1920s and turned the periphery into the centre and the centre into the periphery. More importantly, *Zhar-Ptitsa* stands out as a symbiosis unique in the history of publishing, as it relied not only on Soviet initiative and funding, and Russian creativity but also on Jewish dissemination practice and German support in terms of

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[62] Jed Perl, 'Setting the Stage', *The New Republic*, 25, January 5 & 12, 1998, 25–29.

[63] Carl Einstein, 'Léon Bakst', in idem, *Werke*, ed. by Hermann Haarmann and Klaus Siebenhaar, Bd 2, 1919–1928 (Berlin: Medusa, 1996), pp. 471–500.

[64] Levitan, '*Zhar-Ptitsa*, No. 6. Izd. A.E. Kogana "Russkoe Iskusstvo" Berlin, 1922', *Novaia Russkaia Kniga* (Berlin), no. 3 (March 1922), 9–10.

typographic equipment and fine paper supply. Officially launched for the internationalization of Russian art, with a hidden agenda to support the young Soviet state, *Zhar-Ptitsa* became a success story. At the same time, however, it turned out as something that Alexandre Benois once associated with good ballet: 'a beautiful lie'.[65]

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[65] 'There is no other spectacle that can create such an atmosphere of poetry, that can persuade as strongly as ballet […] Ballet and everything concerning ballet must be artificially conditioned, must be a beautiful lie, and only under these conditions is ballet "good" ', Alexander Benois, 'Décor and Costume. The Composers, Designers, and Librettists', in *The Dance Anthology*, ed. Cobbett Steinberg (New York: New American Library, 1980), pp. 153–171.

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THE ABSENCE OF A JEWISH RUSSIAN LEGACY IN FRANCE: BEN-AMI'S TESTIMONY AND THE SCHWARTZBARD AFFAIR

Boris Czerny

In the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, Jews who had been living in France since the Middle Ages were particularly zealous in their desire for Jews coming from other countries, especially Russia, to become French. French Jews were afraid of being ostracized and of seeing their fragile integration put into question; this was because of the conspicuous appearance of their 'Russian' coreligionaries. They were aware that they could be reminded that in France they were nothing more than guests whose presence was merely tolerated, as the Dreyfus affair had demonstrated. In presenting two episodes from the history of the relationships between French Jews and Russian Jews, and of the misunderstanding between the two groups, I will attempt to explain the failure to promote the cultural heritage of Jewish immigrants coming from the Russian Empire.[1] The first episode is the testimony of Ben-Ami and the second deals with the way the French press and the Russian Jewish press reacted to the Schwartzbard affair.

Ben-Ami (1854–1932), whose real name was Mordekhai Mark Rabinovich, immigrated to Paris in 1881 as a representative of the group Am-Olam.[2] He came to France to make contact with the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* organization. There is little information about his stay in Paris. However, he regularly wrote for the Russian-Jewish magazine *Voskhod*, using the pseudonym Reish Gelusha, which in Hebrew means

[1] On this topic cf. Paula Hyman, *De Dreyfus à Vichy* (Paris: Fayard, 1979); Esther Benbassa, *Histoire des Juifs de France* (Paris: Seuil, 1997); *Les Juifs français de la Révolution française à nos jours*, ed. by Annette Wieviorka and Jean-Jacques Becker (Paris: Liana Lévi, 1998).

[2] In response to the pogroms of the early 1880s, two reform-minded organizations of Russian Jews sought opportunities outside their native Russia. One group, BILU (Beit Ya'akov Lekhu Ve-nelkah, or 'Let the house of Jacob go'), chose Palestine as its destination. The other group, 'Am 'Olam ('The Eternal People'), with its largest concentration of members in Odessa, saw the United States as the land of opportunities.

'The Chief of Diaspora'. He also wrote at least a dozen 'Letters from Paris' to the same magazine[3] (not just two letters, as Laura Salmon has suggested).[4] The first was published in January 1882 in *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda*, followed by others later that year. The subject matter of these letters can be divided into three categories: a) observation of French society, b) judgement of French Jews, c) observation of Russian Jews living in France.

Ben-Ami had a very positive opinion of France, which he saw as the country of freedom and of human rights. He particularly admired the French ability to summon up help for Russian Jews. He enthusiastically quoted extracts from a book written by the diplomat and politician Count Mirabeau (1749–1791) about Moses Mendelssohn and the importance of the emancipation movement among Jews in 1787.[5] He also mentioned the contribution of Victor Hugo (1802–1885), who used his considerable power and influence to castigate the despotism of the Tsarist government and denounce the situation of Jews in Russia. Ben-Ami mentioned that in May 1882 Hugo had presided at a very well attended protest meeting against pogroms, and in June 1882, the newspaper *l'Événement* had published his drama *Torquemada*, which he had written in 1870.[6] This tragedy, an extract from which is quoted by Ben-Ami, is a virulent denunciation of the Spanish Inquisition but, in the context of the persecution of Jews in Russia, the French press regarded the play as a response to the bloody pogroms. Victor Hugo, who in 1882 was president of the Committee for the Support of Jews from Russia (Comité de Secours pour les Israélites de Russie),[7] was not alone in this battle. In spite of a prevailing religious anti-Judaism, French society reacted with sympathy to the situation of Jewish victims of pogroms and to the anti-Jewish laws in the Russian Empire. In magazines such as *La Vie moderne* or *Le Petit Journal*, people could read about the 'colonie russo-juive', and articles entitled 'Les Juifs

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[3] *Voskhod, Knizhki Voskhoda: Rospis' soderzhaniia, 1881–1906*, ed. by A.R. Rumiantsev (St Petersburg: A. Gersht, 2001).

[4] Laura Salmon, *Glas iz pustyni: Ben-Ami, Istoriia zabytogo pisatelia* (Jerusalem: Gesharim; Moscow: Mosty kul'tury, 2002), pp. 65–76.

[5] Honoré-Gabriel Riquetti, comte de Mirabeau, *Sur Moses Mendelssohn, sur la réforme politique des Juifs, et en particulier sur la révolution tentée en leur faveur (en 1753), en Grande-Bretagne* (Paris: EDIS, 1968).

[6] *L'Événement*, June 1, 1882.

[7] On June 21 1882 this committee sent a letter to the mayor of Paris signed by its president, Victor Hugo.

expulsés de Russie campent sur le boulevard d'Ornano' or 'Campement d'émigrants juifs à la gare de Lyon après leur périple d'Odessa à Paris'.[8] This evidence of the reaction of French public opinion explains Ben-Ami's enthusiasm for France. And yet, even if this enthusiasm knew no bounds, his feelings towards French Jews were somewhat negative. His criticism was twofold. First, it concerned the help and support offered by French Jews to Russian Jews. They behaved in an arrogant way towards their Russian 'brothers', criticizing them for behaving like eternal beggars. According to Ben-Ami, the assistance given by French Jews was merely philanthropic and did not provide any real solution for the Russian Jews, of whom they were apparently ashamed. Ben-Ami mentioned an important French Jew who agreed to help, providing the word Jew was neither written nor uttered. So Ben-Ami questioned the nature of Jewish identity. Did the French Jews and the Russian Jews belong to the same people? He analyzed the consequences of having granted civil rights to all members of the Republic, irrespective of their religion or their social class. Thanks to the Abbé Grégoire and also to Mirabeau, the French Jews had become more French than the French, and more French than Jews. The French Jews, Ben-Ami wrote in French, are 'plus royalistes que le roi'.

Eventually he concluded that there was nothing Jewish about them but their name. He was astonished by the way they behaved in synagogues and throughout their ceremonies, in imitation of Catholic rituals. For example, words referring to Jerusalem had been suppressed from the prayers, so as to prove their patriotic devotion to France. The rabbis were dressed as priests. Ben-Ami considered such behaviour as irresponsible and bound to lead to the disappearance of Jewish identity, as Judaism was only a religious practice and totally empty of content.

As he was disappointed with the French Jews, he looked for familiar attributes in the many newly arrived Jews. There were more than ten thousand in Paris, and he considered them as the true spirit of the

[8] 'Jews expelled from Russia, standing on boulevard Ornano', cartoon on the first page by Adrien Marin, *La Vie Moderne*, October 7, 1882; 'Jewish migrants camping at Gare de Lyon, cartoon on the first page of the *Petit Journal*, September 10, 1892; the cartoon refers to the journey made by 120 Jews who were expelled from Odessa and sent to Constantinople, Marseilles, Lyon, Dijon, Fontainebleau, where they slept in the forest. When they arrived at the Gare de Lyon, they spent three more nights there, and many people were struck by their situation.

Jewish people. The largest groups of Jewish immigrants were from Poland, Lithuania and Russia. They lived in an area bordered by the Place de la Bastille and the Rue des Rosiers which was the centre of the Russian Jewish life in Paris. Ben-Ami felt sympathetic towards these Russian Jews who, little by little, were climbing the social ladder without renouncing their Jewishness. Ben-Ami compared their fates and the destiny of the Jewish world as a whole to the motto 'Fluctuat nec mergitur' ('It is tossed by the waves, but does not sink').

The second example illustrating the complex relationship between French Jews and Russian Jews is the Schwartzbard affair. On 25 May 1926 at the intersection of the Boulevard Saint-Michel and the Rue Racine in Paris, Samuel Schwartzbard assassinated Symon Petliura (1879–1926), the president of the Ukrainian Directory between December 1918 and February 1919. Schwartzbard considered Petliura responsible for the massacre of thousands of Jews during the pogroms organized by the independentist Ukrainian army. Schwartzbard had arrived in France in 1906; he was a clockmaker born in Bessarabia in 1886 and joined the French army at the start of the First World War. This patriotic fervour was considered by French Jews as a perfect illustration of the ability of Jewish immigrants to assimilate in French society and to become French citizens. The desire to present Schwartzbard positively must explain the reason why the organizations linked to the Consistoire[9] did not mention that he had been close to the anarchist movement, which would have strengthened the view held by French public opinion concerning the influence of Jews in the spreading of revolutionary ideas.[10] Moreover, Schwartzbard's past, origins and the fact that he shot the torturer of Jews in Ukraine made him a hero for Russian Jews in France and in other countries with large Jewish communities.

As is well known, Schwartzbard was acquitted. The end of the trial was announced on the cover of a Yiddish newspaper, the Parisian version of the *Haynt* (the *Parizer Haynt*), with the French headline: 'Vive la France!'.[11] It was not aimed at the Jewish French community which was less involved than other Jewish communities elsewhere. For

[9] The Central Consistory was an institution set up by Napoleon I by Imperial Decree of 17 March 1808 to administer Jewish worship in France.

[10] Sylvain Boulouque, 'Samuel Schwartzbard, militant anarchiste', *Archives juives*, no. 33/2 (2000), 128–129.

[11] *Parizer Haynt*, 27 octobre 1927, title page.

example, the Jewish community in the USA was very much in favour of Schwartzbard and began to voice support for the killer of Petliura immediately after the murder. Jewish communities started to collect money for his defence. In American Jewish newspapers the main focus was not on the murder itself, but on the absence of a reaction from the Jewish community in Paris. Likewise, Dr Samuel Buchler, president of the Federation of Hungarian Jews in the USA, was quick to assert that his acquittal would glorify the whole Jewish world.[12] The reaction of the Jewish community in America as a whole was no exception. There was also some mobilisation of support in the USSR. Maksim Gor'kii was supposed to speak at the trial but, in the end, he did not attend due to 'health problems'. The Schwartzbard affair occurred at a time when a campaign against anti-Semitism as a remnant of pre-1917 Russian society began in the USSR. The Schwartzbard affair became part of that campaign. For example, a leaflet with testimonies and photographs of victims of pogroms was published, with an introduction by Gor'kii.[13]

In France, the reaction in favour of Schwartzbard developed slowly, over the months that followed the assassination. After Petliura's death, French Jews did not know what position to adopt. The assassination took place at a time when French Jews did not want to be mistaken for the many Jews from the Russian Empire who were settling in France, after emigration to America became impossible in the early 1920s. At that time Russian Jews represented more than sixty percent of the Jewish population of Paris.[14] The proportion of Jews from Russia, Ukraine and Poland grew so large that the French Jews—together with representatives from the Central Jewish Organization (Le Consistoire)—asked the French government to limit the arrival of Jews, which they likened to an 'invasion' and called a 'mal menaçant'.[15]

One year before the beginning of the Schwartzbard affair, the newspaper of the French Jews, *L'Univers israélite*, criticized the presence of posters written in Yiddish in the streets of some Jewish quarters of Paris,

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[12] 'Extrait du *Jewish Daily Forward*', *L'Univers Israélite*, July 2, 1926, 440.

[13] Maksim Gor'kii, 'Pis'mennye pokazaniia na sude nad Sh. Shvartsbardom', in *Protsess Shvartsbarda v Parizhskom sude* (Leningrad: Krasnaia Gazeta, 1928), pp. 57–59.

[14] Dorio Bensimon and Sergio della Pergola, *La Population juive de France: Socio-démographie et identité* (Paris: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, CNRS, 1986), p. 32.

[15] 'Nos échos. Une victime des pogromes', *L'Univers israélite*, May 28, 1926.

such as Belleville and the eighteenth arrondissement.[16] The newspaper also regretted that immigrants spoke Yiddish in the street and that, in using a foreign language, they showed that they did not want to be, or could not be 'real and good' French citizens. The opposition between 'good French Jews' and 'bad immigrant Jews' can be established in an article about Belleville. In 1926, French workers had demonstrated there and shouted anti-Semitic slogans. The newspaper found that the explanation for this was the arrival of young Jews after 1917 who spent their time talking in Yiddish about politics in bars and on the street.[17] There was, the newspaper insisted, no problem between the Jews who had settled there much earlier and the Catholics.

This context highlights the reaction of French Jews at the very beginning of the Schwartzbard affair. In the Jewish French press, Schwartzbard was not represented as a hero whereas, at the same time, he was a hero for the Russian Jews, and, as Simon Dubnow (1860–1941) said, Schwartzbard was an incarnation of the Jewish people refusing to give up.[18] This point of view is widely represented in the *Parizer Haynt*, especially by Yaakov Yatzkahn, the newspaper's editor.[19] The latter, and also the well known Yiddish writer Shalom Ash, called for real Jewish solidarity in order to fight anti-Semitism. At the same time he also accused the French Jews of hiding their Jewishness. The *Parizer Haynt* wrote that the call for union remained a 'lettre morte' and in the article these last words were in French.[20] If we consider the Jewish French press of the time, it seems that the criticism was justified. In *Chalom*, a journal for young Jewish French citizens, the article about the acquittal of Schwartzbard is shorter than another about a naturist camp.[21] However, in the monthly magazine published by the Alliance Israélite, *Paix et Droit*, and in the *Archives israélites* many reports are to be found, if not about Schwartzbard but about pogroms and

[16] Jacques Biélinky, 'Les émigrants juifs à Belleville', *L'Univers israélite*, October 15, 1926, 168.

[17] A strong criticism of shop signs written in Yiddish can be found in *L'Univers israélite*, July 3, 1925, 515.

[18] 'Une lettre du professeur Dubnow sur l'affaire Schwartzbard', *L'Univers israélite*, October 14, 1927, 11.

[19] Cf. Yaakov Yatzkan, 'Pariz in tsenter fun di geshikhte', *Parizer Haynt*, June 6, 1926, 1.

[20] Shalom Ash, 'Der Schwartsbard protses', *Parizer Haynt*, October 17, 1927, 3.

[21] 'Le Procès Schwartzbard', *Chalom*, Oct.–Nov. 1927, 19.

anti-Semitism in Ukraine.[22] Jacques Biélinky, a very prolific journalist from *L'Univers israélite*, wrote at least one article a week about the situation in Ukraine in 1917–1919. The descriptions of physical and mental torture suffered by Jews were intended to arouse a sympathy which had not been expressed at the time. Indeed, if what had happened in the Ukraine had not been studied and written about before 1926, it was completely different after Petliura's murder. A great many books about the anti-Semitic atrocities in Kiev were published in the weeks following the murder. Among these various publications, one is to be noted: the voluminous study of 'the pogroms in Ukraine under the Ukrainian governments', which was published for the first time in Paris in 1927 by the Comité des Délégations juives, a federation founded in 1919 and representing the Jewish organizations of some twenty Eastern and Western European countries. This work, which establishes the reality of what happened concerning anti-Jewish violence during the Ukrainian civil war, had been written under the direction of the Zionist leader, Léo Motzkin (1867–1933) before 1927, but the interest provoked by Petliura's murder enabled its publication. Among the books and articles articles in French we should note *Quand Israël meurt* by Bernard Lecache (1895–1968)[23] and *La Voix de Jérusalem* by Israël Zangwill (1864–1926).[24] The aim of these works was to insist on the fact that France, in contrast, is a country in which law and order are prevalent. This idea is clearly expressed in the *Archives israélites* that it is simply impossible to live and to behave in France like in Ukraine. This is addressed not to Ukrainians, but to Russian Jews. The newspaper emphasized the bad manners and the cultural inferiority of Russian Jews, 'as they stress too much Petliura's assassination, the Yiddish press lacks good manners'.[25] French Jews were very scornful towards the immigrants from the Russian Empire. A journalist of the *Univers israélite* wrote that after the First World War, the 'monde

[22] Cf. the following articles in *Archives israélites*: 'L'Acte d'un justicier', June 3, 1926, 86; 'En préface au procès Schwartzbard', September 15, 1927, 145–146; 'L'évocation des pogromes au tribunal', October 20, 1927, editorial; 'Les Pogromes flétris par la justice populaire', October 27, 1927, editorial; cf. also in *L'Univers israélite*: 'Petliura et les pogromes ukrainiens', July 16, 1926, 464; 'Les Pogromes des bandes de Petliura', July 23, 1926, 485–486; 'La Vérité sur les pogromes en Ukraine', October 27, 1927, 1.

[23] Bernard Lecache, *Au Pays des pogromes: Quand Israël meurt* (Paris: Progrès civique, 1927).

[24] Israël Zangwill, *La Voix de Jérusalem* (Paris: F. Rieder, 1926).

[25] 'Autour d'une affaire judiciaire', *L'Univers israélite*, June 11, 1926, 311.

libre avait d'autres chats à fouetter' [que de s'occuper de la situation des Juifs en Ukraine].[26] This was followed by the accusation of Jewish and Zionist organisations who 'with their absurd national claims had focused the attention away from pogroms'.[27]

French Jews expressed their feeling of superiority at the time of the cancellation of the summons of victims of pogroms by Petliura during the trial. At the last moment, the French lawyer, Maître Henri Torres, decided not to summon men and women who had come especially from the USSR. The Russian Jews regretted this decision. They wanted their brothers to be heard in Paris, 'the capital of the free world'.[28] *L'Univers israélite* considered this reaction as 'a relic of life in the ghetto'.[29] This opposition is also mirrored in the way Schwartzbard was presented. The French press considered Petliura's assassination as an isolated incident, and suggested that Schwartzbard wanted to have his revenge because members of his family had been killed during pogroms. This personalization isolated 'Samuel, the little clockmaker' from the Jewish immigrant community, and turned him into an ideal Jew. In the articles published in the Jewish French press immediately after the assassination a feeling of relief could be felt. Indeed Schwartzbard was presented as an honest shopkeeper, 'an admirer of Greek poetry and French literature'.[30] His biography presented a perfect model of perfect assimilation. He had arrived in France in 1906, at the end of the Dreyfus affair, so at the time when there was a sort of symbiosis between French society and its Jews. Moreover, Schwartzbard also proved his affection to his new country when being drafted in the French Army during the First World War. Each article from the Jewish French press stressed that he had been awarded the *Croix de guerre* for his courage. So he became more and more presented as the perfect model for integration. All references to his origins were suppressed. The two newspapers *L'Univers israélite* and *Paix et Droit* mentioned his glorious past, the violence of Petliura in Ukraine as well as the French intervention in Odessa in 1918. Petliura's murder was thus isolated from Jewish Russian and even from Jewish history, and became part

[26] 'Au seuil d'un grand procès', *L'Univers israélite*, October 14, 1927, 107.

[27] 'The free world had better fish to fry than dealing with Ukrainian Jews.' 'Les Pogromes en Ukraine', *L'Univers israélite*, April 1, 1927, 942.

[28] 'Paris au centre de l'histoire. Pariz in tsenter fun di geshikhte', *Parizer Haynt*, June 6, 1926, 1.

[29] 'Autour de Shwartzbard', *L'Univers israélite*, November 4, 1927, 202.

[30] 'Une Victime des pogromes', *L'Univers israélite*, May 28, 1926, 256.

of the history of the First World War. Schwartzbard's decision to kill Petliura was no longer a Jewish question. According to the French Jewish press, confrontations between the French army and Petliura's soldiers had led to French soldiers being killed.[31] Petliura's assassination by Schwartzbard was nothing but the logical consequence of Schwartzbard being part of the French army. In both places, Ukraine and France, he defended the universal values of freedom and French democracy. The *Univers israélite* went as far as to publish a letter from Schwartzbard in which he wrote that the event of Petliura's assassination and the death of French soldiers in Odessa in 1918 were linked. However the director of the French newspaper *Le Figaro* François Coty (Coty was close to fascist movements and was notorious for his sharply anti-Semitic articles), proved that the letter was not written by Schwartzbard, but by Rabbi Maurice Liber, also known by the pen name Judaeus.[32] This reveals how determined French Jews were to stress that Petliura was killed by Schwartzbard not because the latter was Jewish but because he was a good French citizen. Of course the publication of the invented letter was used by anti-Semitic circles to show that there was no difference between French Jews and Russian Jews, each group seeking to protect the other. This was an easy task because of French society's ignorance of the Jewish world.[33]

The confrontation between the two groups—French Jews and Russian Jews—was heightened at the end of the trial, which took place on the same day as the Jewish festival of Sukkot. At that time, in synagogues that were independent from the Consistoire, a prayer of commemoration was said. This prayer contained a condemnation of the tormentors of Israel. A French anti-Semitic and populist newspaper, *L'Intransigeant*, published an article explaining how this prayer justified 'the hatred some people feel towards Jews'.[34] The *Univers israélite* immediately specified that this prayer (the 'Yizkhor') had not been read in French synagogues since the Middle Ages. The newspaper considered Russian Jews responsible for the scandal and for anti-Semitism in France.[35] Russian Jews, however, did not intend to keep a low profile. In order to lay stress on its historical significance, a journalist from

[31] 'L'Affaire Schwartzbard', *Les Archives israélites*, December 17, 1926, 127.
[32] 'L'Affaire Schwartzbard et *Le Figaro*', *L'Univers israélite*, May 27, 1927, 208.
[33] Eugène Weber, *La France des années trente* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 141.
[34] *L'Intransigeant*, October 16, 1927, 3.
[35] 'Prières et pogromes', *L'Univers israélite*, October 28, 1927, 166.

the *Parizer Haynt* noted that the trial had a national dimension, just like the Dreyfus and Beilis affairs. He added that Schwartzbard had to kill Petliura himself because Jews were not considered as a national minority, so they did not have the same rights as the other nations.[36] In the same way, Simon Dubnow stressed that Schwartzbard's act was an example of non-assimilation. For the first time, wrote Dubnow, a Jew was in court not as the defendant but as the accuser.[37]

One of the consequences of the confrontation between French Jews and Russian Jews was a kind of reconciliation between Jews coming from the Russian Empire and Ukrainians; this reconciliation occurred in Paris. For example, the *Parizer Haynt* noticed that during pauses at the trial they would talk together even if they were enemies during the trial. As far as can be ascertained, in spite of the tensions provoked by the trial, only one fight occurred between a Jewish immigrant, Pertez Stein, and a group of excited Ukrainians. They exchanged shots, but nothing proved that there was any link with the Schwartzbard affair. On the last day of the trial there was a short report in the *Parizer Haynt* about the printing workshop at 5 rue des Gobelins in Paris, where the Yiddish newspaper as well as a Ukrainian one were published. 'Jewish and Ukrainian workers work side by side', wrote the *Parizer Haynt*. The same day the Yiddish newspaper published a call to the Ukrainian people to live in peace with the Jews.[38]

What can we conclude about the Schwartzbard affair and the way it was presented in the Yiddish press in Paris and the French Jewish Press? The affair made it possible to tell people about what had happened in Ukraine during the civil war. But there was nothing about the way of life, or Jewish culture in Russia. At the same time, it is important to note that many Russian Jews were able to express themselves in the Jewish press and to publish books and memoirs about their lives in the Russian Empire. Irène Kachowskaja wrote *Souvenirs d'une révolutionnaire*, and Vladimir Temkin, the former president of the first national Council of Ukrainian Jews, Elias Tcherikover and Jacob-Wolf Latzki-Bertoldi collected and published testimonies about pogroms in Ukraine during the Civil War.[39] At the same time, the Jewish French

[36] Parizer Haynt, October 17, 1927, 4.
[37] See note 22.
[38] 'Schwartsbard un Petliura unter eyn dakh', *Parizer Haynt*, October 19, 1927, 4.
[39] Irène Kachowskaja, *Souvenirs d'une révolutionnaire*, translated from Russian by Marcel Livane and Joe Newman (Paris: Rieder, 1926).

press did not contain the accounts of witnesses of anti-Jewish violence, the people living in the Jewish quarter of Paris, the so-called 'Platzen' in the heart of Paris. Most of the articles did not deal with the Jewish people from Ukraine; there was nothing about their history. The Russian Jews would have liked to share their heritage and to be heard by the French Jewish community. In a very lyrical article, a journalist of the *Parizer Haynt* wrote about the way Schwartzbard's coreligionaries trusted French democracy: 'Young women from Odessa, Lodz and Warsaw gathered around a woman who usually reads prayers in the synagogue. Her reading of articles about Schwartzbard is full of fervour. At dinner time, these women will tell their husbands what happened at the court.'[40]

Ben-Ami's testimony and the analysis of the presentation of the Schwartzbard affair in the French Jewish and Russian Jewish press show that the expectations of Jews from the Russian Empire were limited. As Bernard Lecache has explained, their only wish was for the French Jews to give them time to integrate within the French community without feeling dispossessed of their original culture.[41] The consequences of the rupture between French and Russian Jews were tragic because the rupture prevented them from fighting the rise of anti-Semitism in the 1930s together. After the Shoah, the trend was to forget about collaboration, about the importance of the cultural heritage of Russian Jews, many of whom died in camps, in larger numbers than French Jews. Unlike in Germany, the USA and Israel, there was no Jewish renewal in France in the 1970s with the arrival of Jews from the USSR who could have given a new life to this heritage, a heritage which, from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, was regarded as a cumbersome cultural particularism which was better forgotten.

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[40] N. Frank, 'La Lectrice du Pletzl, Di lezerin fun Pletsl', *Parizer Haynt*, October 21, 1927, 4.
[41] Bernard Lecache, *Parizer Haynt*, October 17, 1927, 4.

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IDEOLOGY AND IDENTITY: EL LISSITZKY IN BERLIN

Christina Lodder

El Lissitzky is an enigmatic and fascinating creative figure with a multi-faceted identity and a complex set of allegiances.[1] He straddled the worlds of the *shtetl* and the technologically advanced West. Having grown up in provincial Belorussia (today Belarus), he studied architectural engineering in Germany. Back in his homeland during the First World War and the Russian Revolutions of 1917, he moved from participating in the Jewish artistic renaissance of the late 1910s to embracing the art and principles of the machine-age avant-garde. Subsequently, his work has been seen as comprising two distinct and mutually exclusive entities: on the one hand the Jewish illustrations of around 1915–1919, and, on the other, the abstract paintings and designs that he made from 1919 onwards under the influence of Suprematism.[2] In Berlin in the early 1920s, his intense activity as a promoter of avant-garde creative approaches has served to reinforce the impression that he had completely turned his back on his Jewish identity in favour of the rigorously abstract pictorial vocabulary of Suprematism. To many art historians, such as Peter Nisbet, the stylistic change seems 'abrupt and total'.[3] Even to a specialist like Chimen Abramsky, the period of Lissitzky's Jewish work appears 'isolated from the rest of his artistic achievements.'[4] Likewise, the major works that he produced in Berlin appear to have 'no connection with anything Jewish'.[5] From this perspective, Lissitzky's artistic trajectory seems to move from the production of explicitly Jewish works like his

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[1] See Nancy Perloff, 'The Puzzle of El Lissitzky's Artistic Identity', in *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow*, eds. Nancy Perloff and Brian Reed (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2003), 1–26.

[2] See, for instance, Peter Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, 1987), 13.

[3] Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', 17.

[4] Chimen Abramsky, 'El Lissitzky as Jewish Illustrator and Typographer', *Studio International*, vol. 172, no. 882 (October 1966), 182.

[5] Ruth Apter-Gabriel, 'El Lissitzky's Jewish Works', in *Tradition and Revolution: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art 1912–1928*, ed. Ruth Apter-Gabriel (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1987), 121.

illustrations for *A Mischievous Boy* of 1919 (Fig. 1) to painting abstract canvases that he called Prouns (*Proekt utverzhdeniya novogo*—Project for the Affirmation of the New, Fig. 2), and ultimately in the late 1920s, to exploiting avant-garde devices to create persuasive propaganda displays on behalf of the Soviet government, as epitomized by his work for the *Pressa* exhibition of 1928 in Cologne (Fig. 3). In other words, Lissitzky was successively the Jewish artist, the Suprematist, and the Stalinist propagandist.[6]

Yet this interpretation of Lissitzky's development is perhaps unduly schematic. Did Lissitzky's adoption of an abstract vocabulary in 1919, and his commitment to communism completely override his Jewish allegiances? Lissitzky himself indicated that there was a certain overlap, giving the period of his Jewish books as '1917–1920'.[7] Despite the artist's assertions to the contrary, several art historians have contested the permanence of his split from Jewish culture. Igor Dukhan, for instance, has argued that although Lissitzky was predominantly a Jewish artist 1916–1919 and 'universal', i.e. concerned with abstraction 1919–1921, in Berlin he embraced both identities and sought to synthesize the approaches of the Jewish, Russian and international avant-gardes.[8] For Dukhan, Jewish messianism informed Lissitzky's seminal theoretical text, 'A and Pangeometry', published in Berlin, and the artist's concept of the proun as a visualization of 'infinity'.[9] More radically, Alan Birnholz suggested a more enduring link between Lissitzky's abstraction and Jewish culture. Birnholz argued that Lissitzky transcended his Jewish identity with the Prouns,[10] while his concept of his role as an avant-garde artist recalled the notion of the Hassidic *zaddik* who was the prophet who enabled his fellow men to achieve a better society.[11] For Birnholz, the concept of the Proun reflected aspects of the Kabbala, and the Proun Room of 1923 possessed affinities with the synagogue.[12] Similarly, Andrzej Turowski has suggested that the

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[6] Perloff, 'The Puzzle of El Lissitzky's Artistic Identity', 1–23; and Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', 13–52.

[7] 'Autobiography by El Lissitzky', in *El Lissitzky* (Cologne: Galerie Gmurzynska, 1976), 88.

[8] Igor Dukhan, 'El Lissitzky—Jewish as Universal: From Jewish Style to Pangeometry', in *Ars Judaica* 3 (2007), 9.

[9] Dukhan, 'El Lissitzky—Jewish as Universal', 1–20.

[10] Alan C. Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', *Studio International*, vol. 186, no. 959 (October 1973), 132.

[11] Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', 135.

[12] Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', 132–135.

Figure 1. El Lissitzky, Cover for Mani Leib, *A Mischievous Boy (Yingl Tsingl Khvat)*, (Kiev and St Petersburg: Yidisher Folks Farlag, 1919). Private Collection.

way in which Lissitzky initially viewed his own form of abstract art was determined by certain features derived from the Hassidic background of his youth.[13] From the perspective of these interpretations, Lissitzky's concern to combine his Jewish heritage with avant-garde approaches

[13] Andrzej Turowski, *Malewicz w Warszawie: Rekonstrukcje i Simulacje* (Cracow: Universitas, 2002).

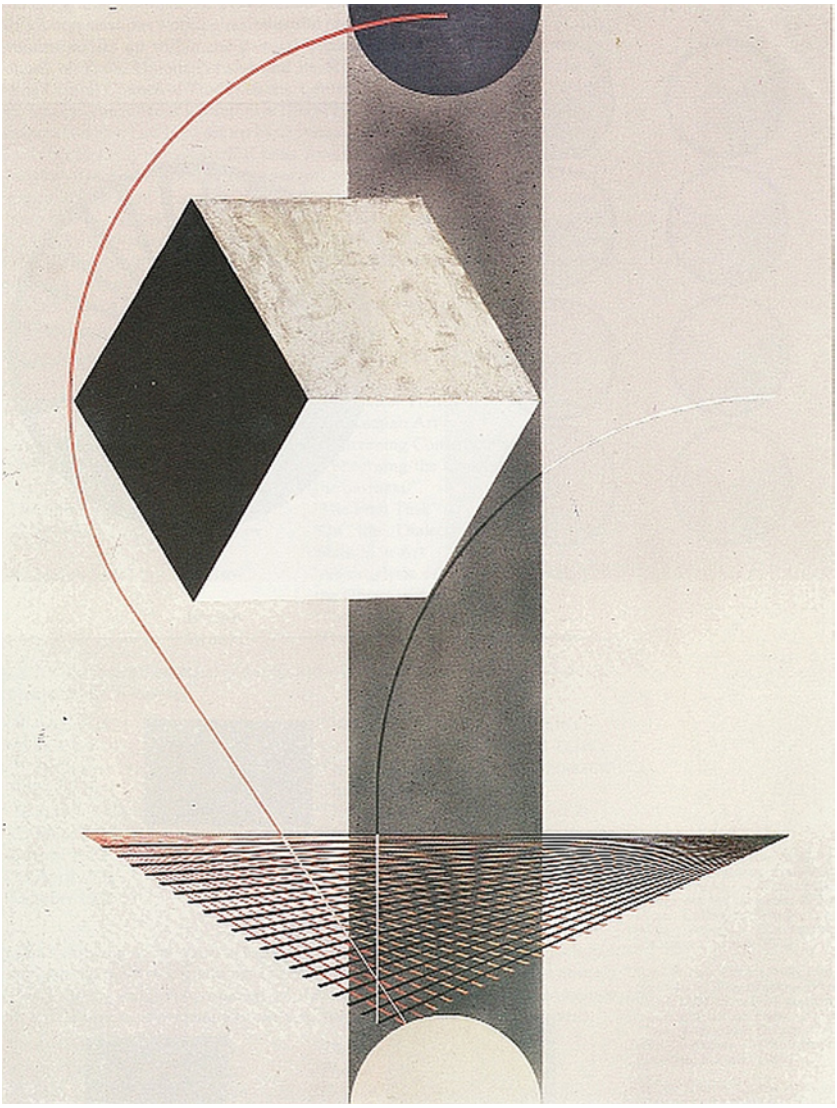

Figure 2. El Lissitzky, *Proun 99*, 1923, Oil on Wood, 129.4 × 99 cm. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of the Société Anonyme.

Figure 3. El Lissitzky, Installation for the Pressa Exhibition, 1928, Cologne. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

in Berlin was part of an earlier process and his activities in Germany did not represent a new departure in his work, but rather the continuation of an existing strand in his creative thinking.

In this paper, I would like to explore these notions further and revisit the idea that Lissitzky (despite appearances to the contrary), did not abandon his Jewish allegiances in 1919, although they might have taken second place for a while. In tandem with this, I should like to argue that the German interlude was not merely a time when Jewish and avant-garde interests were fused, but that the artist's stay in Berlin allowed him to experiment with different and often contradictory elements of his identity and creative thinking. I should like to suggest that it represented a time of fluid allegiances, and multiple aesthetic identities for Lissitzky. During his stay in Berlin between 1921 and 1925, he had the freedom and opportunity to explore and express a multitude of different and what might appear to be conflicting aspects of his identity—his commitment to communism, his allegiance to his Jewish roots, his belief in technology, his dedication to abstract art, and his devotion to extending his avant-garde approach into elements of practical design. From this perspective, the return to Russia in 1925 might more plausibly be argued to mark the end of this comprehensive experimental phase and inaugurate a more focused period of activity in which figurative elements used through the avant-garde medium of photomontage combined with non-figurative compositional devices became the chief medium for his two-dimensional work, while his commitment to communism and acquiescence concerning official preferences for realism eventually came to overshadow other allegiances, including his commitment to avant-garde experimentation.[14]

In the early 1920s, a large number of Jewish avant-garde artists arrived in Berlin from the Soviet Union and participated in the vibrant Jewish culture of the city. Some of them, like Marc Chagall, came independently of the government. Others like Naum Gabo, David Shterenberg, Natan Altman and the architect Berthold Lubetkin came more or less officially as participants in one of the most important diplomatic and cultural East-West events of these early years, the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (*First Russian Art Exhibition*), which opened on

[14] This period also saw Lissitzky being involved in architecture and other areas of design; see Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', 30–46.

15 October 1922, right in the centre of Berlin, at the Van Diemen Gallery, on prestigious Unter den Linden.

The show contained well over 500 exhibits and was intended as a showcase of Soviet artistic achievements and a focus for creating and harnessing sympathy for the new regime, as well as a commercial venture, organized to raise money for famine relief. According to Lubetkin, who had collected works from artists in Russia and subsequently travelled to Berlin in order to help with the display, Lissitzky was present during the unpacking and hanging, so his participation in the organization of the show may have extended beyond merely designing the cover for the catalogue.[15] Lissitzky arrived in Berlin in late 1921, having travelled independently, but his work for the exhibition implies some type of official involvement.

While Gabo and Chagall, along with many other Jewish creative figures like Lubetkin, remained in the West and became permanent émigrés, others associated with the exhibition, such as Shterenberg and Altman, only stayed in the West for a while, and then returned to Russia. For the seven years of the First World War and the Civil War, i.e. 1914–1921, travel beyond the borders of Russia had been virtually impossible. Grasping the opportunity to travel and see what was happening artistically in the rest of Europe had, therefore, been a common and understandable aspiration among creative figures, and did not necessarily entail any virulent anti-Bolshevik sentiment. Material factors also played a role. There was a significant urge to escape the deprivations that the Civil War had imposed on the entire Russian population.[16]

Yet Lissitzky's position is slightly different from that of Chagall at one extreme, who chose permanent emigration, and Altman on the other, who returned to Russia after a short stay abroad. Lissitzky spent about four years in the West, mainly in Germany and Switzerland, before moving back to the Soviet Union in 1925. But, unlike many other artists, he was repeatedly able to return to the West on design projects commissioned by the government for various large international exhibitions, where the image of the Soviet State required expert propaganda handling like, for instance, the *Pressa* exhibition (Fig. 3).

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[15] Berthold Lubetkin, letter to Martin Hammer and Christina Lodder, 20 July 1987.

[16] Sidney Alexander, *Marc Chagall: A Biography* (London: Cassell, 1978), 145.

This implies that he was trusted by the regime and that his sympathy and support for it were beyond doubt.

Indeed, it is possible that Lissitzky's activities in Berlin from the very beginning had a strong official dimension and that he was actually working for the government from 1921 onwards as a secret emissary. Naum Gabo recalled seeing a secret service stamp in Lissitzky's studio in 1922.[17] This suggests that Lissitzky might have been entrusted with an authorized mission to create a phalanx of intellectual and artistic fellow travellers and at the same time realize the aspiration of creating an international community of avant-garde artists united loosely by their sympathy for the Soviet regime. Such an organization had been initially proposed by the International Office of the Department of Fine Arts within the Commissiariat for Enlightenment (IZO Narkomprosa) in 1918.[18]

Certainly Lissitzky's arrival in Berlin in late 1921 marked the beginning of an extremely productive period in his career. The extent of his activities and achievements is incredibly impressive. He appears to have been indefatigable. His energies seem to have been directed toward several objectives. One that is most commonly acknowledged is his aim of creating an international community of avant-garde artists, who were loosely united by a common desire to build a better world through their work, and who could also act as a group of fellow travellers who were sympathetic to the Soviet state. Closely connected with this was his intention to promote abstract art and his personal creative approach through his work, disseminating his ideas by means of prints and exhibitions. Finally, I should like to suggest that he had a third aim, which is less widely accepted, but which would have been important, and that was to encourage Jewish art to develop away from using Jewish folklore motifs and towards an abstract style.

In pursuit of the first of these objectives, he immediately made contact with a wide variety of avant-garde artists of all nationalities. He was evidently in communication with Jewish organizations, but he did

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[17] Miriam Gabo, personal communication, April 1985. For more details concerning the relationship between Gabo and Lissitzky, see Martin Hammer and Christina Lodder, *Constructing Modernity: The Art and Career of Naum Gabo* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 120–123; and Christina Lodder, 'El Lissitzky and the Export of Constructivism', in *Situating El Lissitzky*, 27–46.

[18] See Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 233–234.

not restrict his activities to a Jewish milieu. On the contrary, he seems to have deliberately cultivated a broad acquaintance among people of all races, creeds and political persuasions, with the only proviso that they either belonged to or were sympathetic to the avant-garde. Symptomatic of the wide range of his connections at this time is his close friendship with the German artist Kurt Schwitters, who still considered himself a Dadaist and continued to maintain his anarchic attitudes, while subverting accepted notions of art through his *Merzbau*, an extraordinary accumulation of material which included a Lissitzky 'cave' (contributed by the artist) and eventually extended throughout his house in Hannover. Lissitzky contributed articles to Schwitter's journal *Merz* and also produced the layout for no. 8/9 of 1924 which was devoted to nature as a creative force of organic growth and reflected the ideas of the biologist Raoul Heinrich Francé.[19] In this issue, titled *Nasci*, Lissitzky explored notions of organic growth and irrational elements in creativity, and to some extent sought to reconcile them with his commitment to technology and reason. The association with Schwitters and *Merz* sheds new light on another potentially contradictory element in Lissitzky's thinking and reinforces the idea of the Berlin period as one in which he experimented and indeed tried to fuse a range of artistic, cultural, and ideological identities.

More in keeping with Lissitzky's promotion of geometric abstraction, is his friendship with the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg, who was the editor of *De Stijl* magazine. In May 1922, the two, together with Hans Richter, were responsible for organizing the International Faction of Constructivists. The group's stated aim was to embrace the new art i.e. abstract art and work together for the betterment of society. It opposed individualism with the sense of a progressive collective effort. Its programme stated, 'Art is a universal and real expression of creative energy, which can be used to organize the progress of mankind; it is the tool of universal progress.'[20]

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[19] See Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', 28–30; and Nisbet, 'A Summary Catalogue of Typographical Work by El Lissitzky', in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941*, 190, no. 1924/15.

[20] The faction's declaration was first published in *De Stijl*, 5, no. 4 (1922). For an English translation, see 'Statement by the International Faction of Constructivists', trans Nicholas Bullock, in *The Tradition of Constructivism*, ed. Stephen Bann (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 68–69.

At the same time, Lissitzky and the Jewish writer Ilya Ehrenburg published the journal *Object* (*Veshch'/ Gegenstand/ Objet*), which appeared in two issues in late spring and early summer 1922 (Nos. 1–2, and 3) and espoused similar objectives to the International Faction of Constructivists. It was printed in three languages—French, German and Russian, and contained articles about French Purism, Dutch De Stijl and of course Russian developments.[21] It described its mission early in 1922: 'This publication will have two aims: to inform Russian artists and writers about the post-war achievements of the European masters and provide for the West (in foreign languages) informative material on the state of Russian art.'[22] It was clearly conceived as a kind of two-way conduit of information. In February 1922 Lissitzky wrote to Malevich, 'we're now in contact with whatever is new in the world…the journal will be international. France, Germany, Italy, America, Hungary, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, and other countries are already with us.'[23] *Object*'s distinctly international character was unique among Russian publications at this time.[24] The editorial 'The Blockade of Russia is Coming to an End' was printed in the three languages, spread over the page in three separate columns, with German on the left, French in the middle and Russian on the right. Emphasising the need for co-operation and espousing 'the eternal laws of clarity, economy and proportion', this declaration promoted 'constructive art, whose task is not to adorn life, but to organize it,' by creating objects of all kinds from works of art to useful objects, from paintings to buildings.[25]

The practical demonstrations of his approach, Lissitzky's second objective, were realized through his prodigious creative output. Within

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[21] For a reprint, see *Vešč, Objet, Gegenstand…Kommentar und Übertragungen*, ed. Roland Nachtigaller and Hubertus Gassner (Baden: Verlag Lars Müller, 1994).

[22] "Veshch'", *Novye knigi*, 1 (1922), p. 29; reprinted in Yu. A. Molok, 'Berlinskii zhurnal "Veshch'" i ego russkie kritiki', in *Russkii avangard 1910–1920-kh godov v evropeiskom kontekste*, ed. G.F. Kovalenko (Moscow: Nauka, 2000), 300.

[23] El Lissitzky, letter to Malevich, 25 February 1922, Khardzhiev-Chaga Cultural Foundation, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; English translation in *A Legacy Regained: Nikolai Khardzhiev and the Russian Avant-Garde*, ed. John E. Bowlt and Mark Konecny (St Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2002), 246.

[24] Molok, 'Berlinskii zhurnal "Veshch'" i ego russkie kritiki', 300.

[25] [El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg], 'Die Blokade Russlands geht ihre Ende entgegen', *Veshch'/Gegenstand/Objet*, no. 1–2 (March–April 1922), 1–2; for English translation, see 'The Blockade of Russia is Coming to an End', trans. Stephen Bann, in *The Tradition of Constructivism*, 55.

the space of two years, he published three portfolios and several books (including his innovative design for Vladimir Mayakovsky's poems *For the Voice* and the equally inventive layout for *Die Kunstismen*, which Lissitzky wrote with Hans Arp). Lissitzky also produced numerous illustrations, book covers, typographical designs, and advertisements, had a one-man show, and created an important interior, the *Proun Room* for the *Great Berlin Exhibition* in 1923. His adverts for the Pelikan company (ink, typewriter ribbon, carbon paper, etc.) brought in valuable income, while his portfolios achieved a wide distribution. *The Tale of Two Squares* (1922), which also appeared in a Dutch edition in the journal *De Stijl*, was followed by two portfolios organized by Sophie Küppers for the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hannover (the first Portfolio of 1923, and *Victory over the Sun*, 1923).[26]

All of this seems very difficult to reconcile with any Jewish agenda and the artist's involvement in the revival of Jewish art. Yet, as I hope to show, this concern was a continuous strand in his creative thinking from the mid 1910s to the mid 1920s, and co-existed with his commitments to avant-garde innovation, technology, and communism throughout this period. In 1915–1916 Lissitzky and Issachar Ryback had joined an expedition organized by the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society.[27] The intention was to collect, study and record Jewish folk motifs on domestic utensils, gravestones, and manuscripts, as well as document the decorations and inscriptions in synagogues located along the Dnieper River. Preserving and highlighting this folk culture affirmed Jewish cultural identity, while the material itself acted as a source of inspiration for many Jewish artists in Russia seeking a connection between tradition and contemporary artistic approaches.[28]

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[26] El Lisitskii, *Pro 2 Kvadrata* (Berlin: Skify, 1922); El Lissitzky, *Proun Kestnermappe* (Hannover, 1923); and *Die plastische Gestaltung der elektro-mechanischen Schau 'Sieg über die Sonne'* (Hannover, 1923); reproduced in Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts*, trans. Helen Aldwinkle (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), figs. 80–91; figs. 47–51; figs. 52–63.

[27] The dating of this expedition is uncertain. It may have started in the summer of 1915 and resumed in 1916. See Apter-Gabriel, 'El Lissitzky's Jewish Works', 102.

[28] The beginning of the Jewish renaissance is usually dated to the publication in 1905 of the book by Vladimir Stasov and David Ginzburg devoted to Hebrew ornamental motifs in mediaeval manuscripts. The movement's further development was encouraged by the organization of two ethnographic expeditions to the Ukraine in 1911 and 1915–1916 in search of traces of Jewish folk culture.

On the basis of studies that he made on the expedition, Lissitzky began to illustrate Jewish books, especially children's stories. Between 1915 and 1919 he produced drawings and cover designs for numerous books by Jewish writers.[29] These included his 1917 *An Everyday Conversation: A Legend of Prague (Sikhes Khulin: Prager Legende)*, the Prague legend written in Yiddish by Mojżesz Broderson, who later belonged to the Jung Idysz group in Łódz. The publication of *An Everyday Conversation* included several painted copies rolled in the shape of the Tora and held together in a wooden box. Lissitzky also produced a series of gouaches for *The Little Goat* (*Khad Gadya*), from the Jewish paschal song. This booklet, just a few dozen copies of which were originally published in 1919 by the Kiev Jewish cultural organization Kultur-Lige, appeared in Poland in 1923, in an edition of 1,000.[30]

At the same time as Lissitzky was involved with this type of artistic activity, which was integral to the Jewish renaissance, he was also continuing his technical studies. Before the First World War he had been studying architectural engineering at the Technische Hochschule in Darmstadt, Germany. Unable to complete his degree because of the conflict, he enrolled at the Riga Polytechnic Institute (Rizhskii Politekhnicheskii Institut), which had re-located to Moscow, graduating on 3 June 1918.[31] He thus continued to combine his technical studies with his Yiddish illustration work.

In 1916 Lissitzky moved to Kiev and in early 1919 helped to found the Jewish publishing house Kultur Lige there.[32] By this time, he was working for the local Department of Fine Art within the Commissariat for Enlightenment (IZO Narkompros). In other words, his allegiance to Jewish or more specifically Yiddish culture was going hand in hand with his political sympathies for communism. For him, like many Jews after the Revolution, there simply was no conflict between the two because communism meant the end of government oppression. Indeed, Alan Birnholz has interpreted Lissitzky's 1919 illustrations for *The Little Goat* as a parable of the triumph of the revolution,

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[29] Peter Nisbet lists over 25 books connected with Jewish themes for which Lissitzky designed the covers or provided illustrations. See Nisbet, 'A Summary Catalogue of Typographical Work by El Lissitzky', 177–186. See also Abramsky, 'Eliezer Lissitzky as Jewish Illuminator and Typographer', 182–185; and Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', 130–131.

[30] Apter-Gabriel, 'El Lissitzky's Jewish Works', 118.

[31] See Nisbet, 'An Introduction to El Lissitzky', 14 and 47 n. 9.

[32] Apter-Gabriel, 'El Lissitzky's Jewish Works', 116.

while Haia Friedberg has argued that Lissitzky went further than this, and in these images was actually trying 'to persuade the Jewish public of the justice of the communist cause by using a traditional language, Yiddish symbols, and characteristic Jewish values.'[33]

In May 1919, in connection with his work for IZO, Lissitzky moved to Vitebsk, where he continued to work for IZO until the end of 1920.[34] In September 1919 he started teaching at the Vitebsk People's Art Institute (Vitebskoe Narodnoe Khudozhestvennoe Uchilische) with Marc Chagall, who cherished him as a fellow spirit and his 'most ardent disciple'.[35] The two artists had a lot in common: both had grown up in Vitebsk, although Lissitzky's family was more middle-class than Chagall's, both were immersed in the Hassidic tradition, both had studied art with Jehuda Pen, and both were involved in the Jewish renaissance. Even their styles were close, although it could be argued that Chagall's use of Jewish motifs was freer and more fanciful.

The relationship with Chagall changed dramatically when Malevich arrived at the school on 5 November 1919.[36] Lissitzky had previously encountered Malevich at the Moscow branch of the Council of Military Delegates.[37] In October, when Lissitzky was in Moscow requisitioning materials for the school, he met Malevich again and invited him to Vitebsk.[38] Although Lissitzky's adoption of abstraction is usually dated to Malevich's arrival, his interest in non-figurative art actually co-existed with his Jewish works and started before the founder of Suprematism arrived in Vitebsk. In fact, Lissitzky seems to have begun experimenting with non-figurative approaches in Kiev in early 1919 under the influence of Alexandra Exter who had a studio in the city.[39] Only two examples of his early explorations have so far been discovered: the dust jacket he designed for *The Little Goat* in 1919 using intersecting geometric planes of colour, and *Composition* (1919,

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[33] See Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', 131; and Haia Friedberg, 'Lissitzky's *Had Gadia*', *Jewish Art*, 12–13 (1986–7), 294–303 (294).

[34] Aleksandra Shatskikh, *Vitebsk: The Life of Art*, trans. Katherine Foshko Tsan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 57.

[35] Marc Chagall, *My Life* (London, 1965).

[36] Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 67.

[37] A. Shatskikh, 'Malevich i Lisitskii—lidery UNOVISa', in *V kruge Malevicha*, 45–51; and A.S. Shatskikh, 'Perepiska Kazimira Malevicha i El Lissitzkogo (1922–1925)', in *Pis'ma Kazimira Malevicha E. Lisitskomu i Nikolaiu Puninu*, ed. L.A. Zykov, A.G. Kaminska and A.S. Shatskikh (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Pinakoteka, 2000), 1.

[38] Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 66–67.

[39] Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 60–61.

Figure 4. El Lissitzky, *Composition*, Oil on Canvas, 71 × 58 cm. National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kiev.

Fig. 4), probably completed in the summer of that year, in which he constructed a complex structure of abstract forms around a central collaged fragment of printed Hebrew text.[40] Interestingly, both of these initial forays into abstraction are closely connected with Lissitzky's Jewish interests, indicating an early desire to combine the new style with his ethnic allegiances, and suggesting that at this point he felt no contradictions between the two.

In this respect, Lissitzky was not unique. Many young Jewish artists had no difficulty in reconciling their interest in a non-objective approach to image making with Jewish folk art. In 1919 Boris Aronson and Ryback published a manifesto in which they declared 'Long live abstract form, which represents something specific, since it is akin to folk art' and suggested that precisely because such forms lie at the root of all subsequent art 'it is only through abstract form that a painter is able to express his own national sense of form.[41] Of course, it is possible that they were thinking of the 'abstracted form' of Cubism and associated developments in contemporary art rather than the strict geometrical abstraction of Suprematism that Lissitzky eventually adopted and developed further in the Prouns. Nevertheless, they clearly saw no problem in using such modernist approaches in creating a new Jewish art. They continued:

> However much the artist might strive to be international, he cannot fail to display national characteristics when expressing himself in painting through abstract forms. This is because the spiritual and intellectual being of the artist always springs from the impressions he has absorbed from his environment.[42]

The critic Abram Efros endorsed this opinion when talking about the development of a Jewish art:

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[40] For the dust jacket of *The Little Goat*, see *Tradition and Revolution*, fig. 75. For his painting *Composition*, see Alexander Kanzedikas, 'Ein unbekanntes Bild von El Lissitzky', in *Die Grosse Utopie: Die russische Avantgarde 1915–1932* (Frankfurt: Shirn Kunsthalle, 1992), 71, fig. 197.

[41] B. Aronson and Y. Ryback, 'Di Wegn fon der juddischer Moleraj' [The Ways of Jewish Painting], *Oifgang* [The Way Up], no. 1 (1919), 99; cited by Grigori Kasovsky, 'Chagall and the Jewish Art Program' in *Marc Chagall: The Russian Years 1906–1922* (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, 1991), 56. A rather different emphasis is conveyed by the translated extracts from this text in *Tradition and Revolution*, 229.

[42] Aronson and Ryback, 'Die Wegn', 102; cited by Kasovsky, 'Chagall and the Jewish Art Program', 57.

> Either our aesthetic rebirth will not take place at all, or it will grow from those same two roots from which contemporary international art stemmed, namely modernism and folk art. This combination is both astonishing and unusual, especially for Jewish artists, in that avant-garde ideas go hand-in-hand with a solid, deep-rooted tradition.[43]

Meanwhile in Vitebsk, conflict soon arose between Chagall and Malevich. Both had discarded traditional concepts of pictorial space and the notion of describing the external details of reality in their paintings. But in place of Malevich's geometry, Chagall used motifs from Jewish life to produce fanciful and lyrical narratives. In February 1920 Malevich established Unovis (an acronym standing for the Champions of the New Art) at the school. In April 1920 Chagall observed, 'the grouping into "tendencies" is very well defined; there are (1) the young people around Malevich, and (2) the young people around me. Although we are both striving towards leftist art, we regard its aims and means differently.'[44] On 25 May 1920 the *Unovis Miscellany No. 1*, declared that the Vitebsk State Free Art Studios were now 'under the flag of Unovis.[45] On 5 June 1920 Chagall left.[46]

Lissitzky had sided with Malevich during this tense time, and Chagall felt embittered and hurt. It was a personal and artistic defection.[47] Yet Lissitzky's rift with Chagall might have also coloured subsequent commentary on Lissitzky's works, by people who had considered themselves his erstwhile colleagues. Before this, Lissitzky had been wholeheartedly accepted as a Jewish artist, but afterwards, he tended to be excluded or the nature of his contribution qualified. Aronson, for example, in his *Contemporary Jewish Graphics* published in Berlin in 1924, omitted Lissitzky's name from the final period in the development of Jewish art in Russia, namely that of authentic individuality, although he had acknowledged his contribution in the earlier phases of assimilating

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[43] Abram Efros, 'Lampa Aladina', *Evreiskii mir* 1 (Moscow, 1918), 301, cited by Kasovsky, 'Chagall and the Jewish Art Program', 57.

[44] Marc Chagall, letter to Pavel Ettinger, 2 April 1920, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Manuscript Department, cited in Aleksandra Shatskih, *Vitebsk. Zhizn' iskusstva 1917–1922* (Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2001), 99; translation adapted from Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2001), p. 146.

[45] Cited by Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 145.

[46] Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 147.

[47] See, for instance, Jackie Wullschalger, *Chagall: Love and Exile* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 244.

tradition, and modernization.[48] In contrast, Aronson asserted that Chagall 'personifies the second aspect of Jewish art, namely its primitive spontaneity'.[49] Lissitzky's rejection of Chagall, who was held in such high esteem as a Jewish artist, along with his espousal of Suprematism in late 1919 seem to suggest that Lissitzky was totally turning his back on the Jewish renaissance. His subsequent statements did nothing to contradict this impression. Indeed, they encouraged this interpretation. But was this true? Or was he, as I would like to argue, merely re-formulating his approach to traditional Yiddish culture and the notion of a modern Jewish art?

That Lissitzky had not totally abandoned his Jewish orientation is clear from the evidence of two articles that he published after he left Vitebsk. One of these, an enthusiastic and passionate description of the artistic splendours of the synagogue at Mohilev, was printed in the culturally progressive Yiddish journal *Milgroim* in Berlin in 1923. Lissitzky poetically described elements of the decoration, including various creatures in motion, emphasizing the dynamic qualities this gave to the interior. His eulogy ends with his statement that the synagogue is an important monument and a distinguished work of world-class art, proving that the Jews are an artistic people. Yet even while he was celebrating this example of Jewish creative achievements, he warned about the danger of simply copying such art:

> If would-be artists pick up this once genuine folk expression and take to stylizing it, and powdering it, and splitting it up into bits and pieces, and then present this hodge-podge as new art and culture—then it were better to do without such culture. It is not necessary.
>
> What is called art is only created when one is least conscious of creating it. Only then does it remain a monument of culture. Today it is being created by those who fight against it.[50]

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[48] See Boris Aronson, *Sovremennaya evreiskaya grafika* (Berlin, 1924); English translation of chapters 3–6, as Boris Aronson, 'Contemporary Jewish Graphics', in *Tradition and Revolution*, 235–238, with discussion of the phases of Jewish art and Lissitzky, 236–237.

[49] Aronson, 'Contemporary Jewish Graphics', 237.

[50] El Lissitzky, 'Vegn der Mohliver shul: zikhroynes', *Milgroim*, no. 3 (1923), 9–13; English translation with reproductions of the original illustrations as 'The Mohilev Synagogue: Reminiscences' in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941*, 55–58; and El Lissitzky, 'Memoirs Concerning the Mohilev Synagogue', trans. Seth L. Wolitz, in *Tradition and Revolution*, 233–234.

In other words, Lissitzky was suggesting that the Jews could make a significant contribution to artistic culture, but stressed that if they wanted to create a new and great Jewish art, they should not pillage folklore or create a pastiche of the past, but assimilate former achievements, transcend them, and adopt new means of expression. In this respect he was following the editorial policy of *Milgroim*, which 'regarded Jewish art as part of the general creative process, moulded inexorably by the times and the artist's personality, rather than by national characteristics.'[51] Implicitly Lissitzky was criticizing works produced during the Jewish renaissance in Russia, including his own illustrations and Chagall's paintings, and suggesting that Jewish artists adopt abstraction to create a universal art that would embrace everyone and everything. In this respect, his vision bears some resemblance to the vision of the unity of all life that was presented in the Hassidic religious tradition. Lissitzky even implied in his text that his approach would result in the perfection of that vision.

Lissitzky's other article indicates that he was actively engaged in the debates being conducted among Jewish artists in Poland, when he stopped there briefly in 1921 on his journey from Russia to the West. We do not know precisely how long he stayed in Warsaw, but it was clearly more than a flying visit, and he was evidently still associated with the Kultur Lige, which printed a second edition of Mani Leib's *The Mischievous Boy* (1922, Fig. 5) in 4,000 copies, now with a more geometrical format.[52] Lissitzky also used a similar pictorial style to design a cover for Ben Zion Raskin's *Four Billygoats*, which was also published in 1922.[53] In addition, Lissitzky gave a lecture to a circle of Jewish artists and got involved in their debates. Henryk Berlewi, one of the participants, recalled the discussions with Lissitzky, which were often continued in his Warsaw studio, and remembered the polarization of the argument into two extreme alternatives: on one hand, the tradition of Jewish folk art as manifest in the countryside—on the other, the concept of a universal culture as promoted by the international

[51] See Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 'From My Archives', in Rachel Wischnitzer-Berstein, *From Dura to Rembrandt: Studies in the History of Art* (Milwaukee, 1990), 166, cited by Dukhan, 'El Lissitzky—Jewish as Universal', 10.

[52] Nisbet, 'A Summary Catalogue of Typographical Work by El Lissitzky', 183, fig. 1922/1.

[53] Ben Zion Raskin, *4 Tyashim* (Warsaw: Tarbut, 1922); for reproduction see Nisbet, 'A Summary Catalogue of Typographical Work by El Lissitzky', 183, fig. 1922/2.

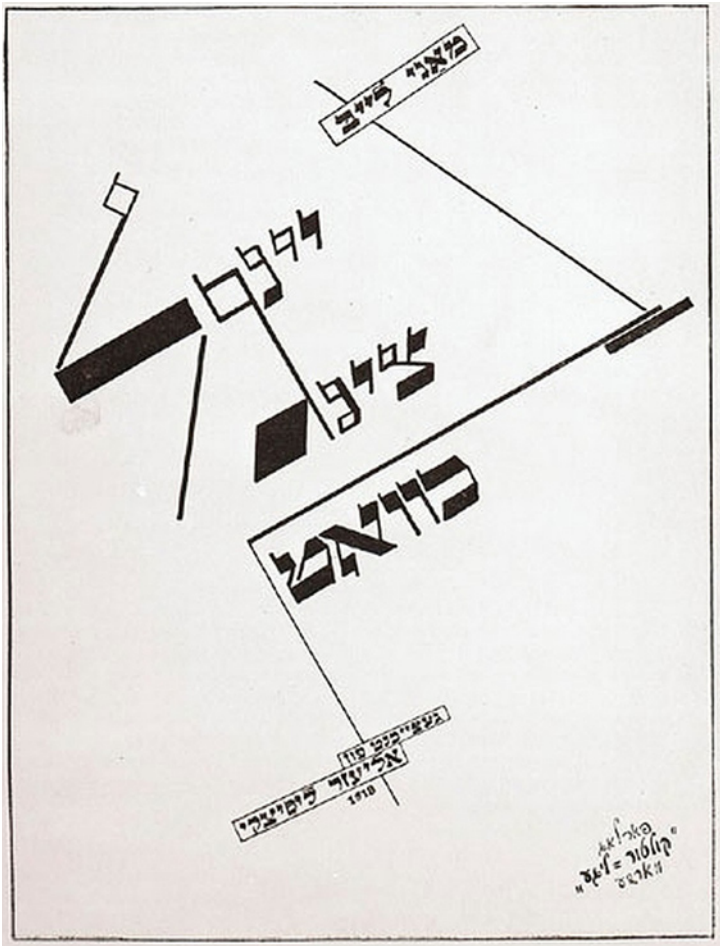

Figure 5. El Lissitzky, Cover for Mani Leib, *A Mischievous Boy* (*Yingl Tsingl Khvat*), (Warsaw: Kultur Lige, 1922). Private Collection.

avant-garde.[54] In stylistic terms, the essential division was between figurative distortion and abstraction. Berlewi was so convinced by Lissitzky's arguments that he, too, abandoned the kind of expressive distortion of essentially figurative form so firmly associated with the Jewish renaissance and adopted abstraction. Lissitzky's article, repeating the theses of the lecture that he gave in Poland, was published in Yiddish, in the columns of the Polish literary and artistic journal *Ringen*.

In this text, titled 'The Conquest of Art', Lissitzky wrote with great passion about the new kind of art that he envisaged:

> The name Proun signified for us that station on the path of creating the new form that grows out of the earth, which is fertilised with the dead bodies of the picture and the artist. The picture fell apart, together with the old world that had had created it…The new world will not need little pictures…
>
> We believe in creative intuition, which creates its own method and system…according to laws which are as organic as the growth of the flower…
>
> We don't need the individual, but the universal.
>
> We live in an epoch of reinforced concrete, a dynamic epoch, we don't describe and we don't beautify, we race and create.
>
> We have overcome religion in order to now fight to overcome art…
>
> We are going out, to create in space and time the elements of the first, second and third dimension, in order to grow along with the whole of nature, guided by the laws of the world. And our movement constitutes a move forward, which is both unflinching and misunderstood, like the steps of the sleepwalker, from whom all draw away embarrassed.[55]

In this way, one might suggest that Lissitzky transferred the dream-like fantasies of Chagall's paintings and the Hassidic vision of harmony and peace into another imaginary world, but this time the world of the new abstract art, the envisioned environment of the Proun, through which he evoked a universal utopia. In Berlin he promoted that art and sought to create a basis for its transference from art to the world of reality. The utopian elements within communism clearly dovetailed with this aspiration, and therefore his allegiance to the communist

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[54] Henryk Berlewi, 'El Lissitzky in Warschau', in *El Lissitzky*, ed. J. Leering and W. Schmied (Eindhoven: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum; Basel: Kunsthalle; and Hanover: Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1965–1966), 61–63.

[55] Eliezer Lisicki, 'The Conquest of Art', *Ringen*, 10 (1922); English translation in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941*, 59–62.

idea, broadly defined, went hand in hand with his allegiance to his Jewish roots. Utopia at this point was not just Jewish, suprematist or communist, but an all-encompassing, multi-dimensional vision.

On a more mundane level, too, Lissitzky's practical actions in Warsaw and Berlin during the early 1920s complemented these important statements. Alongside his Prouns, he developed Jewish themes and even employed Jewish imagery in his work, suggesting a continuing engagement with the project of creating a modern Jewish art and an artistic affirmation of his Jewish identity. This is particularly evident in his reworking of the cover for Mani Leib's *A Mischievous Boy* (*Ying Tsingl Khvat*). The earlier version of 1919 is figurative, with the boy and the animal depicted in expressive broad sweeps of colour and line (Fig. 1). In the later 1922 version, published in Warsaw, Lissitzky retained the essential configuration of rider and horse, but translated it into a series of straight lines, which zig-zag across the page and combined with the letters create a dynamic typographical arrangement (Fig. 5). He used a similar approach in the drawings he made in Berlin for a Yiddish edition of Ukrainian Folk Tales while those for a translation of Belorussian Folk Tales were executed in a more transitional style, which possessed strong craft overtones.[56] In his covers for Olga Forsch's play *The Rabbi* and Levin Kipnis's book of poems *Oxen* of 1923, both published in Berlin, he adopted a more innovative treatment, manipulating the letters themselves as the graphic components of his design. [57]

One of Lissitzky's most eloquent Jewish works of this period is his illustration for Ilya Ehrenburg's short story 'The Boat Ticket' (*Shifskarta*) in *Six Tales with Easy Endings* published in Berlin in 1922. For this Lissitzky used collage elements in a compositional format based on the Star of David.[58] He also placed the two Hebrew letters '*pe*' and '*nun*', traditionally used on tombstones to signify 'here lies', on the palm of a raised hand and combined this with reference to the Hamburg-New York shipping timetable (Fig. 6). These elements are rooted in Ehrenburg's story, which concerns the turbulent years of the Revolution and an old man's belief in his son's promise to send him 'a boat

[56] See *Ukraynische folk-mayses*, trans. Leyb Kvitko (Berlin, 1922); illustrated in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941*, 186, fig 1922/17; and *Vaysrusische folkmayses* , trans. Leyb Kvitko (Berlin, 1923), illustrated in *El Lissitzky 1890–1941*, 186, fig. 1923/1.

[57] See *Tradition and Revolution*, 191, fig. 104; and 66, fig. 31.

[58] It is unlikely that Lissitzky was using an illustration made earlier, since one of the other illustrations in the book includes a newspaper cutting dated 20 April 1922. See Apter-Gabriel, 'El Lissitzky's Jewish Works', 119.

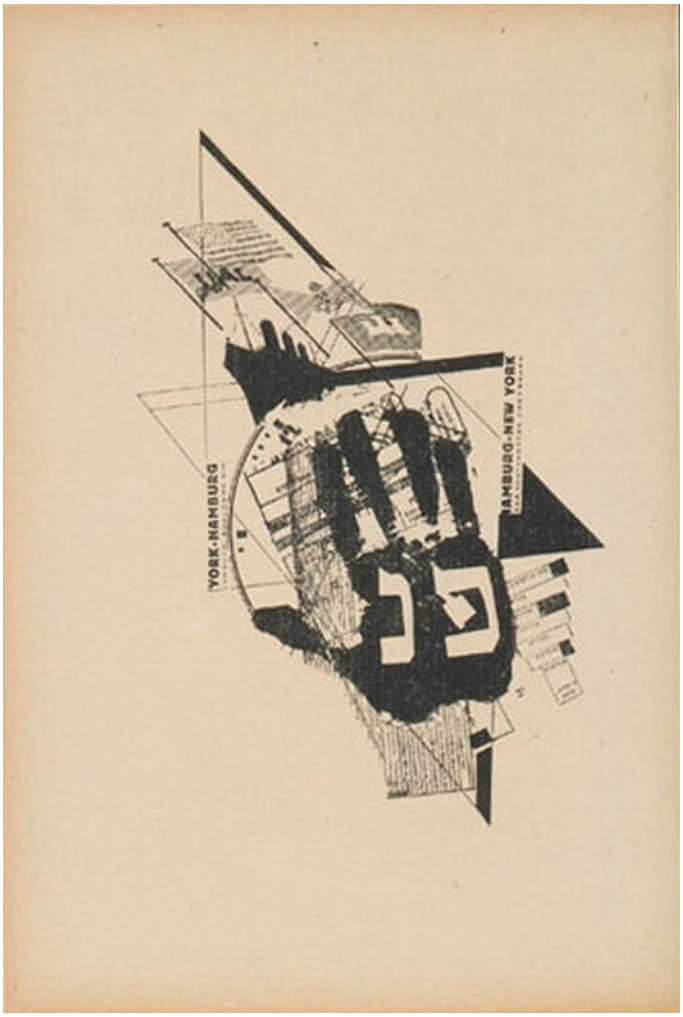

Figure 6. El Lissitzky, 'The Passenger Ticket', Illustration for Ilya Ehrenburg, *Six Tales with Easy Endings* (*Shest' povestei o legkikh kontsakh*) (Moscow and Berlin: Helikon, 1922).

ticket', which he doesn't understand, but associates with the messiah and the promised land, with all the religious and political connotations this entails. Yet Lissitzky's image contains certain ambiguities and can sustain several readings. While referring to the death of the story's hero, the artist might also have been alluding to the end of an entire era. In this context, 'here lies' could be interpreted as announcing the end of the old way of life for Jews in Eastern Europe, along with the demise of the entire pre-revolutionary, pre-Soviet world. At the same time, the words on the hand seem to refer directly to Malevich's passionate appeal: 'Let the overthrow of the old world of art be inscribed on the palms of your hands.'[59] In this illustration, therefore, Lissitzky could be seen to be deliberately fusing Jewish and avant-garde concerns. I would suggest that this combination is also implicit (although perhaps less visually evident) in the photographic self-portrait that he made just a couple of years later, entitled *The Constructor* (Fig. 7). In this, the open hand holds a compass and is fused with the face of the artist, announcing not just his allegiance to constructive art, but also to the more fundamental and ambitious enterprise of building a new world—the promised land.[60] The artist's eye replaces the Hebrew letters 'here lies', while the circle, which supplants the Star of David and suggests the Earth's sphere, extends the particular Jewish resonance to the entire world.[61]

Such textual and visual evidence is compelling and reinforces the idea that Lissitzky's stay in Berlin should be regarded as an intermediate space—between East and West, abstraction and figuration, Jewish art and creative activity in the service of the Communist Party. Lissitzky's stay in Germany evidently represented an interlude between cultures, which allowed the artist to operate on various levels and with different groups, to experiment in many different and apparently contradictory directions. It was, for Lissitzky, a time of multiple and fluid

[59] Kazimir Malevich's slogan which became the motto of Unovis. See Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), 111, although I have modified the translation.

[60] This reading is at odds with Birnholz's interpretation that Lissitzky is dealing with the growing official backlash against Jews, and depicting himself as the crucified Christ with the compass in his hand denoting the nails that affixed Christ to the cross and the eye the stigmata. See Birnholz, 'El Lissitzky and the Jewish Tradition', 134.

[61] For a detailed discussion of the symbolism of the hand in this work, see John E. Bowlt, 'Manipulating Metaphors: El Lissitzky and the Crafted Hand', in *Situating El Lissitzky*, 129–152.

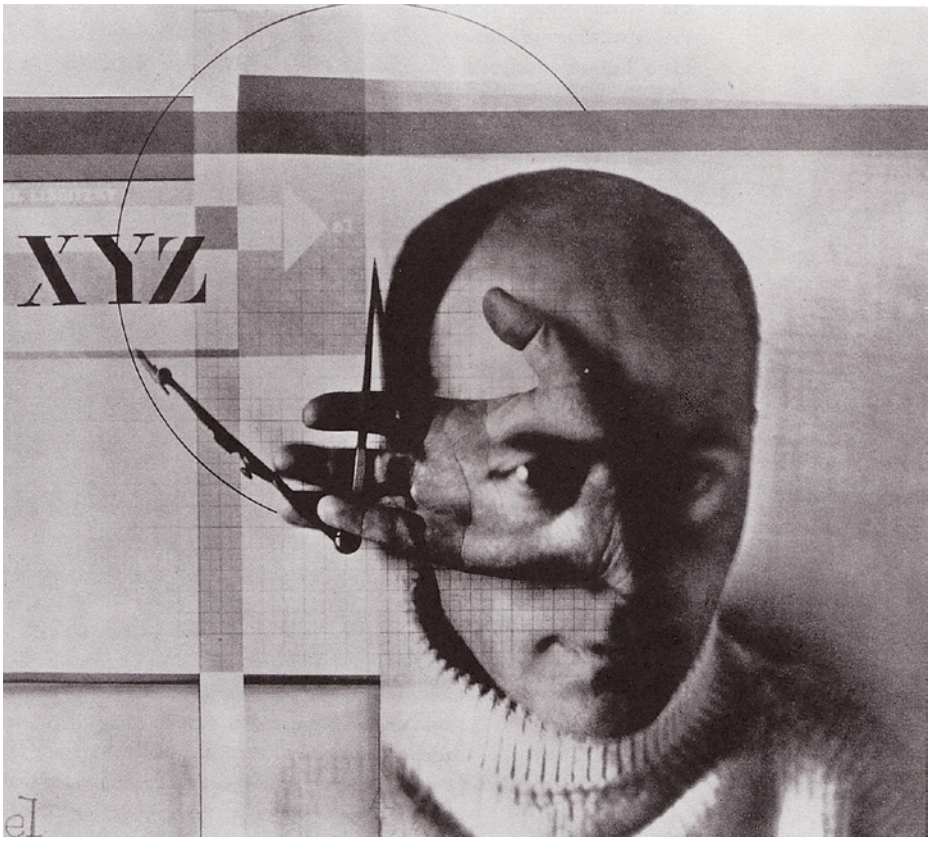

Figure 7. El Lissitzky, *The Constructor (Self-Portrait)*, 1924, Gelatine Silver Print, 19 × 21.1 cm. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

identities: suprematist, dadaist, communist, constructivist, and last, but not least, Jewish artist.

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PART FOUR

REPOSITORIES OF THE RUSSIAN JEWISH DIASPORA

SIMON DUBNOW AND THE QUESTION OF JEWISH EMIGRATION IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Viktor Kel'ner

The issue of large-scale Jewish emigration first emerged in its full scope in the early 1880s. Jewish pogroms raging across the southern parts of the Empire made thousands of Jews leave the country. Heated debates started among the Jewish community, and the young generation in particular, concerning not only the necessity of emigration, but also the 'travel options'. Popular articles in contemporary Jewish press were entitled 'What to do?' and 'Where to go?'.[1] The topical alternatives were America and Palestine. Between thirty and forty thousand Jews left Russia in 1881 and 1882. Among the advocates of the Palestine option were veteran nationalists including men of letters and journalists, such as Moses Leib Lilienblum, Leon Pinsker, Perets Smolenskin, Maks Mandelstam, and Lev Levanda. Many of them had recently been blamed for alleged assimilative tendencies, planning a religious reform and a social transformation of the whole structure of the Jewish community in Russia. Their primary opponents, who belonged to the 'Baron Ginzburg and Poliakov circle',[2] were the proponents of the old *Stadlan* method of behind-the-scenes negotiations with the authorities.[3] Among the major opponents of the idea of emigration was the writer Grigorii Bogrov. The supreme authorities were also divided on the topic of Jewish emigration. Simon Dubnow, a young journalist and inexperienced historian, did not keep out of the debate and published

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[1] Viktor Kel'ner, 'Mezhdu N'iu-Iorkom i Iaffo: Diskussiia o putiakh ėmigratsii i sud'be evreistva v 1881–1883 godakh', in *Evreiskaia ėmigratsiia iz Rossii 1881–1905*, ed. by Oleg Budnitskii (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008), pp. 34–46.

[2] Cf. Viktor Kel'ner, ibid.; Yaakov Poliakov (1832–1909) worked in banking and international commerce. He was a supporter of general Jewish institutions, such as the Jewish Colonization Association. Shmuel Poliakov (1837–1888) was a merchant and a contractor in road construction. He founded the ORT society. Eliezer Poliakov (1842–1914) worked in banking in Moscow.

[3] John Klier, 'Krug Gintsburgov i politika shtadlanuta v imperatorskoi Rossii', *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta*, 3(10) (1995), 38–55.

an article 'Vopros dnia' (Problem of the Day) in the journal *Rassvet* (Dawn). He insisted that the urge towards emigration represented 'a mere self-preservation instinct' which would persist until the pogroms and the legal restraints were done with. He suggested that the phenomenon should be regarded as a natural factor of Russian Jewish life.[4] He believed that Jewish emigration from Russia would continue and advised that it should be encouraged and the fate of those wishing to depart should be eased. Dubnow criticised mainly those Russian Jews who decided to go to Palestine, even though his own brother Vol'f was among them. Dubnow advised against emigration to Palestine because the land was poor and the newcomers tended, as he believed, only to aggravate the strained circumstances of the old yishuv. In addition, Dubnow unequivocally attacked the Jewish zealots moving to the land of Israel in their old age. He considered them as 'the dregs of the Jewish community' because the old people lived on charity given by the Jews who stayed in Russia. Dubnow warned that, as most Jews in the land of Israel were orthodox believers, 'no educated and liberal Jew would be safe among the fanatics'.[5] Considering the available options, Dubnow recommended to those wishing to leave Russia to go to the USA. First, he argued, the country had 'the structures prepared to accept any amount of immigrants'. Following the familiar Russian arguments of the populists, Dubnow regarded emigration as a purely agricultural enterprise, that is, as 'cultivation of land',—'the only firm ground which is free from the fatal miasma of national antagonism and religious intolerance'. Dubnow's views on the 'Palestinophile' ideology developed later into Zionism. During the 1870s Dubnow often considered leaving Russia. He wanted to settle in France and to obtain a proper education as a historian for he believed the French school of history to be the most progressive-minded. However, by the early 1880s the young journalist had given up his hope for a career as an important historian. At the height of the pogroms and during the resulting debates on the fate of Russian Jewry, he did not want to leave the large Jewish community and decided to join the struggle for their equal rights.

Even in the early twentieth century, Dubnow still retained his negative attitude toward the Zionistic ideas which predominated at that

[4] Simon Dubnov, 'Vopros dnia', *Rassvet* no. 34/35 (1881), 1348–1352.
[5] Ibid.

time among Russian Jews. He emphasized the possibility of living a valuable national life and of a further development of Ashkenazi culture in Europe. He was convinced that the cultural and historical traditions of European Jewry would fade in the land of Israel. He considered Jewish emigrants to the US and in Argentina to be refugees escaping from the horror of pogroms and economic grievances rather than champions of nationalistic ideologies.

Dubnow's attitudes towards Zionism and the *aliyah* changed gradually after 1917. The Balfour declaration and, more importantly, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the British victory in Palestine led him to the following confession: 'I have been considering my attitudes to the Palestinian question and Zionism for decades. I believe this to be an all-Jewish rather than a mere party matter.'[6] Dubnow still believed that the land of Israel could give refuge only to a part of the nation and would not end the dispersion of the Jewish people. However, during the 1920s he considered settling in Erez Israel in order to complete his long-term work on the world history of the Jews. On the other hand, he saw the land of Israel as a mere refuge for Jews persecuted in Russia and elsewhere rather than the home of a state, since, as he believed, the resources for a sovereign Jewish state were still lacking.

By the end of 1919 Dubnow felt an increasing spiritual isolation and concern about his 'life's work', that is the composition of a general history of the Jews. All his friends who belonged to political and artistic spheres, such as Semen An-sky, Maksim Vinaver, Genrikh Sliozberg, Oskar Gruzenberg, emigrated. Life and work in Russia became intolerable, both in material and spiritual terms. The governmental suppression of Jewish national and scholarly activities was continuously increasing. Dubnow was particularly disturbed by the Jewish communists leading the attacks on national scholarship and culture. The situation made him decide to leave the country, emigration being justified only by the struggle for freedom to work.

In 1920, when an opportunity for lawful settlement in Lithuania occurred and presented itself as an opportunity for many Jews wishing to leave Russia, Dubnow officially defended his decision to leave, arguing that his works were edited in a number of European countries

[6] Simon Dubnov, 'Natsional'noe ob"edinenie: Palestinskii mandat i Litovskaia avtonomiia', *Rassvet* [Berlin] no. 22 (1922), 2–38.

and he was to supervise translation and publishing in person. After a long and distressful period of suspense, Dubnow even took the risk of writing to Lenin. The letter included the phrase: 'Set me free. Give me back the right of emigration to my Jewish brethren who were persecuted under the tsarist regime over decades. My native land is the land of my nation, with 10 million out of 12 million Jews now residing outside Russia.'[7]

The exit permit was issued in early April 1922. Dubnow's emigration to Berlin during the 1920s has become the subject of several myths describing him as a scholar striving to abstain from the political and social developments of Jewish emigration. To be sure, his main purpose in Berlin was to write a new general history of Jews and to edit various translations of the work. In fact, the 'noise of time'[8] distracted him from pure scholarship, and he led the life of an emigrant Jewish scholar or social activist who had left Russia for Berlin or Paris. Dubnow joined a number of Jewish émigré organizations including the Committee for the Rights of National Minorities. In 1924 and 1926, he participated in the Committee's conferences. In 1927, Dubnow attended a special conference called for by the League of Nations Committee of Jewish Delegations in Geneva where he actively defended a Ukrainian Jew, Schwartzbard, who—in revenge for the mass murder of Jews during the Russian Civil War—had killed the main person responsible for the crime, Symon Petliura. In the capacity of an expert, Dubnow participated in the trial of the distributors of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders* in Switzerland. At the request of M. Vinaner, Dubnow wrote for the multilingual journal *Evreiskaia Tribuna* (Jewish Tribune) published in Berlin and Paris. He became involved in the famous discussion among the emigrant public which was provoked by the book *Rossiia i Evrei* (Russia and the Jews).[9] The authors—Jewish emigrants from Russia, most of whom Dubnow knew from his previous social and political activities—demanded that those presumed to have actively contributed to the revolutionary events should be severely punished, and called for cooperation with the most reactionary monarchist forces of the Russian emigration against the

[7] Michael Beizer, 'An Unsent Letter from Simon Dubnov to Lenin', *Jews in Eastern Europe*, 24 (2) (1994), 49–51.

[8] A famous expression by Osip Mandelstam and the title of one of his autobiographical prose works (1925).

[9] I.E. Bikerman (ed.), *Rossiia i evrei* (Berlin: Osnova, 1924).

Bolsheviks. Dubnow vigorously opposed this interpretation of recent events as well as the idea of a corporate liability.[10]

The leaders of many Jewish organizations who desired to win Dubnow for their causes were interested only in his prestige. When Dubnow joined an emigrant association he only wished to work hard and to influence its ideology. Among his priorities was the preservation of the political and cultural heritage of Russian Jewry. He always supported Yiddish cultural initiatives and contributed to Jewish newspapers and journals. At the same time, Dubnow intended to build bridges between the Russian Jewish emigration and European Jewish communities. Old Jewish communities in Germany, France and other European countries traditionally disapproved of the numerous East-European Jews who arrived to stay in their countries.[11]

Dubnow changed his attitude to Zionism to a large extent while staying in Berlin during the 1920s. He recognized the Zionist course as a means of 'partial settlement of the Jewish question' and became more tolerant towards his former opponents: many Jewish political activists he had fiercely argued against in Russia, among them the Zionist activists Leo Motzkin, Viktor Iakobson, Yaakov Leshinsky, and Yaakov Latskii-Bartoldi, became visitors at his house in Berlin. In Berlin, Dubnow made friends with and, in contrast to earlier times, indulged in discussions with such personalities as David Koygen, Albert Einstein, and Edward Bernstein. His changing views on the problems of emigrant life are evident from his collaboration with ORT.[12] In 1929, he joined, along with Martin Buber and Arnold Zweig, the League of the Friends of Workers in Palestine. Together with Albert Einstein, he worked for the Jewish Research Institute established in Vilna. He also collaborated with advocates of Hebrew culture and Yiddish activists, with Zionists and Bund socialists. His main task was to maintain both national identity and cultural diversity.[13]

In Berlin, Vilna and Riga, Dubnow often appeared at meetings and events during the 1920s and 1930s, along with persons as differently minded—both politically and aesthetically—as Issaiy Eichenwald,

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[10] Viktor Kel'ner, *Missioner istorii: Zhizn' i trudy Shimona Dubnova* (St Petersburg: Mir, 2008), p. 590.

[11] Central Jewish Archive, 1, 75 A. Stu. 1, #9; 8513 Verband Russischer Juden in Deutschland, Centrum Judaicum Berlin.

[12] *80 Years of ORT: Historical Materials* (Geneva: World ORT Union, 1960), p. 140.

[13] Kel'ner, *Missioner istorii*, pp. 587–589.

Marc Chagall, Issachar Ryback, David Bergelson, Rafael Abramovich or Haim Nahman Byalik. In 1925 he took part in a conference of the Union of Jewish Foreign Students. In 1928 he spoke at the special meeting with leaders of the Jewish community in Germany organized by the Union of Russian Jews in Germany. All these organizations were interested in Dubnow's authority which was indisputable for Russian emigrants. News from Russia described the rapid Jewish Sovietization and assimilation, as well as the suppression of all aspects of an independent national life. At the same time, Poland, Hungary, Romania and other European countries witnessed the rapid growth of anti-Semitism. By the late 1920s, this made Dubnow change his view on emigration radically. Under the changing circumstances, he saw large-scale emigration as the only salvation for the Jewish people. Dubnow introduced the idea of several emigration options: to the land of Israel and elsewhere which he regarded as equally valuable. He began to consider emigration as an integral part of Jewish national identity, and the only way to save Jewry as a nation.

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'IMMORTALIZING THE CRIME IN HISTORY…': THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OSTJÜDISCHES HISTORISCHES ARCHIV (KIEV—BERLIN—PARIS, 1920–1940)

Efim Melamed

The history of Jewish émigré archives is still virtually unstudied.[1] We do not even have at our disposal a reasonably complete list of the archives scattered around the globe. Some of the documents stored in them still carry, figuratively speaking, the clotted blood of events and they can have a strong impact on our perception of the Russian (Ukrainian) Jewish emigration. The archive which I shall use as an example to demonstrate this undoubtedly stands out, not only because of its importance (unlike the majority of émigré archives it was collected mainly in the country of the 'Exodus') but also because of its unusual fate.

The Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv was established in Kiev in 1919 where, after the February Revolution of 1917, the renaissance of Jewish science and culture was accompanied by an outburst of collecting and publishing activities. It is worth remembering that Ukraine was not only the core of the Pale of Settlement, within the borders of which the majority of Russian Jews lived, but it was also the arena of the severest confrontation during the Civil War and of the bloodiest pogroms in the modern history of Jewry.[2]

It is, therefore, unsurprising that numerous Jewish political parties and organizations of that time concentrated their attention on collecting materials about pogroms. Almost all of them united around the Central Jewish Pogrom Victims Aid Committee established in Kiev in January 1919. Naturally, the idea appeared to make the collected

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[1] Nevertheless, the subject has been treated by O.V. Budnitskii, 'Materialy', pp. 206–221; see also Iu.N. Amiantov and I.S. Rosenthal, 'Iz istorii arkhiva Bunda', pp. 331–346.

[2] The pogroms of the period are discussed in numerous papers, publications, documents and memoirs. The views of modern historians on their nature as well as statistics on the number of pogroms and their victims (with the distribution of the main parties involved in them) are cited in the article by Budnitskii in his *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdu krasnymi i belymi*, pp. 275–343; see also Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*.

materials accessible to a broader public. This idea was supported by the Kiev-based Yiddish Folks-Farlag and by the Jewish National Council (the executive body of the Jewish Provisional National Assembly). These three establishments formed in May 1919 the Editorial Board for the Collection and Publication of Materials on the Pogroms in Ukraine. Its members were the representatives of the founding organizations, among them such well-known Jewish public figures and writers as Vladimir Latskii-Bertholdi, Nahum Shtif, Felix Lander and Elias Tcherikower. The latter was formally the secretary of the Editorial Board but in fact became its chief almost at the outset.

Elias Tcherikower (1881–1943) left a distinct mark in the field of Jewish studies. In 1925, when he was already living in Berlin, he became a co-founder of YIVO and headed the historical section of that institution until his death. At the same time, between 1929 and 1939, he edited its publication *Historishe Shriftn*. He had already written a monograph in 1913 on the history of the Society for the Dissemination of Enlightenment among the Jews in Russia; later, he was involved as author and editor in the preparation of fundamental works on the history of the Jews in France and in the USA.[3] However, Tcherikower's name is mostly associated with his own works, which became a document of the martyrology of the victims of the Ukrainian pogroms, and with the archives on which his works are based.

Remarkably, the Editorial Board considered the creation of a substantial archive its priority. This corresponded with the main aim of the organization which, as Tcherikower wrote later, consisted in 'providing the fundamental and objective historical work of systematizing documentary data, without any political tendencies'.[4] Dissatisfied with the available materials, the Editorial Board initiated the collection of documents on pogroms but also on the current political situation. Survivors and witnesses, among them between ten and fifteen thousand Jewish refugees who flooded *en masse* to Kiev,[5] were requested to send their testimonies while envoys who formed a net of correspondents were appointed to work in the provinces. The Editorial Board managed also to take into its possession materials which had been gathered by a

[3] Since the analysis and the description of Tcherikower's historical heritage is beyond the scope of this paper, I refer only—for those who are interested in more details—to the recent article by Joshua M. Karlip, 'Between Martyrology and Historiography'.

[4] Cherikover, *Antisemitizm i pogromy na Ukraine*, p. 3.

[5] Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*, p. xviii.

number of other organizations and institutions, including those of the Soviet period such as the Pogrom Aid Committee of the Kiev Red Cross, the Ministry of Jewish Affairs during the period of Ukrainian independence between 1917 and 1920, investigation committees and judicial bureaux on pogrom matters in Zhitomir and Kiev, the Aid Department of the People's Commissariat for Social Welfare of the Ukrainian SSR, the All-Ukrainian Jewish Public Pogroms Victims Aid Committee (Ukrevobschestkom), and the Jewish communities of Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov and other cities.

As a result, they accumulated a large quantity of documents and materials relating to two thousand pogroms in 800 Jewish communities in Ukraine. The collection consisted of thousands of records of evidence and testimonies of victims and eye-witnesses, accounts and reports of Jewish public figures who visited the locations of the pogroms and information on Ukrainian *atamans* participating in pogroms with their original appeals and proclamations. It even included such exotic provocative material as samples of the Ukrainian currency, 'karbovantsy', on which was printed: 'Beat Jews, save the Ukraine'.[6] There were also materials shedding light on the acts of Denikin's Volunteer Army, alongside accounts of 'red' pogroms and peasants' and insurgent movements. Other examples of the archived documentation[7] included *pinkasim* (Jewish community records) of some communities, lists of those killed, newspapers and selections of press clippings; numerous examples of so-called human documents (letters and diaries); visual sources such as photographs and—a rather rare source for that time—a newsreel which later served as a source for documentary films.[8]

This collection, which was unique in its completeness and variety, was supplemented with valuable foreign sources obtained from Ukrainian diplomatic missions, from the Committee of Jewish Delegations in Paris, from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and from other institutions after the archive had secretly been transferred to Berlin. The city served also as a refuge to most members of the

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[6] Mentioned in the memorandum about the pogroms in Ukraine of August 13, 1919 (Central Archives of the History of Jewish People, hereafter CAHJP, P10a, box 1, folder 1).

[7] Cherikover, *Antisemitizm i pogromy na Ukraine,* pp. 1–8; cf. E. T[cherikove]r, *Ostjüd[isches] Historisches Archiv in Berlin*.

[8] Referred to in a short description of the archives, in the supplement to the letter of its Board from June 6, 1924 to the British historian and journalist Lucien Wolf (CAHJP, inv. 316)

Editorial Board staff, including Tcherikower and his wife Rebecca (1884–1963), who took an active part in the archive's affairs.

It might seem incredible that such a large quantity of documents was smuggled out of Ukraine. The details of this illegal operation which lasted eight months remain obscure. What we do know is that the archive was first brought to Moscow, where Tcherikower managed to establish contacts with Lithuanian diplomats. It was transferred in parts to Lithuania only afterwards and from there to the capital of Germany. This could not have been done, as it seems, without the assistance of the Lithuanian ambassador and poet Jurgis Baltrušaitis (1873–1944). Baltrušaitis facilitated the emigration of a significant number of representatives of Russian culture, among them the writers Konstantin Bal'mont, Boris Zaitsev, and Andrei Belyi, rescuing them from the Bolshevik terror. Less well known is his assistance to members of the Jewish intelligentsia, including Marc Chagall (Baltrušaitis helped the painter to save some of his major early works by permitting them to be shipped by diplomatic pouch to Lithuania).[9] The Tcherikowers were part of a group of forty refugees, including David Bergelson, Leib Kvitko, Jacob Lestchinskii, and Issakhar Ber Rybak who, in March 1921, left in a freight train for Kovno and, after a brief stay there, resumed their way to Berlin.[10]

The reasons for moving the archive abroad were twofold. First, the current conditions made it impossible for the Editorial Board to work legally. Second, the archive's future seemed endangered. Changing regimes based in Kiev tried to confiscate it, each for different reasons. The primary motivation of the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic was to hinder the publication of proof of anti-Jewish violence in which government troops were involved, while the Bolsheviks wanted to obscure the truth about the 'red' pogroms and at the same time to denigrate the Ukrainian nationalist movement. After the establishment, finally, of the Soviet regime, Tcherikower and his colleagues could no longer count on an uncensored edition and had to rely on foreign publishers.

These circumstances partly explain the choice of Berlin that, at the beginning of the 1920s, was not only the main centre of freedom, democracy and culture and of Russian and Ukrainian Jewish

[9] Cf. Kazys Norkeliūnas, 'Jurgis Baltrušaitis'.
[10] Ben-Adir [Abraham Rosin], 'Ribak der mentsh', p. 78.

emigration, but also the second largest Yiddish publishing centre after Warsaw.[11] The majority of the staff of the Yiddish Folks-Farlag which was then headed by Vladimir Latskii-Bertholdi had arrived in Berlin only a few months before Tcherikower, in order to establish a similar Jewish publishing house, the Klal-Farlag.

The archive was also re-named and registered as a society named *Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv* (The Archive of the History of Eastern-European Jewry). At the same time, the enterprise gained wider public support when a number of eminent Jewish public figures who were living in Germany, including Simon Dubnow, Baal-Makhshoves (Israel-Isidor Eliashev), Haim Nahman Bialik, Ben-Adir (Avraam Rozin), Nahum Gergel, Joseph Schekhtman, Meir Kreinin and Jacob Teitel, joined the Editorial Board.

By that time the Board had already compiled a large-scale plan for the series, 'The History of the Pogrom Movement in Ukraine from 1917 to 1921'. It consisted of seven volumes which were to be published in Russian and Yiddish, with subsequent translation into one of the main European languages. In addition to a descriptive part, each book was to contain documentary and photographic supplements. Tcherikower undertook to write the first two volumes and, according to some sources, the concluding seventh volume on Jewish self-defence.[12] Joseph Schekhtman edited the third volume on pogroms conducted by Denikin's army, Nahum Shtif prepared the fourth volume on the pogroms by the insurgents. The fifth volume, which was dedicated to the aftermath of the pogroms, was edited by Jacob Lestchinskii, while the sixth volume, which contained reference data on all registered pogroms, was prepared by Nahum Gergel. The society also planned other publications, such as descriptions of the pogroms in Belorussia, collections of the most salient evidence, or *pinkasim* of some shtetls.[13]

Other projects were less ambitious, owing to the limited financial resources of the enterprise. Tcherikower complained in his correspondence about the urgent need and the lack of support from the Jewish community, which had not realised the importance of creating an

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[11] Cf. Glenn S. Levine, 'Yiddish Publishing in Berlin and the Crisis in Eastern European Jewish Culture'.

[12] Szajkowski, 'Di geshikhte', p. 343; I am grateful to Liudmila Sholokhova (YIVO) for her assitance with this source.

[13] Cherikover, *Antisemitizm i pogromy*, pp. 7–8.

archive that would shed light on the national catastrophe.[14] The collective appeal of the Archive's Board, initially published in the Yiddish press and subsequently translated into English and sent to the English historian and publicist Lucien Wolf (1857–1930) in June 1924, was in a similar vein:

> After several years of toil it was realised that due to a lack of funds it was impossible to bring the good work to an end. The different Jewish relief organizations which ought to have secured the existence of such a publication were so busy with immediate relief work that they did not show any interest in the historical work, and they have not supported this undertaking in a sufficient way. Hence it has only been possible to publish the first introductory volume in two languages. Now the edition and the archives are in a very critical and helpless situation. The remaining volumes are ready in manuscript but their publication is at the moment impossible. The materials on Petlyura and Denikin, on the insurgents, a register of the killed and also the materials on Jewish self-defence are threatened to be lost. Even the archives, a rare collection on persecutions of Jews, are in danger.[15]

It should be added that the development of the project was hampered by Tcherikower's involvement in other important social affairs, by his perfectionism and his struggle for survival. As a result, only three volumes of the planned series were published. The first volume, *Anti-Semitism and Pogroms in the Ukraine from 1917 to 1918*, written by Tcherikower himself, was published in Russian and Yiddish in 1923;[16] the second, entitled *Pogroms in the Ukraine in 1919*, which was prepared in the late 1920s and in the early 1930s, was published only in Yiddish more than twenty years after Tcherikower's death, in 1965, whereas the third (chronologically the second) volume *Pogroms of the Volunteer Army in the Ukraine* by Joseph Shekhtman was published in 1932 only in Russian.

The effect of the publication of the first two books was, as it seems, less significant than expected. This can be partly explained by the fact that, despite the original intention, none of the volumes was translated into a European language. Only the publication of the first volume was close enough to the events described; the second volume, prepared by Schekhtman, was published when the interest in the pogroms had

[14] Szajkowski, 'Di geshikhte', p. 343.
[15] See note 8.
[16] Cherikover, *Antisemitizm i pogromy*, p. 3.

already considerably faded. The rather sluggish response to the publication also reflected the apprehension of the Russian-Jewish circles and the desire not to provoke a rise in anti-Semitic sentiments.[17]

The use of the archive was more effective during the much discussed trial of Samuel Schwartzbard, who had shot the former head of the Directorate and the Chief Ataman of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Simon Petlyura, in Paris on May 25, 1926. Most Jews believed Petlyura to be the 'main culprit of the Ukrainian massacre'.[18] During the preparation of the trial, which took place in October 1927, the Archive was temporarily relocated to Paris. Both sides of the conflict, Ukrainians and Jews, considered the outcome of the trial a matter of principle. Even Simon Dubnow, who during this period refrained from public activities and participation in various political meetings for the sake of his main work, the *World History of the Jews*, deemed the case exceptional. The historian recorded in his diary under the date of 2 June 1926 a number of details concerning the trial. He mentions the creation of a special Sholom Schwartzbard Defence Committee headed by the well-known Zionist activist Leo Motzkin (1867–1933): 'The other day we discussed how our pogrom archive can help the defence in the upcoming trial'. By 'we' Dubnow meant the internal Berlin Circle, which consisted of his closest friends, including Tcherikower whom he esteemed highly and considered 'one of the main initiators in this case'. Indeed, not only did Tcherikower become the secretary of the above-mentioned Committee, which comprised himself, Dubnow and the witnesses of the Ukrainian tragedy Jacob Lestchinskii, Nahum Gergel and Isaiah Klinov, but he also directly participated in the trial as a witness for the defence.

By that time, Tcherikower had not yet completed the book on the pogroms of 1919, but the materials he was still collecting became the basis for the special edition, which he prepared together with Joseph Shekhtman, Leo Motzkin and Nahum Tsatskis for the beginning of the trial.[19] Published in English and French, the issue was intended to bolster the arguments of Schwartzbard's counsel Henri Torres (1891–1966) and convince the judges of Petlyura's responsibility for the crimes committed by his army. The book was meant to counter

[17] Szajkowski, 'Di geshikhte', p. 347.
[18] Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, p. 557.
[19] Cf. *The Pogroms in the Ukraine under the Ukrainian Governments* and *Les Pogromes en Ukraine sous les gouvernements ukrainiens*.

propaganda published, also in French, by Petlyura's supporters of the special Ukrainian Judicial Committee.[20]

Neither work can be regarded as examples of strict scientific objectivity. According to Henry Abramson, some of the documents cited by Tcherikower were edited during the translation, while others which could possibly put Petlyura in a more favourable light, were omitted.[21] The primary purpose was to affect public opinion and, eventually, the jury. The arguments, evidence and photographs provided by Tcherikower's publication proved more convincing than those of the opposition, and they are believed to be one of the factors which influenced the outcome of the trial—the vindication of Schwartzbard.[22]

The attitude towards the trial varied even among Jewish intellectuals. It is sufficient to recall the peculiar position of Arnold Margolin who, as Leo Motzkin said, supported Petlyura rather than the Jews.[23] Dubnow's point of view, which was shared by Tcherikower, was not only to use the trial to protect Schwartzbard who 'stood up for our martyrs and raised their memory before an indifferent world'[24] but, most of all, to 'disclose the terrible truth about the three years of slaughter in Ukraine by Petlyura's gangs'.[25] Dubnow had expressed the same idea in his introduction to Tcherikower's book in 1923: 'The thought of the Roman poet "Possibly one day an avenger will rise out of our bones" is alien to the Jewish spirit. Our only revenge is to immortalize the crime in history'.[26] Immortalizing the crime in history is what Tcherikower himself was involved in for many years as a supplier and custodian of the 'testimonies against all the villains of the world'.[27] Tcherikower provided effective assistance to representatives of Jewish communities in Switzerland during the famous Berne Trial (1933–1937) against the local Nazis who had printed and distributed *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. He headed a group of emigrant historians who were commissioned to find evidence to declare the *Protocols* a forgery. Among his colleagues were scholars who were experienced in similar

[20] Cf. *Documents sur les pogromes en Ukraine*.
[21] Abramson, *Prayer for the Government*, p. 176.
[22] Ibid.; cf. *Kratkaia evreiskaia ėntsiklopediia* (Jerusalem, 1999), vol. 9, cols 1154–1156.
[23] Zosa Szajkowski, 'A Reappraisal of Symon Petliura', pp. 199–200.
[24] Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, vol. III, p. 558.
[25] Ibid., p. 562.
[26] Cherikover, *Antisemitizm i pogromy na Ukraine*, p. 15.
[27] Iu. Mark, 'I. M. Cherikover (1881–1943)', *Evreiskii mir*, vol. II, p. 427.

provocations, such as Vladimir Burtsev, Boris Nikolaevskii, and Sergei Svatikov. Aleksandr Tager, a lawyer known for his 1933 book *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa* ['Tsarist Russia and the Beilis Case'], worked on the same project in Moscow and Leningrad archives. The results of the research were not only used during the trial which recognized the *Protocols* as a forgery but also encouraged further research in this field.[28] Tcherikower also promoted the defence of David Frankfurter (1909–1982), who shot Wilhelm Gustloff, a Swiss Nazi responsible for spreading propaganda of racial hatred against Jews, in Davos on 4 February 1936.[29]

I now return to the fate of the archive. The collection remained in Berlin until April 1933. Contrary to the commonly held opinion, it was not transferred to YIVO and did not become a part of it.[30] Only shortly before Tcherikower moved to Paris, where he was forced to emigrate when the Nazi party came to power in Germany, he sent a part of the Archive weighing about 500 kilograms to YIVO.[31] Fortunately, the cargo contained, despite its significant weight, only part of the collection. With few exceptions, all the materials which had been sent to Vilna perished there during the war. What remained is now stored in YIVO in New York. The rest of the documents were transported to Paris once again where Tcherikower and his wife lived until 1940. Shortly before the German Army invaded the French capital, the couple hastily left the city and headed to the South of France from where, albeit with great difficulty, they managed to make their way to New York. Tcherikower had to leave both the library and the Archives which, in addition to the pogroms collection, included his personal archive and materials from the YIVO historical section, in Paris. Almost all these documents survived, thanks to Tcherikower's student and colleague, the historian and archivist Shayko Frydman (1911–1978), better known under the pseudonym Zosa Szajkowski. He revealed the twists and turns of the rescue operation in the afterword to the above-mentioned posthumous edition of Tcherikower's book

[28] For more materials see Khagemeister, pp. 74 and 149; cf. Budnitskii, *Materialy*, p. 209; see also YIVO Archives, Rg. 358, F. 96, pp. 1–2.

[29] *Kratkaia evreiskaia ėntsiklopediia*, vol. 9, col. 1155 [and note 22].

[30] Fruma Mohrer and Marek Web, eds, *Guide to the YIVO Archives*, pp. 193–194 (it is stated here that the Archive merged with the Vilna YIVO in 1925); cf.: Lukin and Peri, 'Israeli Archives', p. 66; Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, p. 140.

[31] Szajkowski, 'Di geshikhte', p. 347.

about the pogroms in Ukraine in 1919, omitting, however, his key role in it.[32]

According to the memoirs of his acquaintances, Szajkowski was a typical self-made man, an extraordinary individual, but at the same time prone to adventurism and even kleptomania when dealing with the archival documents that filled his apartment to overflowing.[33] On the one hand, he provided a great service to YIVO by rescuing and studying Jewish archival treasures; on the other, Szajkowski was exposed for stealing documents from other repositories.[34] His discrepant character is believed to have served the American writer Jerome Badanes as a model for the principal character of the novel *The Final Opus of Leon Solomon* (1985). Like his prototype, its hero committed suicide after being caught stealing a rare publication from the Judaica collection of the New York Public Library.[35]

Born in the Polish town of Zaręby Kościelne, Szajkowski emigrated to France at the age of sixteen. There, after trying his luck in various professions, he began to contribute to the Yiddish press. He received a fellowship at YIVO in 1938–39 and became friends with Tcherikower. Under his influence Szajkowski not only familiarized himself with the history of the Jews but he also left the Communist movement. At the beginning of the Second World War Szajkowski joined the Foreign Legion. In June 1940, fighting against the German troops, he was wounded and sent to a military hospital. He was awarded the French *Croix de guerre* and demobilized. It was then that he managed, with the support of his French friends, to smuggle Tcherikower's library and archives out of Paris. He sent a small part of the documents to New York and hid the rest in Marseilles. Afterwards, he followed Tcherikower to the United States and became a member of staff at YIVO. Not much later, in January 1943, Szajkowski joined the U.S. Army and participated in the battles in Europe as a paratrooper and military interpreter. After the liberation of France he returned to Marseilles in order to take care of his teacher's heritage. Having found both books and documents intact, he received the agreement of the American

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[32] Szajkowski gives more certain information on his role in *Jews and the French Foreign Legion*, p. 80

[33] I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Mordekhai Altshuler, Prof. David Fishman and to the former chief archivist of YIVO, Marek Web, who kindly shared with me their recollections of him.

[34] Mayorek, 'Zosa Szajkowsky and the Transfer of French-Jewish Archives to the US', *passim*. [Hebrew]

[35] Ibid., pp. xlix–l.

military authorities to send all of them to YIVO where later, with Tcherikower's widow, he ordered and described them.

Today these documents form ten separate collections, including Tcherikower's, Dubnow's and Schwartzbard's papers, and the collection of the Archive of the History of the Eastern-European Jewry.[36] According to the guide to the YIVO archives, its compilers believed that the latter holds only a small fraction of what it used to be, and that the major part of it was lost during the German occupation of Vilna.[37] The confusion can be explained by the fact that the authors of the guide were not aware of a considerable part of the same collection, which was stored in the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem (hereafter CAHJP), and therefore judged the size of the archive by the materials kept in YIVO. Formerly, the respective group of records was erroniously named after Leo Motzkin, a close collaborator of Tcherikower,[38] despite the fact that the same archives include another group of records under the name of Leo Motzkin.[39]

Some years ago I had an opportunity to look through the archive *de visu*; a member of the CAHJP staff, Benjamin Lukin, showed me a number of old archival folders with the Hebrew note 'Paris' on it, testifying to the origin of these documents. Along with the materials of Ukrainian provenance which had once been removed from Kiev to Berlin, this group indeed contains a large number of materials related directly to Schwartzbard's trial. Among them were copies of the documents which were presented at the court, appeals to Ukrainian Jews living abroad to send their testimonies on pogroms together with the testimonies themselves, numerous correspondence and newspaper articles concerning the trial, lists of journalists accredited at the trial and of defence witnesses, reports of the Schwartzbard Defence Committee on its activities, congratulatory telegrams and other materials. It is notable that the same archive houses another, separate, collection that contains similar materials which were collected mainly by the abovementioned Committee.[40]

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[36] YIVO Archives, RG 80–89.

[37] Mohrer and Web, eds, *Guide to the YIVO Archives*, p. 194.

[38] Lukin and Peri, 'Israeli Archives', p. 66.

[39] The confusion arose because both of those allied record groups that were primarily kept in different repositories were mistakenly given the same archival code—P10 (at present Tcherikower's record group is listed under code P10a). The author expresses his gratitude to B. Lukin who drew his attention to those materials.

[40] CAHJP, P243.

Thus—under circumstances which require further research—'the only collection that can serve as the basis for a scientific and objective study of the pogroms', as Gergel calls it,[41] has been divided into two parts. Yet I am even now convinced that Szajkowski, who was known for splitting the collections which had come to him one way or another and transferring them to different depositories, played a main role also in this case.[42] Anyway, the consequences of this seem not so fatal. Today's technology makes it possible to reconstruct the whole collection in a virtual form, for example, by making full-text copies of both the American and the Israeli parts. And since this collection is still in demand, and such a unification would facilitate the fulfilment of the purpose for which it was originally created, in my opinion, it should be undertaken.

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FROM A RUSSIAN-JEWISH PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATION TO THE 'GLORIOUS INSTITUTE OF WORLD JEWRY': ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD ORT UNION IN THE 1920s–1940s

Alexander Ivanov

> ORT has gradually developed…into the glorious institute of Russian and later of World Jewry.[1]

Among the various issues and questions relating to the contemporary study of the rise of transnational Jewish philanthropy in the 1920s–1940s, few have generated as much discussion as those pertaining to the following: why did some relief organizations grow at a more rapid rate than others? Why do some of them continue to operate even today, while others have had to cease their activities?

The World Union of Societies [for the Promotion] of Artisan and Agricultural Work among Jews (known by its short name the 'World ORT[2] Union [WOU]' or *Welt ORT Farband* in Yiddish) serves as a good example of a successful relief institution which has been active on the transnational philanthropic scene for about 130 years.[3] A study of the WOU organizational structure as well as of its relief programmes directed towards radical transformation of the social and economic basis of Jewish society in Europe in the 1920s–1940s can shed light on the issues mentioned above.

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[1] Iulii Brutskus, 'Leon Bramson, organizator russkogo evreistva' ('Leon Bramson, Organiser of Russian Jewry'), in *Evreiskii mir: sbornik 1944 goda* [The Jewish World: Yearbook for 1944] (Moscow & Jerusalem: Gesharim, 2001), p. 29. Iu.D. Brutskus, historian and publicist, was one of the leaders of the Zionist movement in Russia.

[2] The name 'ORT' was coined from the acronym of the Russian words 'Obshchestvo Remeslennogo Truda' [The Society for Artisan Work].

[3] Nora N. Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT* (Geneva: Historical Archives of the World ORT Union, [n.d.]); the volume is divided into parts as follows: 'The Beginning (1880–1920)'; 'Between Two Wars (1919–1939)', Parts 1, 2A, 2B; 'From Trading to Trade'; 'The Green Revolution (1880–1944)'; 'From Despair to Hope (1913–1930)'; 'The Fateful Years (1938–1943)'. In this article I will refer to the ORT as the WOU, following Scharf's example.

Founded in St Petersburg in 1880 in the form of a Provisional Committee for the establishment of the ORT Society and reorganized in 1906 into a 'Society with approved statutes', it might be briefly described as relief-orientated, providing financial support to special categories of the Jewish population directly engaged in handicrafts and agriculture. According to an appendix to the accounts of the Provisional Committee of the ORT for 1907, the total amount of financial assistance given to the Jewish population of the Russian Empire from November 1880 to December 1906 amounted to 700,000 roubles.[4] Between 1906 and 1913, ORT committees were organized in Moscow, Gomel, Kovno, Ekaterinoslav, Odessa, Samara, Kherson, Kiev, Ekaterinburg, Riga, Minsk, Belostok, Lida, Dvinsk, Berdichev, Krivoy Rog, and Uman. The network of vocational schools and evening courses became more extensive: by the end of 1913 they were operating in at least twenty cities and towns of the Russian Empire.[5]

ORT's relief programmes stressed the concept of self-help and mutual aid, an integral part of the activity of several philanthropic organizations that worked within the framework of the labour movement in Western Europe and the USA. At the same time, ORT leaders, representatives of the Russian Jewish populist-minded intelligentsia and successors of *maskilim* ideas concerning the moral value of productive work, paid close attention to the national Jewish experience of the self-help institutions that had been active in settlements of the Pale of Settlement since the eighteenth century. They were confident that ORT philanthropic initiatives would find mass support among the Jewish population of the country. Furthermore, ORT leaders believed that the reconstructive activity of a single philanthropic institution created by a circle of intellectuals could be transformed into a mass Jewish movement for social change, capable of bringing about wide-ranging economic, social and political reforms. These, in turn, could result in the creation of Jewish national autonomy and significant modernization of Jewish society in Eastern Europe. In short, it is possible to say that the pre-revolutionary Russian period in the ORT history, on the one hand, demonstrated a new understanding of the

[4] Leon Shapiro, *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change* (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), p. 50.

[5] Sarah Kavanaugh, *ORT, The Second World War and the Rehabilitation of Holocaust Survivors* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 2.

experience of Jewish voluntary self-help structures of the past and, on the other hand, manifested an infusion of Western 'scientific' philanthropic ideas and practices, which corresponded with the overwhelming scientific spirit of that time.

This article examines the complex process of development of the ORT from a national educational and philanthropic institution, whose aims and goals were restricted by the need for the social and economic reconstruction of East-European Jewry, into an interstate, transnational multi-level network of social and political actors (i.e. financial organizations, trade corporations, political establishments, vocational schools, branches and regional committees of ORT volunteer societies) working worldwide. Analyses of source materials preserved in the World ORT Archive in London and in depositories of Israel, Germany, and Russia allow us to argue that such a rapid growth of the WOU and its successful long-term activity depended, to a great extent, on the organizational structure of the institution as a whole. It provided effective and fast relocation of various institutional resources (financial, material, informational etc.) between the actors of the WOU network in the conditions of the constantly changing economic and political reality of pre-World War II Europe.

From ORT Delegation Abroad to World ORT Union

After the October revolution of 1917 the ORT found itself facing financial ruin. The Society lost not only its deposits in Russian banks, but also all its property. To remedy the situation, the Central Committee of the Russian ORT created the so-called Foreign Delegation (or, as it was called in official documents, the ORT Delegation Abroad). Its main task was to supplement the ORT's budget by means of a fundraising campaign in Western Europe, above all in France, Germany, and Great Britain, as well as in the USA. The delegation comprised only two members: a long-standing ORT activist and a former member of the First Russian State *Duma*, Leon Bramson, and David Lvovich. The latter had returned to Russia after a two-year stay in the USA. As Lvovich wrote in his memoirs:

> I had a number of excellent contacts with Jewish leaders in Europe and overseas. I knew Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, Dr Julius Goldman and many others quite well. I was also acquainted with the leaders of various

> Jewish Labor Movements in the United States, persons like Abraham Kahn, Vladek, Nachum Serkin, as well as Stephen Wise, Lipsky, Ruthenberg etc. The contacts with the most influential Jewish leaders in America undoubtedly prompted my being chosen by ORT Central Committee to join the Delegation.[6]

In March of 1920 the office of the ORT Delegation was opened in the Pension Sévigné, Place Sévigné in Paris. Later it was relocated to 6, rue de Belloy. As Lvovich recalled:

> The Foreign Delegation of the Russian ORT was faced with the problem of bringing help to the Jewish masses in Russia, who had suffered so deeply from the upheavals of the Civil War and the terrible pogroms which had raged like a tornado throughout Ukraine […] Our task was to take stronger measures in relation to Russia and Ukraine in response to news of the famine which had struck both town and country.[7]

Members of the ORT Delegation had also to deal with the problem of the economic reconstruction of the Jewish population in the newly formed states of Eastern Europe with 'their thousands of repatriates from Russia—the aftermath of war and revolution'.[8] For this purpose the ORT Delegation established contacts with nearly all important Jewish relief organizations which worked in the countries of Western Europe and overseas. Among them were: the World Relief Conference, Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) in Paris; the War Victims Committee, *Arbeiter Hilfskomitet* (Jewish Workers' Relief Committee), and the Ukrainian Federation in London; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the People's Relief Society in New York; the Relief Committee of the Jewish Community of Viborg (Finland); the *Hilfskomitet* (Jewish Relief Committee) in Stockholm.[9] In 1920–1922 these authoritative philanthropic institutions invested approximately $180,000 in different relief programmes initiated by

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[6] David Lvovich, 'The ORT Delegation, 1919–1921', in *Material and Memoirs. Chapters for the History of ORT* (Geneva: World ORT Publishing, 1955), p. 26. Some of the persons mentioned by D. Lvovich later either assisted in organization of the American ORT, or became its activists. For instance, Boruch Charny Vladek was a National Chairman of the People's Tool Campaign for the Declassed Jews in Russia organized by American ORT and JDC.

[7] David Lvovich, 'L.M. Bramson i Soiuz ORT' [L.M. Bramson and the ORT], in *Evreiskii mir: sbornik 1944 goda* [The Jewish World: yearbook for 1944], p. 33.

[8] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 1, p. 20.

[9] Leon Bramson, 'The ORT Delegation Abroad', in *Material and Memoirs. Chapters for the History of ORT*, pp. 22–23.

the ORT. This success in such a short period was possible because the members of the ORT Delegation were able to involve in its work a large number of specialists from among Russian Jewish emigrants. Thus, no later than in the autumn of 1920, local bureaux of the ORT Delegation were founded in Berlin, Paris, and London with the purpose 'of organizing societies for assistance to ORT work'.[10]

Among the first establishments of the ORT Delegation Abroad was the Purchase Bureau for Tools & Materials organized at the end of 1920. This institution supplied Jewish artisans and farmers in Eastern Europe with equipment and raw materials. In 1920 alone the ORT Purchase Bureau spent 208,134 French francs for 243 cases of craftsmen's tools. All these cases were distributed among Jewish artisans in Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Soviet Russia.[11] In 1921 the ORT Purchase Bureau was relocated to Berlin and later developed into the Tool Supply Corporation under the directorship of the prominent economist and public activist Professor Solomon Frankfurt.

Further expansion of ORT work in Western Europe resulted in the simultaneous establishment of French, German, and British branches of the ORT at the beginning of 1921 in Paris, Berlin, and London respectively. In the same year, or even earlier, representatives of the ORT Delegation appeared in other European cities with significant Jewish populations such as Manchester, Leipzig, Danzig, Reval, Dorpat, Helsingfors, Viborg where ORT committees were founded. They enrolled members, collected funds, and arranged public meetings for the propagation of ORT ideas among the local Jewish population.[12] It is important to note that, at that time, the activities of the ORT branches concentrated mainly on raising funds for ORT work in the countries of Eastern Europe and especially in Soviet Russia. This was manifested in the official name of the German branch of ORT which was included in the Register of associations of Berlin as the 'Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Handwerks und der Landwirtschaft unter den Juden des früheren russischen Reiches, Abteilung Deutschland' (Society for the Promotion of Artisan and Agricultural Work among Jews of the former Russian

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[10] 'Otchet o deiatel'nosti obshchestva ORT, otdelenie v Germanii za 1921–1922 g.' [Report on the activity of the German branch of the ORT Society, 1921–1922), State Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow (afterwards GARF), f. 5774, op. 1, d. 24, l. 1.

[11] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 1, p. 29.

[12] Bramson, 'The ORT Delegation Abroad', p. 23.

Empire, German Branch).[13] The same notion found its reflections in the 'Report on the activity of the German branch of the ORT Society in 1921–22,' where the aims of the organization were stated as follows:

> [A]cquainting the widest possible audience of Russian Jews in Germany with the activities and tasks of the ORT; involvement of [...] experts and qualified intellectuals living in Germany in assisting the various activities of the ORT, either in the field of purchasing machines and stock for artisans and workers, tools and seeds for farmers, and preparing manuals for professional schools; studying the experience of professional schools in Germany, assistance in the training of instructors.[14]

On the basis of these documents it is possible to assume that in the beginning of the 1920s, during the early stage of the ORT activities beyond the borders of Russia, its leadership comprised a newly developing network of local committees and branches as a 'national' institution of Russian Jewish emigrants.

The crucial moment in the post-World War I history of ORT was the establishment in 1921 of the World ORT Union. This demonstrated that, after 15 months of activity, the ORT Delegation Abroad had fulfilled its task as a transitory institution whose main aim was to supplement the budget of the Russian ORT. As the historian Leon Shapiro wrote, 'it was necessary to "naturalize" ORT concepts abroad, particularly among Jews of the West who represented the only important source of much-needed funds'.[15] Moreover, by this time the ORT Delegation members realized that further development of the ORT's constructive work demanded the creation of a transnational association of local committees and branches which could distribute financial and material resources among themselves. The question of the creation of such an association had been raised at the Conference of the Vilna and Grodno ORT branches, where the decision was taken to unite all ORT committees and local bureaux in the World ORT Union, 'for only in this way could ORT become an organization of Jewish Economic Self-Rehabilitation'.[16] Professor Michel Kivelevitch,

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[13] 'Regulations of the Society for Promotion of Handicrafts and Agricultural Work among Jews of Russia, Branch in Germany, Berlin, 21 January 1921', World ORT Archives in London (afterwards WORTA), file 'Berlin ORT, 1921–1941', p. 3.

[14] 'Otchet o deiatel'nosti obshchestva ORT, otdelenie v Germanii za 1921–1922 g.', GARF, f. 5774, op. 1, d. 24, l. 2.

[15] Shapiro, *The History of ORT*, p. 107.

[16] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 1, p. 30.

General Secretary of the ORT Delegation Abroad, was charged with carrying out preliminary work for an exploratory Congress to be held in Berlin. Representatives from all existing ORT organizations throughout Europe were invited to participate in the Congress, but at an early stage in its preparation ORT activists faced a problem. As Jacob Frumkin Chairman of the German branch of the ORT wrote in his memoirs:

> First of all, we needed the assistance of the German Foreign Office for permission to have the various delegates enter Germany. A recently created post in the German Foreign Office, Advisor on Jewish affairs, was occupied by Professor Sobernheim, a scholar and Semitologist, member of an important family of bankers and industrialists. I approached Professor Sobernheim for visas for the forthcoming ORT Congress, but was very coldly received. He did not like the idea that the majority of delegates would be Eastern European Jews.[17]

Such an apparent attitude towards the ORT initiative on the part of the responsible state official can partly be explained by Sobernheim's naïve assumption that 'the immigration of East European Jews during and after the war [was] the primary cause of post-war anti-Semitism in Germany, and as such undesirable.'[18] The problem was only solved thanks to the assistance of the well-known German Jewish political and public activist Dr Paul Nathan and the visas to ORT delegates were granted immediately.[19]

It is worth noting that until about 1923 ORT activists established easygoing relations with Moritz Sobernheim, and the Jewish Affairs section of the German Foreign Office began to lend its support to the WOU.[20] Sobernheim considered it 'worthwhile to do their utmost to improve the conditions of Jews in Eastern Europe in order to dampen

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[17] Jacob Frumkin, 'Stages of ORT Activities', in *Material and Memoirs. Chapters for the History of ORT*, p. 66.

[18] Francis R. Nicosia, 'Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy during the Weimar Republic: Moritz Sobernheim and the *Referat für jüdische Angelegenheiten*', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXIII (London—Jerusalem—New York: Secker & Warburg, 1988), p. 269.

[19] Paul Nathan represented German Jewry at the First ORT Congress in Berlin. For P. Nathan's biographical details see: Ernst Feder, 'Paul Nathan, the Man and his Work', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. III (London: East and West Library, 1958), pp. 60–80.

[20] See, for instance, correspondence between the Jewish Affairs section of the German Foreign Office and the ORT Union of 1923–1930, Politisches Archiv in Berlin (afterwards PA/Berlin), R 78666, L 331805-331816.

their enthusiasm for emigration to Germany'.[21] In Sobernheim's view, ORT was the kind of philanthropic institution which 'enabled Jews to avoid emigration from their native countries. [...] Therefore state institutions should respond to this society with sympathy and promote its work effectively'.[22]

The Founding Congress of the WOU was held at the luxurious Meistersaal assembly hall at Köthenerstrasse, 38, in Berlin on 31 July–3 August 1921. Delegates from twelve ORT committees and provisional bureaux in Vilna, Grodno, Brest-Litovsk, Pinsk, Piotrkow, Warsaw, Kiev, Kaunas, Kishinev, Paris, London and Berlin participated in the Congress.[23]

In addition to the presentation of a report on the activity of the ORT Delegation Abroad (including its balance sheet) on 1 July 1921 (L. Bramson), and several statements by ORT leaders dedicated to further developments of the WOU activities in the promotion of agricultural work among the Jews (D. Lvovich and S. Frankfurt), the organization of financial and material support to Jewish artisans (B. Kagan and A. Krouk), and the development of vocational training (E. Kohn),[24] members of the Central Council and the Central Board of the WOU—the governing bodies of the new association—were elected. Dr. Zalman Szabad, an outstanding public activist who represented the ORT committee of Vilna, was elected chairman of the Central Council and Leon Bramson headed the Central Board. The closing meeting was devoted to a review of a general activity plan presented by L. Bramson, and to several organizational problems.

The work of the Founding Congress of the WOU was actively debated in the German emigrant press. The Russian emigrant daily *Rul'* reported that representatives of the German branch of ORT at the general assembly of their organization 'had expressed a wish that the ORT committees in their further organizational work should follow democratic principles and cooperate with all Jewish economic

[21] Nicosia, 'Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy during the Weimar Republic', p. 272.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] 'First ORT Congress, Berlin 1921 (excerpts from the "ORT Union report for the period from 1 January 1920 to 1 January 1923")', in *80 Years of ORT. Historical Materials, Documents and Reports* (Geneva: World ORT Union Centre International, 1960), p. 135.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 135–136.

organizations.'[25] This means that newly established ORT local committees should be based on the so-called principle of 'tripartite representation': one third of the committee should be 'elected by a general assembly of the society's members', one third should consist of 'representatives of Jewish economic organisations such as agricultural, artisan and other cooperatives', and one third should be appointed by the government from among specialists and public figures.[26] These ideas were put forward in several documents adopted by the Founding Congress as well as in the final version of the 'Statutes of the ORT Union for the Promotion of Handicrafts and of Industrial and Agricultural Work among Jews' which, for a variety of bureaucratic reasons, was only included in the Register of associations in Berlin on 25 April 1927, under the number 5111.[27]

From 1921, the headquarters of the WOU was located in Bleibtreustrasse, 34/35, in the Charlottenburg district of Berlin; subsequently it moved to Buelowstrasse, 90 in the Schöneberg district. Slowly and gradually the WOU was reaching its clearly defined aims, successfully expanding its philanthropic activity and allocating more and more resources to its relief work with different categories of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe. Between 1921 and 1927 the WOU adopted a series of documents which outlined an ambitious programme. These included fund-raising to enable the implementation of 'ORT ideas' concerning the involvement of Jews in productive labour, and the organization of large-scale financial campaigns in France, Great Britain and the USA. It also planned to continue and develop its cooperation with other Jewish relief and public organizations such as the JDC, JCA, various self-help artisan, as well as Jewish communal institutions and community boards in the countries where the WOU worked. Similarly, it hoped to extend ORT's activities, such as professional training, particularly within the framework of the migration process, providing assistance to emigrants from Eastern Europe and, after 1933, from Germany. The documents aimed at centralizing the administration of certain sectors of WOU, such as the purchase of tools and implements,

[25] '*Rul*', no. 213 (31 July 1921), p. 6.

[26] Minutes of the meeting of the ORT Union executive on 15 August 1921, Berlin, Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (afterwards CAHJP), ORT/1"A", p. 1.

[27] 'Statutes of the ORT Union for Promotion of Handicraft and of Industrial and Agricultural Work among Jews', in *80 Years of ORT*, pp. 101–106.

training of instructors, publication of technical manuals in Yiddish as well as informational magazines and brochures. Finally, the WOU aimed to seek government and municipal assistance, and grants.[28]

The last item in this list of tasks is worth consideration and the particular ambivalent status of a transnational (or 'trans-territorial', as it was called by Leon Bramson in one of his letters)[29] association, which meant that the WOU was not under the protection of any particular state or government, caused many problems for the existing work of the WOU. As the representative of the JDC in Soviet Russia, Dr Josef Rosen, said, 'the ORT [...] has no government to call upon'.[30] In order to overcome this problem it was decided to establish contacts with parliamentarians in European countries and in the USA. An activist of the British ORT and 'socialist and Labour Leader in the House of Lords', Lord Marley had commented on the possibility of such contacts: 'We have in the Parliament groupings of different parties interested in the Jewish question'.[31]

In fact, it was the idea of David Lvovich to create ORT Parliamentary Advisory Councils (or Committees, as they were called in some of the documents) which could be used as a tool for overcoming problems dealing with complicated relations between some of the countries where the WOU worked and thus for achieving its political and social goals. He was convinced that integration of the Jewish population into the economic life of European countries was one of the governments' duties and that they should provide economic, moral, and legal assistance to ORT activities. With the help of ORT Parliamentary Committees the WOU could gain protection in some emergency cases on the part of the governments which had been always closely connected with the Parliaments. The first ORT Parliamentary Committee was established in Great Britain:

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[28] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 1, p. 42.

[29] Leon Bramson wrote the following: 'The ORT founded in 1880 represents today the transterritorial union which covers more than 100 organizations in Europe and America.' Letter to the Jewish Affairs section of the German Foreign Office from the Central Board of the ORT Union of 19 June 1930, PA/Berlin, R 78666, L 331805.

[30] Letter of Lord Marley to L. Bramson, 16 September 1938, WORTA, d06c498, pp. 11–12.

[31] Record of conversation of P. Smidovich with Lord Marley, Moscow, 23 August 1932, GARF, f. P-7541, op. 1, d. 567, l. 15.

> The preliminary meeting [of the ORT Parliamentary Committee] took place in London in April 1930. A luncheon was held for Conservative, Liberal, and Labour members of Parliament under the chairmanship of Lord Marley. As well as the Members of Parliament there were present: the Lithuanian and Latvian Ministers to Great Britain, Mr. Israel Zangwill, Mr. A. Halpern, Chairman of ORT [in Britain] and others. Sir Herbert Samuel, a Liberal Member of Parliament, voicing active approval of ORT, said that, 'while the soul of the Jews is in Palestine, the body is elsewhere; Zionism takes care of Jewish soul, the ORT takes care of the body'. Other Members of Parliament also made speeches and Lord Marley was elected Chairman of the ORT Parliamentary Committee.[32]

'Body and Soul': ORTism and Zionism

In contemporary research dedicated to transnational Jewish philanthropy in the 1920s–30s, the WOU is always mentioned in third place, behind the JDC and JCA. This is because the total investments of these organizations in different aspects of the modernization of East European Jewry surpassed the WOU investments by a factor of almost ten.[33] However, leadership in the field of different innovative strategies and practices of philanthropic activity, which found its embodiment in various relief programmes for the Jews of Eastern Europe, undoubtedly belonged to the WOU. Among these one can mention a special and extremely productive programme conceived in 1923, the aim of which was to assist those individuals in Western Europe and the USA who wished to send machines and tools, instead of financial support, to their relatives in the countries of Eastern Europe and in the USSR.[34] The idea of such 'constructive help for relatives' was suggested by Lvovich and, as a result of this proposal, the WOU established a special Department,

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[32] Background of the ORT Parliamentary Committees (untitled manuscript), CAHJP, ORT/371–373, p. 1.

[33] For example, the investment of JDC in the Soviet project of Jewish agricultural colonization according to J. Dekel-Chen amounted to to $16,000,000. See: Jonathan Dekel-Chen, 'An Unlikely Triangle: Philanthropists, Commissars, and American Statesmanship Meet in Soviet Crimea, 1922–1937', in *Diplomatic History*, vol. 27, issue 3 (June 2003), p. 358. The WOU had invested about $1,560,000 in this project (this figure was calculated on the basis of the letter from the Moscow Office of the WOU to the Central Board, 22 April 1938, WORTA, d06c507).

[34] See for details: Alexander Ivanov, 'From Charity to Productive Labor: The World ORT Union and Jewish agricultural colonization in the Soviet Union, 1923–38', in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 1 (April 2007), pp. 1–28.

with the task of solving numerous problems bound up with the provision and shipping of necessary technical equipment. As Lvovich later recalled: 'the ORT's action to aid relatives [...] went ahead with great success and enjoyed great support among the Jews of Soviet Russia, the United States and other countries'.[35]

Another essential difference between the WOU and other Jewish philanthropic institutions, including the non-ideological and non-political JDC, was the permanent aspiration of its leaders to develop a specific ideology of philanthropic activity of their association and integrate it into the background of the ORT's long history. Successful development of the WOU was provided, to a certain degree, by its institutional ideology named 'ORTism', a concept which had been introduced by the ORT activist, Yiddish publicist and literary critic Aron Syngalowski. In the late 1920s–30s, ORTism—which could be briefly characterized as a sophisticated combination of Jewish Diaspora nationalism, 'productivization' theories—and Territorialism played an important role in transformation of the WOU philanthropic activity into a large-scale Jewish movement for social change.

In June 1930, in the pages of the ORT magazine *Wirtschaft un Lebn* (*Economy and Life*), Syngalowski joined in a polemic with a member of the WOU Central Board, the former Minister of Jewish Affairs of the Central *Rada* in Ukraine, Moisei Zylberfarb. The latter argued that ORT was not an organization *of* the masses, but the organization *for* the masses, not a social movement, as, for instance, *Hehalutz*, but precisely a society.[36] Syngalowski objected that the ORT was more than a society, that it was in fact a movement of the Jewish masses with multiple social and economic goals. Its aim was the salvation of the Jewish people through the increase of working individuals amongst them and in this way improving conditions of life for the Jewish population in the countries of their permanent residence. Further conceptualization of ORTism was reflected in numerous articles by Syngalowski, who considered that:

> The roots of the ORT came from the Jewish work-idea, a part of the oldest Jewish cultural assets. It is that idea which fertilized almost all Jewish national and social movements that stand at the centre of current

[35] Lvovich, 'L. M. Bramson i Soiuz ORT', p. 38.

[36] *Hehalutz* (Hebrew, lit., 'The Pioneer')—an association of Jewish youth the aim of which was to train its members to settle in Erets Israel. It became an umbrella organization of the pioneering Zionist youth movement.

> Jewish history. But in ORT this 'work-idea' over the years reached its deepest and purest expression. In ORT it is not subordinate to any political or religious goal—here it alone dominates—Jewish work is not here a means of bettering oneself or apologizing to the world—it is a goal in itself—and ORT's whole life. [...] Work and freedom are the two oldest principles of historic Judaism![37]

Here, the rhetoric of the *maskilim* was organically combined with a consideration of the existing socio-economic context. The WOU philanthropic activity was seen in terms of a social movement with the quite definite goal of salvation of the Jewish people through wide economic transformations of Jewish society. Such an interpretation of the ORT mission testifies to the adherence of the WOU leaders to the political culture peculiar to the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, the representatives of which composed the majority in the Central Board of the association. According to their beliefs, ORTism was able to unite around itself different 'progressive' political and social forces either of the Russian Jewish émigré community, or of the Jewish communities in the countries where the WOU worked.

In this connection, the evolution of relations between the WOU and Zionist organizations is significant. Although mention is made in the WOU Central Board departmental documents that 'assistance and sympathy on the part of persons belonging to Zionist movement who expressed readiness to enter the ORT was very much appreciated',[38] in the early 1920s the contradictions between ORTism and Zionism were very pronounced. The pro-Zionist Berlin weekly *Rassvet* wrote:

> The basic condition for a proper national and political structure of the relief organization should be internal unity between benefactors and beneficiaries. [...] ORT can serve as an example of an organization in which this unity is absent. [...] Relations between plenipotentiaries of the ORT and *halutzim* sponsored by this association are very bad. These are [...] two different worlds, because benefactors and beneficiaries are not identical. [...] As specified above and illustrated in the example of ORT organizational distinctions between relief institutions, it appears that only the elements that understand the national and political essence of philanthropy are capable of lifting it to the necessary height. These

[37] Aron Syngalowski, 'In the Service of Jewish Labour', in *Materials and Memories. Chapters for the History of ORT*, p. 9.

[38] 'ORT i palestinskaia kolonizatsiia' [ORT and colonization in Palestine], (Information on relations with Zionist movement), CAHJP, ORT/89, p. 1.

> distinctions [...] deal with the national and historical character [of philanthropic work].[39]

At the same time there were several attempts to establish cooperation between the WOU and different Zionist organizations. Thus in 1918–19 about forty-five *halutzim* were trained in agriculture at the ORT model farm near Odessa.[40] Later they were repatriated to Palestine and in 1920 four of them founded an agricultural colony *Kiryat Anavim*, one of the best in the locality of Jerusalem. In 1925 the WOU Central Board adopted a special resolution, according to which *Hehalutz's* activity was considered as 'a bright embodiment of the movement towards productive work among Jews and it should be supported by the ORT'.[41] Thus in 1925–39 training farms organized by *Hehalutz* in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Bessarabia, and Germany had received considerable material, financial and technical support from the WOU.

A special agreement concluded between the ORT-OZE-*Emigdirect* committee and *Keren Ha-Yesod* in 1927 is worth mentioning. It dealt with the coordination of financial campaigns for collecting donations in the countries of Western Europe and the USA, with the intention 'to avoid competition and establish benevolent attitudes to each other'.[42] Soon many outstanding leaders of the Zionist movement

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[39] M. Gindes, 'Na putiakh Gegenwartsarbeit' [On the way to contemporary labour), *Rassvet*, no. 25–26 (Friday, 6 October 1922), p. 3.

[40] Ester Bershtein, 'ORT v Odesse' [ORT in Odessa], publication, introduction and commentary by A. Ivanov, *Moriah*, no. 7 (Odessa: 'Druk', 2007), p. 110.

[41] 'ORT i palestinskaia kolonizatsiia', p. 4.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

OZE (abbr. from Russian 'Obshchestvo zdravookhraneniia evreev'—Society for public health services of Jews): a philanthropic organization founded in 1912 in St Petersburg for improving the health of the Russian Jews. Since the early 1920s it was also active outside the Soviet Russia. In late 1926 the ORT-OZE-*Emigdirect* [Association for Jewish emigration] committee was founded for launching joint fund-raising campaigns. Local ORT-OZE committees were organized in 30 countries including Scandinavia, South Africa, Australia and even India and the Far East. This collaboration swept to France in the 1930s with OZE taking care of the physical health of Jews and ORT preparing their integration into economic and social life. See for details: Katy Hazan and Dominique Rotermund (eds.), *OSE: 100 Years of History, 1912–2012* (Paris: OSE publishing, 2010).

Keren Ha-Yesod (Hebrew, lit., 'The Foundation Fund'): an overseas funding organization for the World Zionist Organization established in 1920 at the World Zionist Conference in London. The resolution adopted called on 'the whole Jewish people', Zionists and non-Zionists alike to do its duty through *Keren Ha-Yesod*. Jewish

occupied important posts in WOU governing bodies. Among them we may mention Vladimir Temkin, Meir Dizengoff, Berl Locker, Kurt Blumenfeld, Moshe Diamant, Iulii Brutskus, Zalman Schalit, Leon Zadoc-Khan (since 1937 a vice-chairman of the WOU Central Board), Edmond Fleg and Leon Bergheim.

A considerable change in relations between the WOU leadership and Zionist leaders occurred in July and August of 1934 during the trip to Palestine of the WOU president Leon Bramson, who had been interested in Zionist ideas since the 1910s. In a collection of his personal papers preserved in the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Kiev there is a special file dedicated to Zionism with Bramson's notes on this matter.[43] In Palestine Bramson carried out negotiations with representatives of the local Center of the Jewish Agency *Sohnut* concerning the participation of the WOU in the vocational training of Jews willing to be repatriated to Palestine for successful colonization of the country and organization of a network of technical schools and vocational courses with the objective of the industrialization of Palestine.

These plans were carried out only after Bramson's death. In the early 1950s the network of ORT vocational schools and colleges had been established in Israel under directorship of Aron Syngalowski.[44] ORT schools and training workshops were opened in fourteen cities and towns including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramath-Gan, Jaffo, Safed and Rechovot. Later the ORT network of colleges and schools was successfully integrated into the system of technical education in Israel. As ORT Israel reported in 1993:

> Over eighty thousand pupils study in the ORT Israel system every year; the network's 400,000 graduates are living proof of ORT's dedication and to the immense significance of technological and scientific education. Without it there would be no security, no industry, no immigrant absorption, no growth.[45]

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communities throughout the world established local campaigns under the *Keren Ha-Yesod* umbrella.

[43] 'Kratkaia kharakteristika sionizma i drugie dokumenty o sionizme' [Brief characteristics of Zionism and other documents on Zionism'], Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, Kiev, f. 992, op. 1, d. 26.

[44] See for details: *ORT: People and Achievements* (Tel-Aviv: ORT Israel Public Relations Department, 1993), pp. 15–16.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Organizational Structure of the World ORT Union

In the autumn of 1933, with the arrival of the Nazi regime in Germany, the WOU headquarters was transferred to Paris. The central office of the association was located in 3 bis, rue Roussel, in the XVIIth *arrondissement*. By the mid 1930s the WOU represented an interstate transnational association which united financial institutions (such as the Jewish Reconstruction Fund, the ORT Credit Corporation, the Co-operative Tool Supply Corporation, the Association of ORT and OZE, *etc*.), political establishments such as the ORT Parliamentary Advisory Councils, and numerous branches and local committees of ORT volunteer societies working worldwide. The WOU maintained a large network of professional schools and vocational training courses scattered all over Eastern Europe. It included 165 trade schools and vocational courses, 132 factories, training workshops, and industrial co-operatives. Between 1930 and 1936 about 40,000 skilled craftsmen and industrial workers had graduated from them.[46] The ORT leaders were especially proud of the High Technical School in Vilna (Poland) and the ORT Technical School in Kaunas (Lithuania) which had 'extremely high standards of education' and trained about two hundred students per year.[47]

In 1934 the ORT Parliamentary Council of France was established, with former Prime Minister Édouard Herriot as its President. The Congressional Committee of the American ORT was set up in 1935 under the Chairmanship of Senator Robert Wagner.[48] Subsequently Lord Marley confirmed the success of Lvovich's idea:

> With the new difficulties of frontiers, with growing economic nationalism, with tariffs and other obstacles to trade, the work of ORT was greatly hampered. [...] There were economic and political obstacles, but Governments recognized the value of imports of machines and raw

[46] 'Soiuz obshchestv ORTa' [Union of the ORT Societies], in *Evreiskii mir: ezhegodnik na 1939* [The Jewish World: Yearbook for 1939] (Moscow-Jerusalem: Gesharim, 2002), pp. 359–360.

[47] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 2A, pp. 46–47, 53.

[48] 'Fifty-five Years of Constructive Relief for the Jews of Europe, 1880–1935 (list of the WOU establishments)', Russian State Archive of Economics in Moscow, f. 5244, op. 1, d. 738, l. 6–7.

> materials and ORT Parliamentary Advisory Counsels were able to overcome political difficulties.[49]

Thus, in 1937, the WOU was engaged in activity in Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania (including Bessarabia and Bukovina), Bulgaria, USSR (including Birobidzhan), United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia.[50] Lord Marley described the organizational structure of the WOU as follows:

> ORT is a democratic organization, governed by National Committees in each country and by local ones in each town which are helped and guided, but never controlled by the ORT Union Central Board in Paris.[51]

This statement is interesting in that it notes the declared absence of controlling functions attributed to the WOU Central Board, as well as the administrative equality of ORT regional and local committees. This corresponds to the widely held belief among many Jewish social workers that the WOU was not a bureaucratic institution but a real Jewish people's movement for social change, as manifested in the concept of ORTism. Moreover, the ideology of ORTism, propagated via the ORT press, exhibitions and personal contacts, exerted great influence on the formation of the political and social views of a large number of people, especially Jewish artisans and farmers who were rank-and-file members of the ORT national organizations. From the viewpoint of political communication, it is possible to say that the WOU succeeded in transforming its public, institutional values into private ones, transferring them on to the micro-level of Jewish society in the 1920s and 1930s.

In sociological terms, the WOU can be generally defined as a multilevel, multifunctional social network, a kind of social structure made of organizations called actors, which are connected by one or more specific types of interdependency, so-called tiers, such as financial exchange, for example.[52] Research in a number of academic fields has shown that social networks operate on many levels, from families

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[49] Lord Marley, 'How the ORT works: A Factory of Useful Citizenship', Materials of the British press, WORTA, D05a004, p. 1.

[50] *80 Years of ORT*, p. 144.

[51] Marley, 'How the ORT works', p. 2.

[52] See for details: M.E.J. Newman, 'The Structure and Function of Complex Networks', in *SIAM Review*, vol. 45, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 167–256.

up to the level of institutions, and play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which different social movements succeed in achieving their goals.[53] As a result of the interaction of all the actors within the framework of the WOU social network in the late 1920s and 1930s, the charitable donations collected worldwide were converted into the badly needed machines, tools, raw materials, agricultural stock and seeds which were transferred to Jewish artisans, industrial and agricultural cooperatives in the countries of Eastern Europe; yesterday's *luftmenshn* could get technical and agronomical training of the highest standards available at that time.

A distinctive feature of the WOU network was its horizontality which, unlike the vertical, hierarchical governing nature of some relief organizations such as JDC, for example, provided the basis for expansion and rapid growth in a horizontal direction. Another important characteristic of the horizontal networks was their ability to function even in cases of emergency when the ties between some of the actors had been broken. Thus, after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the local committees of the ORT had been working in the border areas of the former Russian Empire in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Bessarabia which were located beyond the frontiers of the Soviet state. As all the tiers between the Central Committee of the Russian ORT in Petrograd and the local ORT societies in these countries had been broken, the latter had to mobilize their own resources and even received some support from the state authorities for continuation of their authorized activities. The same situation was repeated during World War II; the WOU network was able to survive and to continue its activities even in the conditions of Nazi occupation of European countries.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to diminish the role of the WOU administrative bodies. According to the new 'Statutes of the ORT Union' registered at the Headquarters of the Paris Police on 19 October 1938 under number 3124, the WOU was administered by the General Congress which 'consisted of national delegates elected by local organizations

[53] See: K.S. Cook, J.M. Whitmeyer, 'Two Approaches to Social Structure: Exchange Theory and Network Analysis', in *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 18 (1992), pp. 109–127. The effectiveness of social networks was amply demonstrated during the 20th century. For example, it was noted that during financial crises it is much easier to find a job using the resources of social networks then with the assistance of governmental institutions especially created for this purpose.

or their sections'.[54] The Congress would elect the supreme administrative bodies of the WOU: the Central Board consisted of 50–65 members, the Executive Committee (fourteen members), and the Control Commission (five members).[55] As mentioned in the 'Statutes', 'the activities of the member associations should conform to the general directives issued by administrative bodies of the Union without prejudice to their autonomy as independent organizations'.[56] The Executive Committee of the Central Board, chaired by L. Bramson with D. Lvovich and A. Syngalowski as vice-chairmen, was the responsible management body of the WOU. One of its duties was the creation and development of different innovative, constructive methods of relief work as well as their application in the countries of Europe. These were based on self-help and concepts of mutual aid, of which the WOU had been always considered the champion among other charitable organizations. The leaders of these willingly borrowed the ideas and methods of relief work generated by the WOU, or financed their development and approval.

To sum up: we may conclude that the organizational structure of the WOU, which provided a functional interaction between its administrative bodies and local committees, demonstrates a successful professional application of philanthropic assistance to the Jewish population in Eastern Europe, responsive to its urgent demands and needs. This made the WOU relief programmes, which may be considered major achievements of professional institutional philanthropy in the interwar period, economically effective and politically significant.

'Systematic Service for Our Wandering People'

The rapid growth and development of the WOU network in the late 1930s and 1940s provided an answer to the challenge facing Jewish philanthropy with the advent of the Nazis and the beginning of World War II. The urgent task at that time was to provide assistance to Jewish refugees from the countries under Nazi rule. Approximately 130,000 Jews had left Germany in the period between 1933 and 1938. The annexation

[54] *80 Years of ORT,* p. 113.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 145.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

of Austria in March 1938 'increased by 190,000 the number of Jews who were forced either to emigrate or to flee'.[57]

It is significant that ORT had had to solve a similar if smaller scale refugee problem during World War I. At that time the Russian ORT developed several programmes providing assistance to refugees driven by the Russian army from the war zone, which took in a significant part of the Pale of Settlement. For example, in Petrograd alone the number of Jewish refugees was about 25,000. Together with other philanthropic organisations such as OZE and EKOPO (*Evreiskii komitet pomoshchi zhertvam voiny*, the Jewish Committee for Aiding Victims of War), the ORT organized twenty-five industrial workshops, seventy-two labour bureaux and numerous apprenticeships for the refugees. The aim of the ORT programmes was the gradual transformation of refugees from objects of charity into people of material independence. In the period from 1914 to 1918 about seventy thousand refugees found a job due to various programmes run by the Russian ORT.[58]

There were several attempts to organize the resettlement of Jewish artisans from among refugees to the towns and cities of Russia where it was possible to get a job. Thus, as the ORT magazine *Vestnik trudovoi pomoshchi sredi evreev* reported, 'a large number of tailors from Warsaw were settled in Kiev and some dozens of saddlers in Moscow, whereas a strong depression [...] dominated in the Pale of Settlement and even local workers were unable to find an application for their skills'.[59] The editor of the magazine, an outstanding economist and one of creators of ORT relief programmes, Boris Brutskus, described the refugee problem in an articles in1917:

> At the end of the war we should expect an enormous increase in migratory processes. It is necessary to expect a mass movement of refugees to newly created industrial centers in Russia and overseas. Jewish relief institutions will be faced with a number of tasks dealing with the organization of systematic service for our wandering people in accordance with the historical prospects of our emigration problem.[60]

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[57] Solomon Adler-Rudel, 'The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XIII (London: East and West Library, 1968), p. 236.

[58] 'Soiuz obshchestv ORTa', p. 357.

[59] M.M. 'Evreiskie biuro truda vo vremia voiny' [Jewish labour bureaus during the war], in *Vestnik trudovoi pomoshchi sredi evreev* [Bulletin of Labour Help among the Jews], no. 1 (Petrograd: ORT, 1913), p. 5.

[60] Boris Brutskus, '1916 god' [Year 1916], in *Vestnik trudovoi pomoshchi sredi evreev*, no. 11–12 (Petrograd: ORT, 1917), p. 4.

This prophetic statement defined the general direction of ORT work in subsequent decades.

By 1934 the WOU leadership was already offering a multi-faceted approach to overcoming the refugee problem in Europe. It was dedicated to expanding the professional training of Jews maintained by the WOU in face of 'the increase of anti-Semitic feelings in Germany and Eastern Europe'. Lord Marley described these attempts:

> The ORT at least helps to diminish the demand for emigration in those counties where it works. It enables at least a proportion to live a tolerable life. And where emigration is possible, the ORT-trained worker is always welcome and, by his example and value, lessens the resistance to other emigrants. ORT has its agents in many countries. It studies the needs of immigration, and special classes are organized to train people in whatever may be the needs of particular countries.[61]

In 1936 the plenipotentiary representative of the WOU in the USSR, Iakov Tsegel'nitskii, reached an agreement with the Soviet authorities for the 'resettling in Birobidzhan of 300 families of Jewish refugees from Germany, France and East-European countries who had graduated from ORT technical schools'.[62] In the future it was intended 'to enlarge the number of Jewish resettlers up to one thousand persons per year'.[63] But because of a drastic change in Stalin's foreign policy, which led to the closing down of all foreign Jewish philanthropic organizations in the Soviet state, including the WOU, this resettlement scheme was not fulfilled.[64]

The refugee problem was widely debated at the fourth ORT Congress, held in August 1937 at the Paris International Exhibition. As a result of this discussion a definite and ambitious project for overcoming the refugee crisis in Europe had been worked out by the WOU leadership by the beginning of 1938.

The ORT project had been set forth in a memorandum entitled 'The Problem of Vocational Adaptation of Refugees' and tabled at the Evian Conference convened by American President Franklin

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[61] Marley, 'How the ORT works', p. 2.

[62] 'Supplement to the Report of the ORT Union Central Board on resettlement of Jews in Birobidzhan', 1936, WORTA, d06b266, p. 1.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[64] See for details: Alexander Ivanov, 'Facing East: The World ORT Union and the Jewish Refugee Problem in Europe, 1933–1938' in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 39, issue 3 (December, 2009), pp. 369–388.

D. Roosevelt. The main aim of this Conference, held in July 1938, was the consolidation of the efforts of several Jewish and non-Jewish institutions for the organization of Jewish emigration form Germany and Austria. As David Lvovich, a member of the ORT delegation at the Evian Conference, recalled, the ORT Memorandum, which was distributed among delegates of the Conference, 'came almost as a revelation'.[65] The document suggested the following:

> The centre of gravity of the refugee problem of German and Austrian Jewry lies in the economic domain. The problem can be fundamentally solved by the liberal admission of these migrants into various countries of Western Europe and overseas. [...] Systematic work directed towards the resettlement of German and Austrian Jews must, therefore, be concentrated first on the vocational adaptation of the mass of migrants with a view to radically changing their social and economic structure. Stress must be laid particularly on the training of the emigrants for those artisan, industrial and agricultural occupations in which the countries of immigration are short of sufficient skilled labor.[66]

According to the financial plan accompanying the Memorandum, in 1939–1941 the ORT intended to train about 12,000 refugees per year. For this purpose the WOU would use its own network of technical schools and vocational courses as well as newly organized training institutions in Germany, Austria, some other European countries and in the USA. The annual cost of this activity would be about $900,000.[67] These figures were realistic, as the income of the WOU during the period from 1930 to 1939 was about $4,000,000 and, in 1939 alone, the ORT Union budget totalled $1,250,000.

In order to fulfil the task of vocational training for Jewish refugees, the WOU suggested the 'creation of a special fund for professional training by means of special Government allocations, contributions from the leading Jewish organizations and from other sources'.[68] The ORT project received high praise from the Chairman of the Evian

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[65] David Lvovich, 'L.M. Bramson and World ORT', in *ORT Economic Review*, vol. IV, no. 2 (November, 1944), p. 14.

[66] Memorandum 'The Problem of the Vocational Adaptation of the Refugees' submitted to the International Refugees' Conference at Evian- Les- Bains by the Central Executive of the ORT Union of Societies for the Promotion of Trades and Agriculture among the Jews, Paris, July 2nd, 1938, in Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 2B, pp. 43–44.

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 54–56.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

conference, Myron C. Taylor, an American Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and from James G. McDonald, the former High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany of the League of Nations and Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. However, as the well-known historian Solomon Adler-Rudel, who was also a member of the WOU Central Council, mentioned in his essay of 1968,

> the Evian Conference did not achieve its aim and had not set up an organization to deal with all refugees. As the pressing problem of Germany and Austria demanded immediate and urgent attention, the adopted resolution recommended that the scope of the Committee's activities be limited for the time being to finding a solution to the problem of these two countries.'[69]

In 1941 David Lvovich made the following estimation to the Conference:

> At the Evian Conference, to which President Roosevelt had invited 32 governments of immigration countries, the representatives of the Jewish organizations tried to persuade these governments to admit Jewish immigrants, especially from Germany, and suggested infiltration as a method of immigration. They did not speak of mass immigration [...] because of the social structure of the refugee groups concerned. The belief of these Jewish representatives was that the Jewish businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and so on, from Central Europe could continue their old occupations in their new homelands. [...] But since there was already a trend to restrict immigration of non-skilled people in South American countries, there remained little hope, of course, that this Conference would bring any results unless new methods of immigration were presented.[70]

In spite of these negative results the WOU continued its activity dealing with the creation of a network of training institutions for Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. An important action for the organization of professional training for Jewish youth was undertaken by the German branch of the WOU in the mid-1930s. At that time, after the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws, the German Jewish communities realized that they would have to take care of the younger generation and involve them in manual work in industry and agriculture as

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[69] Solomon Adler-Rudel, 'The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question', p. 260.

[70] David Lvovich, 'Negotiated Immigration and Colonization', in *ORT Economic Bulletin*, vol. II, no. 3 (May–June 1941), p. 1.

this would make their immigration easier. Educational opportunities of this kind in Germany were very limited. For this reason, the Berlin Jewish community and the Reich Deputation of German Jews (*Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden*) welcomed the ORT's decision to bring a large number of German Jewish young people to Eastern Europe in order to give them a thorough training in the ORT trade schools and agricultural training farms.[71] In 1933 the first group of thirty people, including merchants, young lawyers and students were brought to Kaunas in Lithuania and established in a special department for technical and metalwork. This was followed by a second group, for which an electro-technical department was opened at the ORT Technical School in Kaunas. In the same year forty young men came to Liepaja in Latvia and were trained in metalwork. In 1934 a third group of thirty German youths was sent to Ungarina and Kalinovo in Lithuania where they studied agriculture in farms and schools belonging to ORT. In 1935 the last group went to Vilna in Poland to study at the ORT Technical School. It was intended that, after graduation from ORT vocational schools and agricultural courses, these young German Jews would participate in the colonization of Palestine.

In November 1935 ORT started to organize a technical school in Berlin. As Wilhelm Graetz, a member of the WOU Central Board and chairman of the German branch of ORT, mentioned in his memoirs: 'Long negotiations with the Gestapo ended with the ORT School being only allowed to prepare Jews for *emigration*.'[72] The 'ORT Private Jewish Centre for training Jews wishing to emigrate as artisans and tradesmen, Berlin, Ltd.' was opened in April 1937 with the assistance and under the protection of the ORT Parliamentary Advisory Council in Britain and the Joint British Committee ORT-OZE.[73] The Berlin School provided vocational training for Jewish young people who could not gain admission to a state or municipal trade school on the completion of their elementary schooling. It enrolled 101 students for training in woodwork and thirteen adults in courses in gas and water plumbing.

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[71] This action was also described in: Giora Lotan, 'The *Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle*', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. IV (London: East and West Library, 1959), p. 204.

[72] Wilhelm Graetz, 'ORT's Work in Germany', in *Material and Memoirs. Chapters for the History of ORT*, p. 43.

[73] *Ibid*.

The Berlin School survived the 'Kristallnacht' and was still functioning in 1939, at which time it had more than two hundred students. The plight of the Jews in the German Reich worsened very quickly and there was finally no option but to decide to relocate the Berlin ORT School abroad. In 1939 on the eve of the war Colonel James Henry Levey, chairman of the Joint British Committee ORT-OZE, came to Berlin where he succeeded in obtaining permission to remove the school with its students and teachers to Great Britain. 100 students and seven teachers and their spouses left Berlin for England in August 1939, thus establishing the ORT school in Leeds.[74] Some training programmes were maintained at the school in Berlin during the war. The Berlin ORT School, as well as the German branch of ORT, was liquidated by the Nazis in 1943.

In France, which was one of the main countries of legal and illegal Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany, ORT expanded its activity directed towards the vocational training of refugees. In order to satisfy the growing number of applications from German and Austrian refugees, the French branch of ORT, with the financial assistance of the WOU, organized in Paris twelve parallel courses in some particularly popular specialisms such as radio-assembling, photographic and cinema operation, electricity, dressmaking, millinery and applied arts.[75]

In the same year, the ORT France organized a training farm at La Roche in the district of Villeneuve between Bordeaux and Toulouse. In 1939 twenty families of Jewish refugees from Germany settled there. They received credits from the WOU for seeds, cattle, implements and for reconstruction of the farm buildings. Later another three farms of this kind were established in the same district. It is worth noting that 'the farms in Villeneuve which had been working until 1943 remained the only practical result of the experiments undertaken in recent years from various sides with a view to settling German Jews on the land in the countries of Western Europe.'[76]

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[74] See: *From Despair to Hope. A Constructive Form of Help. The ORT Technical Engineering School, Roseville Avenue, Roseville Road, Leeds, 8* (London: The Narod Press, [n.d.]).

[75] 'ORT Union: the progress of our work and our new institutions in Eastern and Central Europe', 1938, in Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 2B, p. 39.

[76] Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 2A, p. 36. See also: Mikhail Parkhomovskii, 'ORT vo Frantsii i ego russkie rukovoditeli' [ORT in France and its Russian Leaders], in M. Parkhomovskii and D. Guzevich (eds), *Russkie evrei vo Frantsii: stat'i, publikatsii, memuary, esse* [Russian

As David Lvovich reported at the conference of the Emergency Committee for WOU Affairs established in New York in 1942:

> People here did not believe that we were working in Hungary, Poland, France or elsewhere, until we showed them original reports and even cables; these helped to maintain the morale of ORT workers here. Later, when the Executive Committee of the Central Board was established in Marseille, we received requests that American ORT should send allocations directly to various ORT organizations. This was very important not only from the point of view of material help but also because it gave great moral encouragement to our ORT workers overseas. We made funds available to them through different channels and for this reason, I am sure that the ORT in the Nazi-occupied countries continues its work as much as possible. In other countries with which America has direct contact, the ORT has extended its activities. France, as is known, established ORT schools in a short period in almost all the French towns of the South. There are 75 projects [...] including training centers and workshops in 4 Internment Camps in France. Workshops in 5 Internment Camps in Switzerland, and a School for boys in Zurich were also established [...][77]

In 1943 the WOU Central Board transferred its office to Voiron, a town halfway between Lyon and Grenoble. This part of South-Eastern France was at that time under Italian jurisdiction.[78] After it was occupied by the German troops the WOU went underground but did not cut down its activities. As one of the ORT activists, Sussya Goldmann, recalled: 'The work of ORT was never completely interrupted, even during the hardest period of the total occupation of France.'[79] Moreover, the work directed towards further development of a transnational network of training institutions for Jewish refugees proceeded both in Europe and overseas. By 1944 ORT technical schools and colleges for refugees had been opened in Britain, Switzerland, China (Shanghai), Argentina, USA, Canada, Uruguay, Cuba, Bolivia, Chile, South Africa and Australia. Some of these training institutions still continue to work today.

Jews in France: articles, publications, memoirs, essays], Book 1, Russkoe evreistvo v zarubezh'e [Russian Jews Abroad], 3(8) ([n.p.]: Jerusalem, 2001), p. 259.

[77] Minutes of the conference of the Emergency Committee for WOU Affairs held on May 19, 1942 in New York, in Scharf (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: The Fateful Years (1938–1943)*, pp. 103–104.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[79] Sussya Goldmann, 'ORT in the Post-War Period, 1945–1960', in *80 Years of ORT*, p. 56.

Conclusions

During the period 1921–1944 the WOU leadership was able to create an interstate, transnational network of philanthropic organizations which, according to Grigorii Aronson, General Secretary of the WOU in 1926–31, had won 'the whole of the terrestrial globe'.[80] The organizational structure of the WOU network ensured the successful realization of several relief programmes directed towards the radical modernization of the socio-economic basis of East European Jewry and the gradual transformation of its representatives from objects of charity into people of material independence. The WOU network not only established reliable relations between thousands of benefactors in Western Europe and overseas and their beneficiaries in Eastern Europe, and provided assistance for the organization of a system of Jewish technical training on the part of public and governmental institutions, but also made this assistance economically effective and politically significant.

A developed ideology of ORTism, which combined general humanitarian values with traditional Jewish assets, was able to unite around itself prominent public figures and social activists with different political views who promoted WOU activities among a variety of social groups of the Jewish population in many countries of Europe and overseas.

In the late1930s, with the advent of the Nazis, the WOU network had faced serious challenges in view of the critical political and economic conditions in pre-war Europe. The ability of the WOU network actors to mobilize their own resources when the ties between them had been broken ensured the viability of the WOU organizational structure and its effectiveness during World War II. Thanks to the employment of sophisticated WOU relief programmes, especially those that had been directed towards enabling large scale emigration from Nazi Germany, thousands of Jews were saved and their adaptation to social and economic viability in their countries of destination was facilitated.

[80] Grigorii Aronson, 'Zapiski sekretaria ORTa' [Notes of the ORT Secretary], publication, introduction, and commentary by A. Ivanov, in *Arkhiv evreiskoi istorii* [Archive of Jewish History], vol. 3 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), p. 104.

It has been calculated that, during the twentieth century, with its dramatic events—world wars, the Holocaust, and economic depressions—programmes of vocational training and social rehabilitation developed and carried out by the WOU have reached more than three million people in more than one hundred countries of the world. This serves as the best illustration of the impact of the legacy of the WOU for the Jewish culture of Europe, Israel and the USA.

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'The Problem of the Vocational Adaptation of the Refugees', memorandum submitted to the International Refugees' Conference at Evian- Les- Bains by the Central Executive of the ORT Union of Societies for the Promotion of Trades and Agriculture among the Jews, Paris, July 2nd, 1938, in Scharf, (ed.), *Collected Materials on the History of ORT: Between Two Wars (1919–1939)*, Part 2B, pp. 41–58.

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VLADIMIR (ZEEV) JABOTINSKY AND HIS RECENTLY DISCOVERED WORKS: PROBLEMS OF ATTRIBUTION AND ANALYSIS

Leonid Katsis

The life and activity of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky have been the object of study throughout the more than 70 years which have passed since his death. The very extent of this period of time might suggest that nothing remains to be uncovered in Jabotinsky studies. As my work on Jabotinsky's Complete Works[1] shows, his biography still contains a vast number of blanks waiting to be filled.

This study aims precisely at bridging these substantial gaps. I will present examples which reconstruct Jabotinsky's journalistic activity, and restore both his bibliography and biography, following a chronological order.

Jabotinsky's first article appeared in *Iuzhnoe obozrenie* (The Southern Survey) published in his native city of Odessa in 1897. At the time, the young Jabotinsky began working for the Odessa newspaper *Odesskii listok* (Odessa News-Sheet) and continued this activity until he left for Italy in 1901. His *Tale of My Life* (*Sipur Yamai* in Hebrew and *Povest' moikh dnei* in Russian)[2] reveals that, at the same time, Jabotinsky contributed to the St Petersburg newspaper *Severnyi kur'er* (Northern Courier) which was published from 1899 until 1901. This fact is not mentioned in either of the two bibliographies of Jabotinsky published

[1] V.(Z.) Zhabotinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 9 tomakh* (Minsk: Met, 2007–). This collection of Jabotinsky's works (edited by Feliks Dektor as head of the editorial board and me as academic editor) is the first scholarly edition of the prose, poetry and journalism of the founder of Reform Zionism. The previous (Hebrew) edition had been prepared by his son Ery Jabotinski and was edited in the late 1940s and early 1950s. We have discovered that his censored articles often had analogues in the émigré press signed by pseudonyms in hitherto unknown revolutionary magazines. The comparison of these articles with his famous *Feuilletons* published in Russian in 1913 and 1922 shows that these early texts often became a point of departure for his later journalistic work. Cf. Leonid Katsis, 'O psevdonimakh rannego Vladimira Zhabotinskogo v zhurnale *Osvobozhdenie*: 1903–1905', in *Russkii Sbornik: Issledovaniia po istorii Rossii*, ed. by Modest Kolerov (Moscow: Regnum, 2011), pp. 132–182.

[2] V.(Z.) Zhabotinskii, *Povest' moikh dnei*, translated from Hebrew by N. Bartman, in V.(Z.) Zhabotinskii, *O zheleznoi stene: Rechi, stat'i, vospominaniia* (Minsk: Met, 2004), pp. 454–534.

in 1979 and 2007, respectively.[3] As the Russian references in both bibliographies are similar to each other, it can be concluded that the studies on the 'Russian' Jabotinsky were based on the same archival sources. Even the magazines and newspapers which were analyzed in the Italian biography of Jabotinsky[4] and which are mentioned in Joseph Shechtman's *Rebel and Statesman*[5] have not been included in either of the bibliographies. The problem is not restricted to those Russian newspapers which are difficult to find and known only from Jabotinsky's *Tale of My Life*. Jabotinsky himself attempted to create his own biography in a way which omits not only newspapers and magazines for which he wrote, but also important episodes of his life and of his intellectual activity. Other episodes, including his meeting with T. Hertzl, cannot be verified today but may at least be presented in a stylized form.[6]

This is partly due to Jabotinsky's attempt to create a new image of himself which was motivated by the circumstances of his political activity in the 1920s and 1930s when he published the novel *Piatero* (The Five), the Hebrew *Sipur Yamai* (Tale of My Life) and the *Story of the Jewish Legion*. At the same time, the style, intonation and content of his publications were influenced by struggles within the Zionist movement and by accusations during the 'Arlozorov Affair' to which Jabotinsky referred as a 'new Beilisiad'. The real life of the founder of Reform Zionism was, especially during his youth, very different from the picture portrayed in his émigré texts.

Therefore, our ongoing study of Jabotinsky's early years attempts a) to provide an essential commentary to his memoirs; b) to decode the background to his memoirs and prose, and c) to base Jabotinsky's biography on the foundation of his published texts and not on the myths that even his closest acquaintances (e.g. Shechtman) have been prone to constructing (possibly as a result of Jabotinsky's influence).

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[3] *Kitve Ze'ev Zaboṭinski, 1897–1940: bibliografyah*, ed. by Yisra'el Yevarovits (Tel-Aviv: Mekhon Zaboṭinski be-Yisra'el, 1977); *Kitve Ze'ev Z'abotinski: bibliyografyah, 1897–1940*, ed. by Minah Gra'ur (Tel-Aviv: Mekhon Zaboṭinski be-Yisra'el, 2007).

[4] Vincenzo Pinto, *Imparare a sparare: Vita di Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, padre del sionismo di destra* (Torino: UTET libreria, 2007).

[5] Joseph B. Shechtman, *Rebel and Statesman: The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky: The Early Years* (Silver Spring, MD: Eshel Books, 1986).

[6] Michael Stanislavski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 150–177.

One could argue that, for instance, Jabotinsky's Italian texts or his Hebrew memoirs do not belong to the 'Russian' Jabotinsky. This is, however, not the case, because the 'Russian Jabotinsky' should not be restricted to the Russian texts. Jabotinsky remained a Russian Zionist, writer and journalist regardless of the languages he used or the countries he visited. This can be proved by a close reading of his articles, for example those written in Italian.

I

In the Italian press Jabotinsky signed his articles 'Vladimiro Giabotinski'. One article that was published in the Italian magazine *Nuova Anthologia* is dedicated to Russian literary impressionism and to the writers Maksim Gor'kii and Anton Chekhov.[7] Two other articles devoted to Russian political problems[8] and, more specifically, to the strikes of Russian students were published in the Rome newspaper *Avanti!*. There is a third article in the same newspaper which is not signed. Although the above signature cannot be called a pseudonym, we shall see that it originated in Jabotinsky's pseudonym 'Zionist G.'. Whereas the signed articles were dedicated to the Russian students' social democratic movement, the third, unsigned, article describes the excommunication of Leo Tolstoy from the Russian Orthodox Church. This article was attributed to Jabotinsky by Stefano Gardzonio. At first sight, the two themes—the Russian students' movement and Tolstoy's excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church—do not seem to be connected to each other or to *Severnyi kur'er*. *Severnyi kur'er*, however, was closed down by the Russian censorship precisely because of its support for the Russian students' movement. This is a simple example of a link between different media which is not immediately obvious.

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[7] Vladimiro Giabotinski, 'Anton Cekhof e Massimo Gorki: L'impressionismo nella litteratura russa', *Nuova Antologia*, vol. 96 (1901), 723–733.

[8] Vladimiro Giabotinski, 'La Rivolta Russa: L'attegiamento del pubblico in Russia', *Avanti!*, 10 April 1901; Idem, 'Cosa sono e cosa vogliono gli student russi', *Avanti!*, 16 April 1901, 706–709; cf. S. Gardzonio, 'Zhabotinskii ital'ianskogo perioda', in V. (Z.) Zhabotinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 9 tomakh* (Minsk: Met, 2007–), tom 2 (2008), kniga 2, pp. 6–18; The third article from *Avanti!* is unsigned: 'Tolstoi allo zar', *Avanti!*, 17 April 1901.

A more complex example is the first text from *Avanti!* which contains an interesting footnote by Jabotinsky explaining that an Italian reader could not possibly imagine how important the Russian Marxist magazine *Zhizn'* (Life) was for advanced Russian students and with what impatience they awaited each issue. Jabotinsky mentions *Zhizn'* in a letter to Vladimir Korolenko, in which he complains about the attitude which democratic magazines had taken towards him.[9] The issues of *Zhizn'* which appeared between 1899 and 1901 do not contain anything connected with Jabotinsky. The four last issues of 1901, though, include, in the rubric entitled 'Book Reviews', nine reviews signed 'A.' and dedicated to Russian translations of Maupassant and to Akim Volinskii's book on the Russian writer Nikolai Leskov. Some other interesting texts cannot be unequivocally ascribed to Jabotinsky. One of these texts is a book review written by a young author in a disrespectful style. The book in question is a voluminous collection of poems by the 60-year-old Russian poet Konstantin Fofanov. The reviewer 'A.' criticizes the sheer size of the book, pointing out that 500 pages were, considering the contemporary book market, clearly excessive. A poet should present a publication of no more than 50 pages unless he is a classic, such as Pushkin or Nekrasov. 'A.' also made the point that some poems from this collection were close to pornography.

The solution to the authorship problem can be found in an article signed 'Altalena' (the most prominent pseudonym of the young Jabotinsky) and published in *Odesskie novosti* (Odessa News). This article or, more precisely, short novel, describes a young man who was not able to publish a certain article of his. The article deals with the Russian poet Mirra Lokhvitskaia, who was very close to her teacher Fofanov. The hero of the long article tells its author that the reason why he has not been able to publish his texts on Lokhvitskaia were not due to the artistic value of her work but to her ideology and aesthetics which were unacceptable to a liberal magazine. He adds that Mirra Lokhvitskaia was not a pornographic poet (as she had been labelled by some critics), and that the 50 poems of hers were more valuable than many thick books. There is no doubt that both texts

[9] Ze'ev Zaboṭinsḳi, *'Igrot*, ed. by Daniyel Ḳarpi (Jerusalem: Mekhon Z'aboṭinsḳi be-Yiśra'el, 1992–1998), vol. 1, pp. 5–6 (letter from Jabotinsky to Korolenko of 9 September 1899). In Russian: Vladimir Zhabotinskii, 'Pis'ma russkim pisateliam', ed. by Khaim Firin, *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, 1 (1992), p. 204.

were written by the same author—concealed under the pseudonyms Altalena and 'A.', respectively. A little later Jabotinsky began to use these pseudonyms simultaneously in *Odesskie novosti*. As I have shown in a separate study, the structure and correlation between the texts signed 'A.' and 'Altalena', published in this newspaper, are the same as between the texts published in *Zhizn'* and in *Odesskie novosti*. We can therefore conclude that the texts from *Zhizn'* signed 'A.' were written by Vladimir Jabotinsky.[10]

The journal *Zhizn'* informed its readers of the closure of *Severnyi kur'er* and of Leo Tolstoy's excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church (shortly before it was closed down itself by the same authorities). At this first stage, the invention of pseudonyms and literary personalities seems to be no more than a common game by a young author who intends to conceal his name from his readers in different countries and cities. The case of *Severnyi kur'er*, however, provides us with another type of game which was connected with radical changes in Jabotinsky's position in Russian journalism.

As mentioned above, Jabotinsky collaborated with *Odesskii listok* and with *Severnyi kur'er* at the same time. In both newspapers his texts were signed 'Vl. Zh.'. At some point, 'Vl. Zh.' disappeared from *Severnyi Kur'er* but appeared in the more respectable *Odesskie novosti* to which he began to contribute at that time. Some texts published subsequently in *Severnyi kur'er* are reminiscent of the previous texts (signed 'Vl. Zh.'), yet this time they were signed 'A. Z-skii'. The issue is clarified by one text (in two parts) which was sent from Italy and dedicated to the New Year of 1901. The text bears two different signatures in the two magazines: it was signed 'A. Z-skii' in *Severnyi kur'er*, but its continuation in *Odesskie novosti* was signed 'Vl. Zh'. There can thus be no doubt that 'A. Z-skii' had become Jabotinsky's new pseudonym.

It is untypical, though, for Jabotinsky to hide behind a coding as simple as the one described. *Odesskie novosti* was not an ordinary provincial newspaper (like *Odesskii listok*) which had no interest in its author's activities outside Odessa or did not care if he used a widely known

[10] Leonid Katsis, 'O psevdonimakh rannego Zhabotinskogo', in V. (Z.) Zhabotinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 9 tomakh* (Minsk: Met, 2007–), tom 2 (2008), kniga 2, pp. 715–728. For additional material concerning the pseudonym 'A' and its parallels with the pseudonym 'Altalena' in *Odesskie Novosti* see: Leonid Katsis, 'Iunyi Vladimir Zhabotinskii: Opernyi kritik', in *Teatral'naia periodika v Rossii: Doklady vos'mykh Mezhdunarodnykh nauchnykh chtenii 'Teatral'naia kniga mezhdu proshlym i budushchim'* (Moscow: Tri kvadrata, 2009), pp. 150–164.

pseudonym elsewhere. It was distributed all over Russia and was not willing to pay fees to an author who was working elsewhere under the same name or pseudonym. Jabotinsky was therefore forced to use a different name in other journals. He did it in a very original way.

An article signed 'A. Z.-skii' was dedicated to the monument on the grave of Heinrich Heine, and to the commemoration of the poet's legacy; it attracted the attention of the famous translator of Heine's poetry Petr Veinberg, who wrote a critical letter to the editorial board. In this letter, published in the following issue, Veinberg pointed out that 'A. Z-skii' misled the readers and did not possess any knowledge about the monument. 'A. Z-skii' responded to this criticism saying that, although Petr Veinberg was right, he ('A. Z-skii') had learned new facts about the monument in the sculptor's studio where the artist himself had shown him a new version of the monument which was to be erected at Heine's grave in the near future.

The young journalist was obviously embarrassed about the whole situation but did not want to acknowledge it. The identity of the pseudonym 'A. Z-skii' can again be revealed through *Odesskie novosti* in a text by 'Altalena'. The latter presents his new novel about a poor Lithuanian Jew who used to work as Rome correspondent of a recently closed Petersburg newspaper. This Jew—his surname was Zlatopol'skii—became involved in an embarrassing incident concerning Heine's monument, very similar to the one described above. Altalena continued the story of Zlatopol'skii with a dramatic love story and the description of his sudden death. The whole text was based on quotations from Heine's *Buch der Lieder* (Book of Songs) translated into Russian by Petr Veinberg. Jabotinsky described an episode from his own past in a short piece of fiction which was published when the newspaper or magazine he used to work for had been closed down.

Another principle used by Jabotinsky for coding his real name can be derived from the newspaper *Elizavetgradskie novosti* (Elizavetgrad News) which is not mentioned in any of the sources related to his life but surfaced when one of Leo Tolstoy's correspondents, Isaak Teneromo, published the writer's letters which were dedicated to Jewish issues.[11] I found evidence of Jabotinsky's activity in this newspaper when I was studying the magazine *Iuzhnye zapiski* (Southern Notes), where he

[11] G.A. Ėliasberg, 'Teneromo: Provintsial'nyi korrespondent Tolstogo', *Filologicheskie nauki*, 5 (2009), 45–55.

published a series of articles in 1902–03. Although this magazine has been mentioned in various bibliographies, some articles have escaped the bibliographers' attention. In the same journal, one of the subscription announcements for 1904 mentions Jabotinsky as a regular contributor to *Elizavetgradskie novosti*.[12] In this journal nothing was signed with the name Jabotinsky or with any of his known pseudonyms. Nevertheless, the newspaper continued to list Jabotinsky's name on its first page for about half a year. According to the rules of the Russian press an author was allowed to make an agreement with a newspaper for half a year. This was a standard practice. Jabotinsky himself made this kind of agreement with many provincial newspapers during his years in Russia.

Elizavetgradskie novosti was a typical provincial newspaper of Southern Russia and such a well-known name as Jabotinsky's could help its popularity. It seems unlikely, though, that the listing of his name was merely to serve as an advertisement. I found two types of publications which can be ascribed to Jabotinsky. They are signed 'Zet' (either in Latin or in Cyrillic characters), with the exception of one contribution which was signed 'Tourist'. The latter is of some interest as it discusses the problem of the journalist's independence from the editor. 'Tourist' argues that a journalist should have an opportunity to work for any newspaper of his choosing. The editor should not be able to prohibit this as long as the journalist uses different pseudonyms and rubric titles in different newspapers.

One incident of this kind, in which Jabotinsky himself had exercised this liberty, has been described above (the case of *Severnyi kur'er* and *Odesskii listok* where he could use his own pen name in both newspapers, and the case of *Severnyi kur'er* and *Odesskie novosti* where he was unable to do so). In the second case he used the pseudonym 'Altalena' in one newspaper and the pseudonym 'A. Z-skii' in another. It is relatively straightforward to conclude that both pseudonyms refer to the same person 'Altalena Zhabotin-ski'. The case of 'Zet' and 'Tourist' is more complicated.

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[12] A separate article discussing this problem will appear in the fourth volume of Zhabotinskii's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (in press). It is interesting to note that one can find a letter from Jabotinsky to the Russian writer and stage director N.N. Evreinov dated Ekaterinoslav [not far from Elizavetgrad] 9 April 1904: Ze'ev Z'aboṭinsḳi, *'Igrot*, ed. by Daniyel Ḳarpi (Jerusalem: Mekhon Z'aboṭinsḳi be-Yiśra'el, 1992–1998), vol. 2 (1995), p. 265.

It is clear from the articles signed 'Altalena' in *Odesskie novosti* that Jabotinsky intended to organize a journalists' trade union in order to fight against the enslavement of journalists by mass-media owners. The idea expressed in the article by 'Tourist' was thus in line with Jabotinsky's general stance. Another suggestion put forward by 'Tourist' was that if journalists from well-known newspapers collaborated in small provincial ones, this would in fact serve to boost the interest of owners of regional newspapers in the provinces also in such newspapers as *Odesskie novosti*. He illustrated this idea through an example: 'Is the anti-Semitic *Novoe vremia* (New Time) concerned about the existence of other anti-Semitic news-sheets in the province? Not at all! They merely support the activity of *Novoe vremia*. So, why should *Odesskie novosti* be concerned about our participation in provincial liberal newspapers?'

A closer look at the first page of *Elizavetgradskie novosti* reveals that the newspaper had its home on the same Malaia Arnautskaia Street in Odessa as *Odesskie novosti*. In fact, they were situated opposite each other. It is therefore hardly surprising that the majority of the *Odesskie novosti* authors contributed also to *Elizavetgradskie novosti*; this was not unusual: correspondents of Russian newspapers often contributed to several periodicals simultaneously, using different pseudonyms. Another case is even more complicated. 'Zet' began his collaboration in *Elizavetgradskie novosti* with reviews of the provincial press called 'From among our Correspondents' ('Sredi korrespondentov'). This included even reviews of newspapers published in small Russian towns, compared to which Berdichev and Bobruisk could count as metropolises. Similar reviews were published at the time by the famous Russian journalist Ippolit Fedorovich Vasilevskii who wrote under the pseudonym 'Vasilevskii Bukva' (Vasilevskii Letter) and worked for the St Petersburg newspaper *Birzhevye vedomosti* (Stock Market News). Here the title of the reviews was slightly different: 'From the Residents' World' ('Iz mira obyvatelei').

The first review written by 'Zet' refers to a play by the Russian author V. Bezhin with the strange title *Olgin den'* (Olga's Day). According to 'Zet', the play had been heavily criticized by an unnamed 'Petersburg Mephisto'. This forgotten play had been a significant event for the Russian stage of the 1903/1904 season. Its title referred to the Orthodox holiday 'St Olga's Day'. The play was performed in the theatre belonging to Aleksei Suvorin, who was at the same time the owner of the above-mentioned *Novoe vremia*. The title 'Petersburg Mephisto' referred to the prominent Russian writer and critic Aleksandr Amfiteatrov,

who was Jabotinsky's colleague on the St Petersburg newspaper *Rus'* (an ancient word for Russia), owned by Suvorin's son A.A. Suvorin. At the same time an advertisement for this play was published in *Teatr i iskusstvo* (Theatre and Art), a weekly magazine edited by the sharp critic Aleksandr Rafailovich Kugel' who wrote under the pseudonym 'Homo Novus'. *Teatr i iskusstvo* also formed part of Suvorin's media empire.

The pages of this magazine contain a whole advertising campaign which had started in N° 2 and continued until 1904, shortly before 'Zet' began to publish his reviews in *Elizavetgradskie novosti*. It was preceded by a sharp criticism—in the rubric 'From the Provinces'—of the views of Altalena in the first issue of *Teatr i iskusstvo*. It is interesting to mention that this was the only text concerning Jabotinsky in this magazine.

There is yet another text by 'Zet' which is linked to *Olgin Den'*. Issues 43–45 of *Teatr i iskusstvo* for 1902 feature a *Rasskaz teatral'nogo reportera* (Story of a Theatre Reporter) signed by 'Zet'. This text bears strong similarities to Jabotinsky's story *Nevezha* (Boor) published (under the pseudonym Altalena) in *Odesskie novosti* on 23 December 1900. This novel by 'Zet' is analogous to 'Altalena's' autobiography and describes the fate of Jabotinsky's early plays and his departure for Rome. The second text is closely related to the first; it is dedicated to the beginning of the hero's activity as a theatre critic. This 'novel' was published in the context of a broader discussion on theatre criticism organized by *Teatr i iskusstvo*.

Both texts describe the relationship between a young correspondent and his editor-in-chief. The first text deals with meetings between an author of plays and prose and their prototypes, who, having recognized the author (despite his attempts to hide behind a pseudonym) as a native of their town burden him with their advice. It also describes the author's meeting with the editor who sends his correspondent to Rome in order to save him from intrusive advice. In the second text, the editor mentors the young reviewer on how to write theatre reviews. At the time the editor-in-chief of *Odesskie novosti*, Mikhail Kheifets, published his own theatre criticism in *Teatr i iskusstvo* and signed it as 'Staryi teatral' ('Old theatregoer').

What we know about the young Jabotinsky fits in with this story. In April 1904 he wrote in the second article of the series 'Sketches without a Title' in the St Petersburg newspaper *Rus'* that he was now based in Aleksandrovsk-on-Dniepr, where newspapers from

Ekaterinoslav (another town on the Dnieper near Elizavetgrad) could be obtained within two days after their publication. This was the town of Menakhem Ussishkin as well as of another of Jabotinsky's Zionist colleagues, V. Temkin; Jabotinsky even points this out in *The Tale of my Life*.

In the next text of the 'Provincial Correspondent' series, the St Petersburg *Birzhevye vedomosti* is mentioned. Another interesting source of information, similar to *Elizavetgradskie novosti* and *Iuzhnoe obozrenie* (The Southern Survey) is the Jewish Zionist magazine *Evreiskaia zhizn'* (Jewish Life).

The back cover of this journal reveals that Jabotinsky was, among others, a contributor to the Odessa magazine *Voprosy obshchestvennoi zhizni* (Questions of Social Life). This magazine which is not mentioned in the main bibliographies of Russian periodicals can be found in the Russian State Library. It does not contain a single publication signed by Jabotinsky, but almost every issue comprises one or several articles by an unknown 'V. Vladimirov'; they deal, among other topics, with Russian theatre, Maksim Gor'kii, the Russian Intelligentsia and Leonid Andreev's prose.[13]

A reader unfamiliar with the above-mentioned text on Chekhov and Gor'kii published in *Nuova Antologia* could not possibly guess that the articles were written by Jabotinsky. From Jabotinsky's claims, which were directed at the Russian liberal critics and can be found in his article on Lokhvitskaia, from his novel about the theatre reporter signed 'Zet' and from his letters to one of the editors of *Russkoe bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth), Vladimir Korolenko, it becomes clear that all of them reflect the aesthetic manifesto of the young Jabotinsky.

II

Unlike many other newspapers, *Rus'* is mentioned in Jabotinsky's memoirs *A Tale of my Life*. Yet it was not included in either of the two bibliographies, and even J.B. Shechtman, who knew about Jabotinsky's contributions to *Rus'*, did not try to find the newspaper, an oversight

[13] For an article about Leonid Andreev signed by 'V. Vladimirov' and published in *Voprosy obshchestvennoi zhizni* with our attribution and commentaries see: Leonid Katsis, 'Vladimir Zhabotinskii o Leonide Andreeve: K probleme atributsii gazetno-zhurnal'nykh tekstov V. Zhabotinskogo 1901–1907)', *Vestnik Rossiiskogo Gosudarstvennogo Gumanitarnogo Universiteta* (Zhurnalistika i literaturnaia kritika) 6 (2011), 230–244.

later repeated by Shimon Markish.[14] Jabotinsky was an official contributor to *Rus'* from 1904 until 1905 and again from 1907 until 1908 and published in this newspaper more than 100 articles and letters, signed both with his own name and with pseudonyms. In the aftermath of the revolution, the newspaper was closed by the Russian censorship in 1905, to reappear only in 1907. The signature 'Vl. Zh.' appeared as well in the newspaper *Molva* (Rumour) which was an affiliated publication of *Rus'*. It also contains articles signed with other pseudonyms, as do other affiliated publications of *Rus'* such as *XX vek* (The Twentieth Century) and *Illustrirovannoe prilozhenie* (Illustrated Supplement [to *Rus'*]).

Some of Jabotinsky's articles in *Elizavetgradskie novosti* share common features with his contributions to *Rus'*. An article published in *Elizavetgradskie novosti* and signed 'Atta Trol' (the title of Heinrich Heine's poem) discusses the socialization of prostitutes in terms which are similar to an article in *Rus'* signed 'Vl. Zh.'. The 1907 satirical supplement of *Rus'* contains two texts (a satirical novel and a poem) signed as 'Atta Leo' and 'Attalea', undoubtedly transformations of 'Altalena'.

The same pseudonym appears in the Vilna newspaper *Novaia zaria* (New Dawn) under the 1906 essay dedicated to Friedrich Nietzsche (Jabotinsky also contributed to the same newspaper, edited by his Zionist colleague Shmaryahu Levin, under his own name). It can further be found in *Krymskii kur'er* (Crimea Courier) in 1906 under an article on Leonid Andreev's recently written and as yet unpublished play *Zhizn' cheloveka* (Life of a Man). These articles feature numerous parallels with texts published elsewhere under Jabotinsky's own name and thus leave no doubt regarding their authorship. Jabotinsky not only invented puns based on his various pseudonyms but also invariably left a key to their decoding. As a Russian literary and theatre critic he could safely assume that his Russian readers would not at the same time read the Zionist magazine *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* (*Chronicle of Jewish Life*) of 1905.[15] Here, one can find minutes of the Meeting of Moscow Zionists, signed not by Jabotinsky, but by a 'reporter of the journal', A.M. The author of this report describes a discussion between Vladimir Jabotinsky and Menakhem Ussishkin, and quotes a

[14] See for example: Shimon Markish, 'Zhabotinskii: Russkii zhurnalist', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 31 (1990), 61–75.

[15] Leonid Katsis, 'Vladimir Zhabotinskii: Teatral'nyi kritik i organizator teatral'nogo dela', in *Istoriia teatra v arkhivnykh i knizhnykh sobraniiakh*, ed. by A.A. Kolganova (Moscow: Tri Kvadrata, 2011), pp. 88–116.

speech by Jabotinsky on the revolutionary situation in Russia during the First Russian Revolution, and what prospects it implied for the Jews. He refers to the well-known story entitled 'Attalea Princeps' by Vsevolod Mikhailovich Garshin, a Russian writer of democratic orientation. The story is a fable about a rare species of palm-tree which dreams of breaking the roof of its greenhouse and becoming free. As soon as the dream comes true the tree perishes. This was Jabotinsky's metaphor for the Russian revolution and Jewish dreams of liberation and equal rights in the Russian Empire which the revolution would bring. The story reveals not only the source of Jabotinsky's pseudonyms but also their paradigmatic pattern. It makes abundantly clear that all texts signed 'Atta Trol', 'Atta Leo' and 'Attalea' and connected to one of Jabotinsky's topics should be attributed to him.

Not only Jabotinsky's texts but his very choice of pseudonyms can contribute to the reconstruction of his portrait as a writer. We can now conclude that Jabotinsky's system of encoding his pseudonyms and acronyms is historically predicated, as described above, and based on historical events or texts which preceded the creation of a pseudonym. Almost none of Jabotinsky's pseudonyms pointed out above are mentioned in his memoirs or in later studies dedicated to his life and work.

Any commentary on his memoirs and émigré prose will be incomplete without this hidden part of his *œuvre* which makes us aware that the existing biographies of Jabotinsky are highly influenced by Jabotinsky's own construction of his identity as a writer and journalist. It even seems possible that the omission of *Rus'* and its affiliated publications from Jabotinsky's biography (and even from his bibliography) is not accidental.

III

Jabotinsky dedicated to *Rus'* a special chapter of his *Tale of My Life*. In this chapter he discusses the history of his interactions with the Editor-in-Chief of this newspaper—the son of A.S. Suvorin, the editor of *Novoe vremia* (New Time), A.A. Suvorin. In contrast to his right-wing father, A.A. Suvorin founded a liberal newspaper—*Rus'*, the editorial board of which Jabotinsky joined in 1904. Here, according to his memoirs, the articles by 'Vl. Zh', although published occasionally, ended up in the editor's rubbish bin more often than not because A.A. Suvorin was afraid of radicalism. Yet Jabotinsky mentions that Suvorin paid him regularly. Jabotinsky then left *Rus'* for the more radical *Nasha zhizn'*

(Our Life) where he was, on the contrary, found not to be radical enough. He reports the editors' refusal to publish an article about his arrest in Odessa, his subsequent parting with this newspaper and his return to A.A. Suvorin. The article in question was the first in a series called exactly the same as it was called in *Rus'*: 'Nabroski bez zaglaviia' ('Sketches Without a Title'). This means that Jabotinsky's reason for leaving *Nasha zhizn'* was not connected to insufficient radicalism. The true reason was the newspaper's consent to have its issues censored, which was unacceptable to Jabotinsky. In his typical manner, Jabotinsky published an article under a pseudonym, this time 'A Provincial Correspondent', where he challenged the newspaper's editors with the question of how he could possibly inform his readers of the current affairs in the towns which he was covering, without prior knowledge of what was permissible for publication.

The editors' response was a reassurance that their consent to the requirements of preliminary censorship was motivated purely by their concern for their readers. Jabotinsky answered in his characteristic style that, as 'a reader from the province', he would not wish to read such a newspaper. This put a final stop to his work for *Nasha zhizn'*. Jabotinsky returned to *Rus'* and continued publishing there once or twice a week without any interruptions throughout 1904 and almost all of 1905. Hence it becomes clear that his memoirs present only a part of the picture of his contacts with A.A. Suvorin.

It is interesting to note that this discussion was held before Jabotinsky began to contribute to *Nasha zhizn'*. But at the same time 'Zet' from *Elizavetgradskie novosti* was writing very similarly in his 'Iz Mira Korrespondentov'. In any case this history needs special study.

The last two 'Sketches Without a Title' appeared not in *Rus'*, but in *Molva* in 1905. After that the signature 'Vl. Zh.' disappeared from *Rus'* and its replacements (i.e. the newspapers published instead of *Rus'* which were identical to it save for the logotype: *Molva*, *XX Vek*, and *Oko*) until it re-emerged in the resurrected *Rus'* in 1907. The question thus arises of what happened between the end of 1905 and the end of 1906. A regular reader of *Rus'* might have concluded that 'Vl. Zh.' had simply left the newspaper. Our answer, however, is different: from the end of the 'Sketches Without a Title' until their reappearance in the re-opened *Rus'* the same journal featured regular articles signed 'V. Vladimirov' (which was above proven to be one of Jabotinsky's pseudonyms).

What did 'V. Vladimirov' write about? In *Rus'* he began to publish his divertissements dealing with the assault on the Russian terrorist

Maria Spiridonova in a Tambov prison. From there he turned to his investigations into the punitive actions by members of the Russian Army on the Moscow-Kazan railway, and to executions in Riga and Warsaw. Already at this stage one can conjecture that 'V. Vladimirov' from *Voprosy obschestvennoi zhizni* and 'V. Vladimirov' from *Rus'* are the same person as 'Vl. Zh.' and, indeed, as Vladimir Jabotinsky. The identity of the pseudonym 'V. Vladimirov' is confirmed via a tragic event in Russian history: on 1–3 June 1906 the Białystok pogrom took place. Jabotinsky dedicated numerous well-known speeches and articles to this bloody event. It suffices here to mention his famous 'In the Days of Mourning' from his *Feuilletons*. It turns out, though, that his main and most voluminous texts about this pogrom have been unknown to us. The Russian bibliographical magazine *Kniga* (Book) published at the end of 1906 provides information on the arrest and release of Jabotinsky, as well as on the arrests of the editors of *Molva*. It also contains an announcement of the release of three books by the 'journalist Vladimirov'. Two of these books are *Mariia Spiridonova* and *Karatel'naia politika pravitel'stva i Belostokskii pogrom* (The Punitive Policy of the Russian Government and the Białystok pogrom). According to library catalogues, *Maria Spiridonova* was written by 'V. Vladimirov' and *Karatel'naia politika pravitel'stva i Belostokskii pogrom* by 'V. G-skii'. There is yet another book by 'V. Vladimirov' entitled *Ocherki sovremennykh kaznei* (Sketches of Contemporary Executions) more than two-thirds of which is devoted to the Białystok pogrom. All of these texts are very close to the corresponding texts in *Rus'*. In the preface 'V. Vladimirov' explains that the articles have been checked, updated and supplemented by official documents after their newspaper publication in *Rus'* and *XX Vek*. The publisher's preface to 'V. G-ski''s book contains new information on the author who was a correspondent of one Russian and one Viennese newspaper. Whereas the 'Russian newspaper' can easily be recognized as *Rus'*, the Viennese newspaper is more difficult to identify.

Jabotinsky was a member of the editorial board of the weekly *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* (Chronicles of Jewish Life), and it is plausible that he published there on the Białystok pogrom as well. And indeed, an author who signs 'Z' published in *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* as a special correspondent. 'Z' writes that he was in Kishinev on the ninth day of the pogrom, and in Białystok on the third day. He ends his text with the conclusion that the latter pogrom did not give the Jews any moral or historic experience and did not reveal to them anything new in

terms of their tragic history. Exactly the same conclusion can be found in Jabotinsky's 'Mourning Days'; here he uses the Hebrew expression 'Musar Elohim' (The Chastisement of God). This allows us to conclude that the above text belongs to Jabotinsky.

Two further texts on Białystok are signed 'A.G.' and include testimonies of the victims of that pogrom. If one compares these testimonies with those given by 'V. Vladimirov', it becomes clear that they are very close to each other but different from the testimonies collected by the State Duma Commission. The investigations conducted by 'A.G.' clearly took longer than the four days which the Duma commission spent in Białystok. The main difference between the testimonies published by 'V. G-skii' and those published by 'A.G.' concerns details of Jewish life—there are more of them in the Jewish magazine and fewer in the Russian newspaper (and in the book designed for the Russian reader).

Another example is the editor's article 'Białystok and the Duma' in which the author discusses, amongst other topics, the speech given by the Jewish deputy Shmaryahu Levin. Jabotinsky discusses the same problem in a letter to Menakhem Ussishkin from the small town of Ledborovo between Vilna and Białystok. Here he spent approximately four weeks from the end of May until 11 August 1906. It is instructive to compare this information with the report by 'V. Vladimirov' (in his book) where he says that he has spent 20 days in Białystok. The calculations show that from the third day of the pogrom until his departure from Ledborovo (the place from where his letters were sent judging by the postmarks) exactly that many days had passed. The victims' testimonies gathered by 'A. G.' for *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* appeared in the journal, starting with chapter four. This is the number of the chapter in 'V. G-skii's book where the same testimonies are published. Putting together these results, we can conclude that all the authors of the Białystok texts mentioned above are one single author: Vladimir Jabotinsky.

It has become clear that the problems discussed in the radical revolutionary texts published in *Rus'* are connected with the investigations by 'V. Vladimirov' in 1905–1906. These texts show clear traces of the hand of a censor, e.g. excisions of parts of the series and even banning an entire issue (e.g. the issue of *XX vek* which included the second part of 'The Pogrom in Białystok'). The same is true for all the other texts by 'V. Vladimirov' published in A.A. Suvorin's periodicals at the time. Suvorin did not have any influence on the work of the censor.

IV

This section is an attempt to reconstruct Jabotinsky's strategy for writing his autobiography of the 'non-Russian years'. These years began in 1913–1914 when Jabotinsky was a contributor to the famous and popular Russian newspaper *Russkie vedomosti* (Russian News). The period lasted approximately five years. It continued in the post-revolutionary and post-war years of the 1920s and 1930s during which he edited the journal *Rassvet* (Sunrise). The years of the First World War are not reflected in any of Jabotinsky's memoirs.[16] In particular, this period is absent from the published version of Jabotinsky's memoirs *The Tale of My Life*: its first part concerns the *Odesskie novosti* period, whereas the second part is dedicated to Jabotinsky's activity in *Evreiskaia zhizn'* and *Rus'*.

We still do not know anything about the third period of Jabotinsky's activity in the Russian press, which lasted from 1909 until 1918. From 1908 until 1909 Jabotinsky worked for the Zionist press in Constantinople, where he was sent officially by *Rus'*. Yet Constantinople does not feature in any significant way in his memoirs. Little information is available for the period 1911–1913—the years of the Beilis trial. Jabotinsky published two different series of articles at the same time. One of them included his famous 'Instead of an Apology' which became part of the book *Feuilletons* as well as 'A Trial without Beilis'. The article 'The First Part of a Verdict' from *Rech'* (Speech) remained unknown until I discovered and published it in 1996.[17] The second series entitled 'On the Blood Libel', which was published in *Odesskie novosti*, contains seven of Jabotinsky's articles dedicated to the controversial issue of the so called 'documentary defense of Jews and Judaism' (which Jabotinsky advocated instead of an apology).

In his *The Tale of My Life* Jabotinsky refrained from a detailed description of his activity in Russia between 1908 and 1914 merely stating that he was an honest man during those years and that he did not want to write about it. *The Tale of my Life* was published by Shlomo

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[16] His activity in *Russkie Vedomosti* has recently been described in Mikhail Veiskopf, 'Liubov' k dal'nemu: Zametki o russkoiazychnom tvorchestve Vladimira Zhabotinskogo', *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta*, Jerusalem, 11 (29) (2006), 295–340.

[17] See, for example, my article 'V. Zhabotinskii i V. Rozanov: Ob odnoi nezamechennoi polemike (1911–1913–1918)', in Leonid Katsis, *Russkaia èskhatologiia i russkaia literatura* (Moscow: OGI, 2000), pp. 83–86 and chapter 14 in my monograph *Krovavyi navet i russkaia mysl': Istoriko-teologicheskoe issledovanie dela Beilisa* (Moscow: Gesharim—Mosty kul'tury, 2006), pp. 411–451.

Zaltsman in Hebrew in 1936. Some interesting pages, however, which concerned Jabotinsky's activity in *Russkie vedomosti*, had been published in Russian, namely in Jabotinsky's *Slovo o polku* (The Story of the Jewish Legion) in 1926. Here Jabotinsky describes his interactions with the editorial board of *Russkie vedomosti*, the members of which urged him to stay in Russia. He refused, explaining that his presence was needed in Europe. At the time, he was very active in establishing the first Jewish military force which later became the Jewish Legion. As a result of these negotiations, Jabotinsky became the European correspondent of *Russkie vedomosti*. In *The Tale of My Life* Jabotinsky describes a meeting with Theodor Herzl during the VI Zionist Congress of 1903. Michael Stanislavski, however, who has carefully studied *The Tale of my Life* and Joseph Shechtman's biography, came to the conclusion that such a meeting was impossible.[18] Jabotinsky's *Story of the Jewish Legion* begins with a similar scene: an accidental meeting between Jabotinsky and the second leader of World Zionism, Max Nordau, in 1914, a few days after the beginning of the First World War. I have not been able to verify this information. Nordau died in 1923, two years before the publication of the *Story of the Jewish Legion*. In a similar way, the information on the meeting with Herzl was published only in 1936, i.e. more than ten years after the alleged event.[19]

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[18] Michael Stanislavski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle*, pp. 161–165.

[19] There is yet another account of a historic meeting with a real historical figure, which evokes similar doubts. This meeting with the Polish philosemite author Eliza Orzeszkowa took place, according to Jabotinsky, in Grodno during the first days of the Białystok pogrom. In the *Tale of my Life* Jabotinsky relates that he did not risk getting off the train in Białystok on the first day of the pogrom because the pogromists threatened any Jew arriving in the town; instead, he went on to Grodno. There he accidentally met Orzeszkowa with whom he discussed questions of Polish independence and the reasons why he did not support this idea. In the 22nd volume of *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni*, the aforementioned 'Z' reports that he arrived in Białystok on the third day of the pogrom after having travelled by train from Warsaw to Grodno. Volume 18 of the same journal contains an article warning that Polish independence will lead to pogroms against Polish Jewry and to the destruction of the unified Jewish community in the Russian Empire. It is hard to imagine that Orzeszkowa and Jabotinsky eagerly embarked on a discussion of Jabotinsky's recent article during the first days of the pogrom, rather than discussing the pogrom itself. In 1936 it was equally difficult for the reader to verify the authenticity of this meeting with the writer who died in 1910. It seems possible that Jabotinsky, realizing the prospect of the extermination of Polish Jewry, merely reflects on his own article, written 30 years earlier. Cf. my article 'K probleme atributsii anonimnykh i psevdonimnykh tekstov V. Zhabotinskogo o Belostokskom pogrome: "Z.", "A.G." i "V. G-skii"', in *Nauchnye trudy po iudaike: Materialy XVIII Mezhdunarodnoi ezhegodnoi konferentsii po iudaike* (Moscow: Sefer, 2011), vol. 1, pp. 275–287.

An entirely new light is shed on the problem by the hitherto unknown third part of Jabotinsky's autobiography which is preserved in the Jabotinsky archives in Tel Aviv. This part of Jabotinsky's memoirs is very original and will astonish anybody who knows Jabotinsky as a straightforward and uncompromising military leader of the Revisionist movement in Zionism. It gives such a different picture that the new information surprises even in comparison with his underground revolutionary biography.[20] The unpublished version ends with the meeting with Max Nordau. It was conceived as the first part of a book of which the well-known *Story of the Jewish Legion* was, for chronological reasons, to become the second part. For the future edition of the memoirs I suggest that the chronology of events rather than the chronology of composition be followed. In this case, the first two parts of the *Tale of My Life* would be complemented by the third, yet unpublished, chapter (written in 1935/36) on the events of 1914–1918; together they would precede the chapters concerning the Jewish Legion, originally published in 1926.

It has become clear that Jabotinsky's early activities, especially his participation in the Russian revolutionary movement and in the radical Russian media, threatened the image of the upright Zionist prophet which Jabotinsky acquired after the First World War. For this reason he published the *Feuilletons* in a new version which included descriptions of events that took place after the first edition of 1913;[21] he broke with the first Russian revolution of 1905–1907 in his play in verse *Chuzhbina* (An Alien Land), which was written in 1908 but published only in 1922. In order to put an end to all suspicions concerning his revolutionary activity, Jabotinsky refers in very offensive terms (even using the word 'fool') to an unknown person who had allegedly labeled Jabotinsky a founder of the Russian liberal press.[22] In the light of the new discoveries the unknown person does not appear quite so foolish any more—he might have simply been well informed. This interpretation, however, was inconvenient for the protagonist.

Jabotinsky left the Zionist organization and established his own revisionist Zionist organization in 1925, shortly after the death of Nordau.

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[20] The text is kept at the Jabotinsky Instute. The document will be published by the author in cooperation with Brian Horowitz together with *Sipur Yamai* (of 1936) and *Slovo o polku*.

[21] Vladimir Zhabotinskii, *Fel'etony* (St Petersburg: Gerol'd, 1913).

[22] *Tale of My Life*, pp. 502–503.

Then there were no obstacles to Jabotinsky publishing his memoirs with their strong 'mystical' element, i.e. the unverifiable meetings with the late leaders of world Zionism, Herzl and Nordau. He found himself in a substantially new situation with the Arlozorov affair in 1933, when he had to play down his self-assured image until around 1935. In consequence, Jabotinsky published only a short version of his memoirs, without 'mystical' motives and without a representation of his new image—despite the fact that both the English and the Hebrew versions of the complete text were ready for publication.

During these years Jabotinsky contributed both to the non-revisionist Harbin newspaper *Evreiskaia zhizn'* (Jewish Life) and to the Hebrew revisionist monthly *Ha-degel* (The Flag). He also continued to publish in a number of Bessarabian newspapers throughout his émigré years. This is not as strange as it may seem: Bessarabia was, together with the Baltic states, the main base of revisionist Zionism. Over many years these territories had given Jabotinsky almost all their votes at the Zionist congresses. The Bessarabian newspapers which (with the exception of one accidental article from *Evreiskaia zhizn'*) do not appear in the Jabotinsky bibliographies, provide a considerable addition to our knowledge of the activity of the leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement. Jabotinsky's strategy of publishing his memoirs in various languages and countries is no easier to decipher than his strategy of publishing journalistic works in the Russian, Russian-Jewish, Hebrew, and Yiddish press between 1900 and 1914. I hope that the results presented here will become a useful step towards a full restoration of Jabotinsky's life and work. I believe that we stand at the beginning of a new stage in the study of Jabotinsky's spiritual and political work. This may be the main result of our activity in publishing Jabotinsky's complete works in Russian.

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