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S:I.M.O.N.

SHOAH:
INTERVENTION.
METHODS.
DOCUMENTATI**ON**.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Jacqueline Vansant

„Bitte vergeßt nicht, alle Briefe gut aufzuheben“

Shared Agency in einem Briefwechsel österreichisch-jüdischer Schüler in der Emigration

Abstract

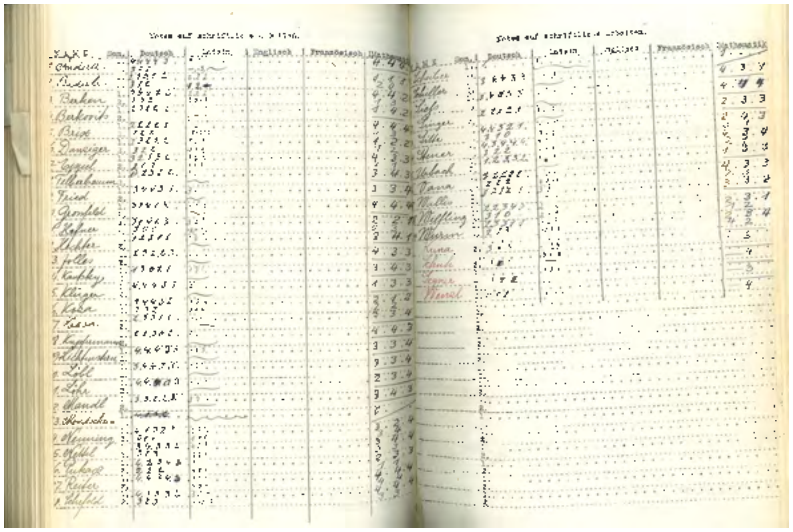
After the National Socialists came to power in March 1938 a group of 15 and 16 year-old classmates of Jewish heritage met for the last time and promised to keep in contact with one another as a group. The boys' original promise resulted in a group correspondence, or "round letter" as they called it, which stretched over more than a decade and crisscrossed three continents. Drawing on the essay „What is Agency“ by Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, Vansant examines the correspondence as an expression of shared agency. It provided the youth with a means to act at a time when their options were severely restricted and it allowed them to resist the efforts of the new regime to destroy their community. Indeed, the establishment, the survival, and the archiving of the group correspondence or "round robin" are all expressions of the boys' agency. In this essay, the letters are a window into the drama of the period and they serve as witness to the boys' inventiveness as well as their familiarity with a lost letter-writing culture. The correspondence, which consists of 106 round letters for a total of 675 individual letters, has been housed in the Archive of the History of Austrian Sociology in Graz, Austria since 1994.

Es muss in den Wochen kurz nach dem ‚Anschluß‘ gewesen sein. Eine Gruppe 15- bis 16-jähriger Schüler jüdischer Herkunft verabschiedet sich ‚für immer‘ auf der Schwedenbrücke in Wien. Sie können noch nicht ahnen, wo sie landen werden und wie ihre Zukunft verlaufen wird. Die Schüler des traditionsreichen Gymnasiums auf der Stubenbastei, offiziell: Bundesrealgymnasium Wien 1,[1] wissen nur, dass sie aus Wien wegmüssen, jedoch den Kontakt zueinander nicht verlieren wollen. Sie versprechen nicht nur einander zu schreiben, sondern entwerfen auch einen komplizierten Plan für eine Art Rundbrief. Die aus dem Versprechen resultierende erstaunliche Korrespondenz stellt ein bedeutendes historisches Dokument der Exilerfahrung dar: Der Briefwechsel sollte sich über die Jahre 1938 bis 1953 erstrecken und drei Kontinente umspannen. Auch aus der Überzeugung heraus, dass ihr Briefwechsel von einzigartiger historischer Bedeutung ist, haben einige der Ex-Schüler einige Briefe aufbewahrt und für die Nachwelt erhalten.

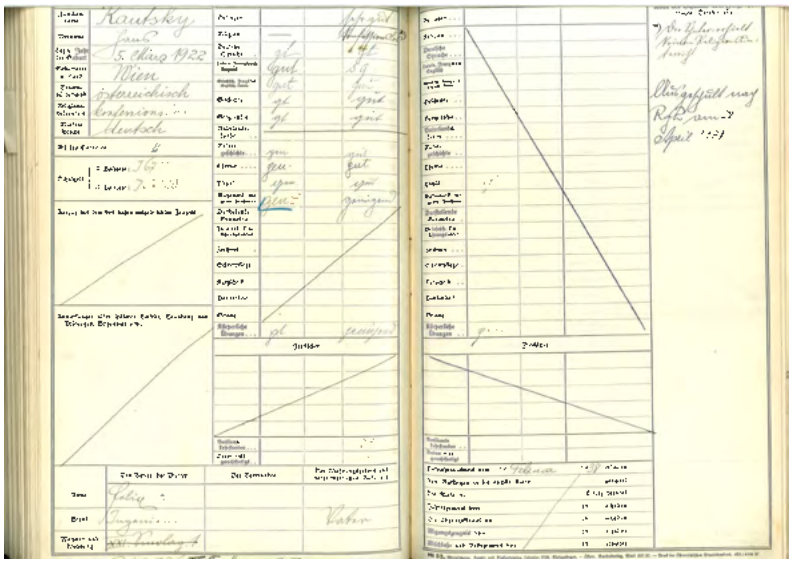
1 Zur Geschichte des Gymnasiums und den mehrfachen Umbenennungen seit dem Jahre 1872 siehe: http://www.stubenbastei.at/?page_id=2557 (8. März 2019).

Die Schüler der 6b des Bundesrealgymnasiums Wien 1 nach dem ‚Anschluß'

Bevor ich auf den Briefwechsel eingehe, möchte ich die beteiligten Jugendlichen in ihrer Schule und in Wien verorten. Im Jahre 1938 besuchten sie die 6b am damaligen Stubenbastei Gymnasium. Anhand der Klassenliste dieses Jahres kann festgestellt werden, dass fast die Hälfte der Schüler das Schuljahr an diesem Gymnasium nicht abschließen konnte.



Die Wellenlinien in obiger Abbildung zeigen an, dass die jeweiligen Schüler der Schule verwiesen worden waren, wenn sie die Schule nicht schon vorher verlassen hatten: Der Klassenbuchvermerk für Hans Kautsky zeigt, dass er – wie alle anderen Schüler jüdischer Herkunft – am 28. April „ausgeschult" wurde.



Vor ihrer Vertreibung aus Wien lebten die Schüler in mehr oder weniger normalen und gesicherten Familienverhältnissen.[2] Dies änderte sich schlagartig mit der

2 Im Anhang findet sich eine Tabelle mit den Namen, Spitznamen bzw. mit den nach der Flucht angenommenen Namen all jener, die sich mindestens einmal am Briefwechsel beteiligt hatten.

nach dem ‚Anschluß' notwendig gewordenen Emigration, die für die meisten unter ihnen plötzliche Selbständigkeit, sozialen Abstieg und oft auch die Trennung von der Familie bedeutete.

Entstehung und Funktionen des Rundbriefes

Nach der Ausschulung und der bevorstehenden Emigration schien den Schülern ein Briefwechsel die einzige Möglichkeit zu bieten, um miteinander in Kontakt zu bleiben. Die Schüler griffen wohl auf bereits existierende Modelle von Rundbriefen zurück, als sie auf die Idee kamen, nicht nur einzeln, sondern als Gruppe in Briefkontakt zu bleiben.[3] Generell war es unter Schülerinnen und Schülern in dieser Zeit nicht unüblich, nach Schulabschluss den Kontakt mittels Rundbriefen aufrechtzuerhalten.[4] Ein solches Beispiel wird in dem Band *Freundschaft über sieben Jahrzehnte. Rundbriefe deutscher Lehrerinnen 1899–1968*[5] vorgestellt. Dieses sogenannte Rundbuch wurde fast siebzig Jahre von einer Teilnehmerin an die nächste geschickt, von der jeweiligen Empfängerin mit einem Eintrag versehen, in dem sie die anderen über Neuigkeiten in ihrem Leben informierte. Wie die im Archiv für Geschichte der österreichischen Soziologie an der Universität Graz aufliegende, aus 106 Rundbriefen bestehende Briefsammlung zeigt, gingen die Schüler der Stubenbastei ähnlich vor.[6] Es ist leider nicht möglich, die ersten neun Runden genau zu datieren. Wahrscheinlich ist jedoch, dass der Briefwechsel kurz nach der ‚Ausschulung' der Schüler begann. Die im Archiv erhaltene Briefsammlung beginnt mit dem zehnten Rundbrief, der aus Briefen von vier Schulkameraden besteht. Von den Daten kann man auf den Verlauf dieses Rundbriefes schließen: Paul Berkovits begann die Runde, indem er seinen Brief am 26. August aus Budapest an Ali Hechter in Wien schickte. Ali legte seinen Brief am 30. August 1938 dazu und schickte beide Briefe an Otto Fried in Petržalka, Tschechoslowakei, weiter. Fried schickte diese gemeinsam mit seinem Brief am 2. September 1938 an Turl Kupfermann, der die Briefe abschrieb und sie am 4. September 1938 von Piest'any, Tschechoslowakei, aus an Kautsky nach London sandte. Der regelmäßige Briefverkehr hielt bis 1953 an. Da John (Hans) Kautsky, der die Sammlung dem Archiv in den 1990er-Jahren übergab, einige Briefe aus der Sammlung entfernte, ist es unmöglich festzustellen, wie viele Briefe verlorengingen und welche oder wie viele er herausnahm. Die größten Lücken findet man in den ersten Jahren, wohl weil die Briefschreiber noch auf der Suche nach einem neuen Aufenthaltsland waren und des Öfteren ihren Wohnsitz wechseln mussten.

3 Auch andere veröffentlichte Beispiele von Rundbriefen weisen auf die Existenz von solchen Praktiken vor und zu dieser Zeit hin, z. B.: Heinrich Dreidoppel/Max Herresthal/Gerd Krumeich (Hg.), Mars. Kriegsnachrichten aus der Familie. Rundbrief der rheinischen Grossfamilie Trimborn 1914–1918, Essen 2013; Marlen Eckl wies mich auf den Breesen-Rundbrief aus dem Jahre 1938 hin; siehe: http://findingaids.cjh.org/?pID=475516#serI html (8. März 2019).

4 In der Einführung zu *Der Klassenrundbrief* stellt die Herausgeberin Charlotte Heinritz fest: „Solch ein Rundbrief […] war damals durchaus üblich, vor allem bei Mädchen"; Der Klassenrundbrief. Opladen 1991, 8. Siehe auch: Wilfried Hansmann, Die Klassenrundbriefe des Homberger Seminarjahrgangs 1923, in: Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte (ZHG) Band 111 (2006), 237-248.

5 Heinz Jansen (Hg), Freundschaft über sieben Jahrzehnte. Rundbriefe deutscher Lehrerinnen 1899–1968, Frankfurt/Main 1991.

6 John H(ans) Kautsky (d.i. Hans Kautsky), Rundbrief Wiener Gymnasiasten im Exil (1938–1953) Konvolut (Signatur 26); http://agso.uni-graz.at (5. März 2019). Die Rundbriefe, aus denen zitiert wird, liegen im Archiv der Geschichte der Soziologie Österreichs an der Universität Graz. Die Schreibweise der zitierten Briefe wird mit eventuellen Fehlern übernommen. Abkürzungen hingegen werden erweitert.

Es war bestimmt nicht leicht, sich unter diesen unsteten Verhältnissen ein funktionierendes System auszudenken. In den ersten Monaten des Rundbriefwechsels schickten die jungen Emigranten ihre Briefe wahrscheinlich immer an Ali Hechter, der in einem Brief vom 11. August 1938 an Hans Kautsky feststellt: „Bin Tag u. Nacht mit der Organisierung unseres Briefwechsels beschäftigt." Die sich ständig ändernden Umstände machten einen reibungslosen Ablauf der Korrespondenz unmöglich. Am 16. August 1938 schreibt Paul Schiller von Wien aus direkt an Hans Kautsky: „Da Alis Rundschreibmethode noch nicht funktioniert, so schreibe ich Dir direkt mit Übergehung Mandels, Urbachs etc." Wie dieser und auch andere frühe Briefe zeigen, funktionierte das System nicht gleich und musste ständig revidiert werden. Aber anstatt aufzugeben oder sich nur mit individuellen, d. h. konventionellen Briefen an einen Adressaten, zufrieden zu geben, blieben die Jugendlichen hartnäckig. Sie waren im ersten Jahr nach dem ‚Anschluß' sehr bemüht, das Netzwerk auszubauen und darüber hinaus Kontakt mit der ganzen Gruppe aufrechtzuerhalten.

Auch wenn ihr Rundbrief denen anderer Schülerinnen und Schüler in manchen Aspekten ähnelt, so ist er vom Inhalt her völlig anders. In den traditionellen Rundbriefen oder Rundbüchern geben die Mitwirkenden nach einem längeren Zeitraum kurze Berichte über den Verlauf ihrer Leben, ohne auf die der anderen einzugehen. In den Rundbriefen der vertriebenen Stubenbastei-Gymnasiasten kam dem Informationsaustausch eine weit ernstere Bedeutung zu. In den ersten Jahren sind die Briefe voll von Informationen über Affidavits[7] und Visamöglichkeiten, Nachrichten über den Alltag in der neuen Umgebung und über Freunde und Verwandte.[8] Von Anfang an tauschten die Briefeschreiber Informationen über ihre Versuche, die Schule abzuschließen, bzw. sich weiterzubilden aus. Die Korrespondenz war für die ehemaligen Schulkameraden wichtig, weil sie ihnen ermöglichte, die Klassengemeinschaft aufrechtzuerhalten und einen Teil der Vergangenheit mit sich in die unsichere Zukunft mitzunehmen.

Der Rundbrief als Ausdruck kollektiver Handlungsmöglichkeiten oder *Shared Agency*

Mit dem Ziel gegründet „Privatangelegenheiten und -schicksale"[9] auszutauschen, bot die Korrespondenz den Jugendlichen die Möglichkeit, zumindest über einen Teil ihres Lebens Kontrolle auszuüben, und zwar zu einer Zeit, in der ihre Handlungsmöglichkeiten radikal eingeschränkt waren.[10] Sowohl die Form dieser Korrespondenz als auch die Schritte, welche die Jugendlichen setzten, um sie aufrechtzuer-

7 Für Informationen über die Dokumente, die Flüchtlinge brauchten, um ein Visa für die USA zu erhalten, siehe https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/what-did-refugees-need-to-obtain-a-us-visa-in-the-1930s.

8 Zu weiteren inhaltlichen Details des Briefwechsels siehe meine Artikel: „Damit nie der Kontakt verloren geht". Rundbriefe Wiener Gymnasiasten jüdischer Herkunft 1938–1942, in: Daniel Azuélos (Hg.), Alltag im Exil, Würzburg 2011, 137-151; Cohesive Epistolary Networks in Exile, in: Helga Schreckenberger (Hg.), Networks of Refugees from Nazi Germany: Continuities, Reorientations, and Collaborations in Exile, Amsterdam 2016, 247-261.

9 In einem Brief vom 27. Juni 1939 schreibt Hans Kautsky: „Die blöde Palästina-Frage verdrängt immer mehr besonders aus Ottos Briefen die Privatangelegenheiten und -schicksale, für die der Rundbrief doch eingerichtet ist."

10 Die Handlungsmöglichkeiten der individuellen Jugendlichen hingen von ihrer jeweiligen Situation ab. Inwiefern sie als einzelne Individuen Agency ausüben konnten, würde den Rahmen dieses Artikels sprengen und wird Teil einer längeren Studie sein. Jedoch kann sowohl die Form der Korrespondenz als auch die Maßnahmen, welche die Schulkameraden setzten, um den Briefwechsel aufrechtzuerhalten, als Ausdruck einer Gruppenhandlungsmächtigkeit oder *shared agency* gesehen werden.

halten, sind Ausdruck ihrer *Shared Agency*[11] oder ihrer kollektiven Handlungsmächtigkeiten. In diesem Sinne erweist sich Mustafa Emirbayers und Ann Misches Definition von *Agency* für die Analyse des Briefwechsels als hilfreich. In ihrer Studie *What is Agency?* definieren sie „human agency" als „a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)".[12] Für Emirbayer und Mische ist *Agency* immer ein dialogischer Prozess von und zwischen Akteuren, die mit anderen im Kontext eines Kollektivs verbunden sind und interagieren.[13] Das alles trifft auf die Korrespondenz zu, konstituiert doch der jahrelange Briefwechsel einen zeitlich eingebetteten Prozess der sozialen Interaktion mit Bezug zur Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Kontakt mit den Freunden aufrechtzuerhalten, mit denen sie sechs Jahre lang die Schulbank drückten, vermittelte den Jugendlichen eine wichtige Verbindung zur Vergangenheit und zu Gleichgesinnten, die ähnliche Schicksale erlebten und stellte damit in einer von Unsicherheit geprägten Zeit eine Art Stabilität her. Um das Überleben des Gruppenbriefwechsels zu sichern, reagierten die ehemaligen Schüler auf die sich ständig ändernde Situation der Gegenwart, bzw. die Ungewissheiten des Moments. Dass einige von den Schülern früh den historischen Wert der Korrespondenz erkannten und viele der Briefe aufhoben, zeigt zudem, wie zukunftsorientiert sie handelten. Emirbayer und Mische behaupten weiter, man könne durch die Untersuchung von Veränderungen der Handlungsorientierung das notwendige Werkzeug für die Vermessung variabler Grade der Flexibilität, des Erfindungsreichtums und wohlüberlegter Entscheidungen unter sich ständig verändernder Rahmenbedingungen gewinnen.[14]

Im Weiteren möchte ich hier die Veränderungen der Handlungsorientierung auf den Ebenen der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft nachzeichnen. Dabei nehme ich die Wechselwirkung von Flexibilität, Erfindungsreichtum und wohlüberlegter Entscheidungen im Kontext der ständig wechselnden Umstände unter die Lupe. Ich beginne mit der Diskussion der Planung des Briefwechsels und der frühen Hürden, welche die Jugendlichen überwinden mussten, um die Korrespondenz bzw. die Verbindung mit der Vergangenheit in Gang zu bringen und aufrechtzuerhalten. Dann gehe ich auf die Maßnahmen ein, die die Schulkameraden aufgrund der verschiedenen, sich ständig ändernden Umstände der Gegenwart setzten um den Briefwechsel trotz allem weiterzuführen. Als letztes wende ich mich der Zukunftsorientiertheit und der Frage nach dem historischen Wert der Korrespondenz und ihrem Nachleben zu.

Gewiss hätten alleine die Umstände, die zur Entstehung des Rundbriefes führten, auch sein Ende sein können, hätte die Mehrzahl der Briefeschreiber nicht so viel Energie und Engagement aufgebracht, besonders in den ersten Jahren. Gelang es aber den Jugendlichen, ein funktionierendes System zu entwerfen und den Kontakt miteinander nicht zu verlieren, war das ein Beweis, dass sie auf ihre Weise dem Naziregime trotzen konnten. Wenn man die Reaktionen der Jugendlichen auf die sich stetig

11 https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shared-agency/ (8. März 2019). vgl. auch: Michael E. Bratman. Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together, Oxford 2014.

12 Mustafa Emirbayer und Ann Mische, What is Agency? in: American Journal of Sociology 103 (Jänner 1998) 4, 962-1023, hier 963. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/231294; https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/231294 (8. März 2019).

13 Ebd., 973-974.

14 Ebd., 967.

verändernden Hindernisse oder die „contingencies of the moment“[15] verfolgt, sieht man, wie wichtig die Zusammenarbeit und der Dialog sowohl für den Briefwechsel als auch für die Jugendlichen selbst waren. Sie konnten hier ein System der willkürlichen Zensur in einer sich rasch wandelnden Welt (Kriegsverlauf, neue Grenzen, Fronten und damit einhergehende Veränderungen der Transport- und Postwege) durch gezielte Planung und strategische Überlegungen ‚austricksen‘. Der soziale Zusammenhalt der Gruppe, bzw. die Verantwortung für einander schien durch den Briefwechsel gestärkt, was wiederum zum Überleben des Briefwechsels beitrug.

Die Schwierigkeiten, den Briefwechsel aufrechtzuerhalten, waren mannigfaltig, aber die Jugendlichen meisterten sie mit viel Geschick und Flexibilität. Eine dieser Schwierigkeiten war der ständige Adressenwechsel, dem sie als Exilanten in einer Zeit der permanenten Unsicherheit ausgesetzt waren. Am 8. September 1938 schreibt Paul Berkovits seinen Freunden von St. Gallen aus: „Als Leitprinzip gelte stets: bei Änderungen sofort Adresse angeben, damit nie der Kontakt verlorengeht.“ Wenn sie keine genaue Adresse für ihre nächste Station wussten, gaben die am Austausch Beteiligten ein Ziel an und die Briefe konnten postlagernd dort hingeschickt werden. Von Anfang an wurde der Briefwechsel immer wieder unterbrochen. Nicht nur der häufige Adressenwechsel, sondern auch unvorhergesehene Änderungen der Reisepläne, z. B. aufgrund von Arrest oder Festnahmen, bewirkten, dass die Briefe die Adressaten oft nicht oder nur mit Verzögerung erreichten.

Solange die Jugendlichen keine festen Adressen hatten, bestand die Gefahr, dass der Kreislauf unterbrochen werden, oder dass der eine oder andere aus dem Briefwechsel ausscheiden könnte. Der folgende Austausch vom Februar 1939 verweist auf einige Hindernisse, die die Gruppe in dieser Hinsicht überwinden mussten. Turl Kupfermann schreibt Willy Mandl am 16. Februar 1939 in die USA und zitiert aus einer Karte von Ali Hechter:

> „Wien, 6.II.1939. Lieber Turl! Zeige Dir hiemit meine Abreise nach Rodges b[ei] / Petach-Tikva, P.O.B. 44, an. Was ich also seit Monaten sehnlichst erwartete, ist endl. eingetroffen. Wir fahren heute abds. [abends], Mittwoch bis Dienstag geht das Schiff von Triest, Brindisi, Tel-Aviv. Paul habe ich bereits verständigt, er wird in Zukunft an mich abzweigen, Wien übernimmt Robsy bis auf weiteres, dann viell[eicht] Bobby, dann hoff niemand mehr.“

Um die Zukunft des Briefwechsels zu sichern, teilt Ali mehreren Beteiligten an der Korrespondenz seine neue Adresse mit und gibt darüber hinaus an, wem man in Wien schreiben sollte. Ali lässt Turl auch wissen, dass Paul Berkovits die europäischen Briefe dann an ihn nach Rodges schicken würde. In derselben Karte berichtet er von unvorhergesehenen Komplikationen. „Der Rundbrief steckt in La Chaux-de-Fonds, wohin ihn Paul für Pick schickte. Dieser ist aber durch einen ungl[ücklichen] Zufall nicht dort, sd. noch in Dtschl. Darüber kannst Du Näheres in 2 od[er] 3 Tagen bei Paul erfahren.“ Joachim (Pick) Felberbaum wurde mit seinen Eltern auf der Ausreise in Salzburg wegen Devisenschmuggel verhaftet.[16] Ali schreibt vielleicht deswegen so vage über Pick, da er den Brief von Wien aus schickt. Er fährt hoffnungsvoll und optimistisch fort. „Hoffe, daß sich alles wieder zum Guten wenden wird u[nd]

15 Ebd., 963.

16 Darüber wurde im Salzburger Volksblatt vom 1. Februar 1939 berichtet; siehe: Siegfried Göllner, Die Stadt Salzburg 1938. Zeitungsdokumentation, https://www.stadt-salzburg.at/pdf/zeitungsdokumentation_1939.pdf (8. März 2019). Der Vorfall wird auch Bernard Violets Biographie von Jean-Pierre François[Joachim Felberbaum] L'ami banquier. Le mysterieux conseiller de François Mitterand [Banker Friend. The Mysterious Advisor of François Mitterand], Paris 1998 und in Jean-Pierre François Autobiographie Vol d'identité. Le conseiller occulte de Mitterand raconte [Identity Theft. The Secret Adviser of Mitterand Recounts], Paris 2000 beschrieben.

daß wir bald wieder um 2 mehr in der Korrespondenz sind. Lieber Turl, gerade Dich hoffe ich bestimmt noch einmal in Erez zu sehen, bis dahin viele Grüße, ebenso an Xaverl, Georg und Schenirer, um dessen Adresse ich Dich noch bitte." In einem Brief vom 16. Februar 1939 schreibt Turl Teile aus Alis persönlichem Brief an ihn ab und zitiert sie dann in seinem Brief an Willy Mandl in den USA. Die Weitergabe von Informationen über einzelne Teilnehmer unterstreicht die Bedeutung des Rundbriefs für den Zusammenhalt der Gruppe. Dank des regen Briefkontakts mit Einzelnen und der Gruppe war es dann auch für einige der ehemaligen Schulkameraden möglich, einander zu treffen, wie in Alis Brief angedeutet wird. In London traf sich beispielsweise Turl mit anderen Schulkameraden, darunter mehrere Rundbriefschreiber, die das Glück hatten, nach London entkommen zu sein. In demselben Brief an Willy fügt Turl Auszüge aus Paul Berkovits' Brief an die Freunde vom 8. Februar 1939 hinzu. Dieser unterrichtet sie über das Schicksal des Rundbriefs:

> „Leider keine angenehmen Nachrichten. Ich habe den Rundbrief am 2. bekommen und sofort an die Adresse weitergeschickt, die mir Pick in L[a] Ch[aux-]d[e-]F[onds] (Westschweiz) angegeben hatte. Ein paar Tage vorher hatte er mir nämlich mitgeteilt, daß er dann dort sein werde u[nd] er hätte dann an Ali geschrieben. Am 3. erhielt ich von Ali eine Karte, in der er mir mitteilte, daß er am 6. nach Erez fahre. Heute kam von Ali ein Brief, in dem er mir knapp vor der Abreise mitteilt, daß Pick in Salzburg, anstatt in L[a] Ch[aux-]d[e-]F[onds] ist. So blieb also der Brief poste restante in L[a] Ch[aux-]d[e-] F[onds]."

Das Weiterleiten von Informationen über einzelne Mitglieder an die ganze Gruppe stärkte das Netzwerk und trug ebenfalls zur Aufrechterhaltung der Korrespondenz bei. Wegen der Unvorhersehbarkeit ihrer Situation mussten die Schulkameraden flexibel und einfallsreich vorgehen. Paul berichtet in der Folge auch über die weiteren Maßnahmen, die er unternommen hatte, um den Kontakt aufrechtzuerhalten. „Damit Otto keine neue Runde beginnt sende ich direkt an ihn u[nd] hoffentlich klappt dann bei der nächsten Korrespondenzrunde alles. An Stelle von Ali tritt in Wien Robsy. Bitte notiert genau die Adressen von Turl und Ali." Aber Paul denkt nicht nur an die nächste Runde, sondern an die Zukunft des Briefwechsels überhaupt:

> „Die Korrespondenz wird bald, wenn Hans, Otto und Bobby Licht., sowie Pick an Ort u[nd] Stelle sind, folgend aussehen: Es gibt 3 Rundbriefe: Amerika, Europa, Paläst[ina]. Die Abzweigung an Amerika besorgt Turl, indem er an einen schreibt u[nd] der letzte drüben retourniert an Turl Kopien u[nd] Auszüge der Briefe der anderen. Pal mit Ali u hoffentlich bald anderem besorge ich in der gleichen Weise. Die genaue Einteilung werden wir festlegen bis alle drüben sind. Als Mittelpunkt der Korr[espondenz] gilt jetzt Turl, weil er eine dauernde Adresse hat."

Trotz der Herausforderungen der Exilsituation zweifelt Paul nicht an der erfolgreichen Flucht der Kameraden oder an dem Überleben des Rundbriefs. Aufgrund der bevorstehenden Auswanderung von Schulkameraden auf drei Kontinente stellt er sich drei Rundbriefe innerhalb eines übergreifenden Austausches vor. Darüber hinaus identifiziert er Turl und sich als Verbindungsglieder zwischen den außereuropäischen Runden. Im Laufe des Bestehens der Korrespondenz listeten die Schulkameraden die Adressen immer wieder in den Briefen auf, oft mit einem revidierten oder alternativen Plan für die Route des Rundbriefs.

Die sich ständig ändernden Lebensverhältnisse im Exil, der Beginn des Krieges in Europa 1939, der Überfall auf Frankreich 1940, der Eintritt der USA in den Krieg 1941 und die Einberufung von mehreren von ihnen zum Militärdienst führten

dazu, dass die jungen Männer sich immer wieder überlegen mussten, wie sie den Rundbrief umgestalten und damit am Leben halten konnten. Schon in einem Brief vom 3. April 1939 überlegt Hans Kautsky: „Wie unsere Korrespondenz im Kriegsfall verlaufen würde, kann nur die Praxis zeigen." Als sich der Krieg im August 1939 am Horizont abzeichnete, schien die Zukunft des Rundbriefes unsicher. Damals befanden sich die Briefschreiber in den USA, England, Frankreich, der Schweiz und Palästina. Sie überlegten sich Maßnahmen, um die Gefahr eines unregelmäßigen oder abgebrochenen Briefverkehrs zu minimieren. Als erstes wechselten sie die Sprache und verfassten die Briefe auf Englisch, damit die Briefe nicht so lange bei den britischen Zensoren liegen würden. Aus dem Internat in St. Gallen schreibt Paul am 18. September 1939 an die Freunde:

> „You can imagine that I was very glad indeed when I got your letter, posted by George on Sept. 4, this morning. I agree that we should write from now on in English. I think the Censor who opened your last letter had rather a difficult job and I suggest therefore to you to write just briefly about yourselves and what you are doing."

Der Brief, den Paul erwähnt, ist leider nicht in der Sammlung erhalten, aber wir können annehmen, dass wenigsten einer von den Jugendlichen daran dachte, dass die Briefe von den Engländern zensuriert würden und die Post schneller weiter geschickt würde, wenn sie auf Englisch verfasst wären.[17] Witzigerweise schienen die Länge und die englische Prosa dem Zensor Schwierigkeiten bereitet zu haben. In einem Brief vom 25. Februar 1940 teilt Turl den anderen mit:

> „By the way, when this round reached me, it was, as usual, censored but, and this is unusual, attached to Xavers [Hans] letter (9 pages) I found a yellow label reading: ‚Letters are more likely to pass the Censor expeditiously if they are short and clearly written.' Though in this case it probably refers specially to Xavers letter, please, everybody, take note of that."

Amüsiert spricht er Hans direkt an: „Well, I'm enough of a selfish and unsocial element to ask you not to shorten your letters because of this, but you probably can do something about clearliness, can't you?" In einem ähnlichen Ton erwidert Hans am 28. März 1940: „As to my letter, Paul, if it wouldn't be for the censor, I'd write much less clearly so that you could enjoy it for some more hours." Die Möglichkeit, sich selbst auszudrücken und einen freien Austausch mit den ehemaligen Schulkameraden zu führen, bot den Jugendlichen ebenfalls einen Handlungsraum, den sie sich mit aller Kraft zu bewahren versuchten. Der Dialog mit der Gruppe half ihnen ganz offensichtlich über die Isolation des Exils hinweg. In seinem ersten Brief aus den USA vom 9. Januar 1940 betont Hans, welche wichtige Bedeutung der Rundbrief für ihn hatte. „Do I have to tell you how glad I was when I got your letters to-day? To be in connection with you again makes me feel much more at home here and not so much out of the world." Ähnliche Gefühle werden auch von den anderen Briefschreibern des Öfteren ausgedrückt. Die Möglichkeit, wenn auch in einer Fremdsprache, mit ehemaligen Schulkollegen zu witzeln und über das neue Leben zu schreiben, diente als wichtiger Antrieb, jedes neue Hindernis zu überwinden.

17 Zu den Themen Postverkehr und Zensur; siehe: Lawrence Sherman, United States Mail to France in World War II, Part II, in: American Philatelist 127 (Februar 2013), 1, 124-137; Ernest L. Bergman and Richard T. Hall, Switzerland in World War II. Its Defense – Its Survival – Its Refugees and Internees, in: Tell. American Helvetia Philatelic Society, 38 (März 2012), 2, 3-57; Ann Pfau, Postal Censorship and Military Intelligence during World War II, in: Thomas Lera (Hg.), Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia. Select Papers, 2006–2009, Washington, D.C., 81-89. http://mars.gmu.edu/bitstream/handle/1920/10343/LittleColoredBitsofPaper-2010.pdf;sequence=1 (8. März 2019).

Nachdem die Vereinigten Staaten im Dezember 1941 Japan und Deutschland den Krieg erklärt hatten, sahen sich ‚die Amerikaner' vor weitere Hürden gestellt. Gleich nach dem Angriff auf Pearl Harbor überlegt Willy sich, wie sich der Krieg auf ihr Leben und den Rundbrief auswirken würde. „Wir alle werden ja nun früher oder später wahrscheinlich einrücken müssen, doch hat es keinen Sinn, sich trübe Situationen der unsicheren Zukunft auszumalen." Statt der fernen Zukunft beschäftigt ihn die unmittelbare Situation in der Gegenwart. „Ich schlage aus offensichtlichen Gründen vor, die Runde von nun an in Englisch weiterzuführen, u[nd] würde gerne Eure Meinung darüber hören." Hans' Antwort vom 17. Dezember 1941 zeigt, dass er Willys Bedenken nicht teilt:

> „Ich hatte, als ich den Brief zu schreiben anfing, vergessen, Englisch zu schreiben, wie Du es vorschlaegst. Ich halte dies allerdings fuer ganz unnoetig, denn innerhalb der U.S. wird es ja keine Zensur geben. Dies ist nicht nur meine Meinung, sondern auch die Mr. Roosevelts, was vielleicht noch massgebender ist. Ich habe zwar an sich nichts dagegen, Englisch zu schreiben, aber, obwohl wir wahrscheinlich mit unseren meisten Freunden Englisch sprechen, kennen wir uns doch nur auf Deutsch, und ich glaube, wir werden uns so besser verstehen."

Kautskys Unwille, die Korrespondenz auf Englisch zu führen, verrät ebenfalls, dass dem Briefwechsel eine besondere Bedeutung zukommt. Er verbindet mit den alten Freunden Erinnerungen an sein früheres Leben, sie kennen sich doch „nur auf Deutsch" heißt es in dem Brief, Kautsky weist damit auf die Situations- und Personengebundenheit der Sprachwahl hin. Gleichzeitig ist sich Kautsky bewusst, dass der Krieg die Verbindung mit den Schulkameraden in Europa und Palästina beeinträchtigen könnte, und er überlegt, was zu unternehmen sei, um den weiteren Kontakt zu ermöglichen:

> „An Paul muessen wir wohl englisch schreiben, denn die Briefe an ihn, wenn sie ueberhaupt gehen, gehen sicher durch eine Amerikanische, vielleicht aber nicht durch eine deutsche Zensur. Ich nehme an, dass der Clipper nach Lissabon, und daher die Verbindung mit Paul, wenigstens in naechster Zeit, ziemlich regelmaessig weitergehen wird."

Den Austausch mit Ali betrachtet er jedoch als gefährdet. „Dagegen duerfte die Verbindung mit Ali jetzt praktisch unmoeglich werden. Schon in ‚normalen' Zeiten erhielt Ali einen Brief vom Februar im August und Turl seine Antwort im Oktober. Mit Krieg im Pacific kann sich das leicht auf 1-2 Jahre ausdehnen." Die Möglichkeit, dass die Verbindung, die sie über drei Jahre aufrechterhalten hatten, abbrechen könnte, empfindet er als niederschmetternd. „Es ist mir nicht ganz klar, ob es unter diesen Umstaenden Sinn hat, die Korrespondenz mit Ali weiterzufuehren, aber andererseits ist mir die Idee schrecklich, ganz die Verbindung mit ihm abzubrechen und vielleicht nie wieder mit ihm in Kontakt zu kommen." Beim Schreiben noch kommt ihm eine Idee, wie sie ihn erreichen könnten:

> „Mir faellt gerade ein, dass die sicherste und schnellste Verbindung mit Aegypten jetzt wohl ueber Paul geht, wenigstens so lange man von der Schweiz einen Brief an die RAF schreiben kann. Ich werde Paul diesbezueglich schreiben und wir muessen dann einfach unseren Briefen an Paul je einen Brief an Ali beilegen. Ich glaube, das ist eine ziemlich gute Loesung, auch weil wir dann weniger an Paul schreiben muessen, da er ja unsere Briefe an Ali liest."

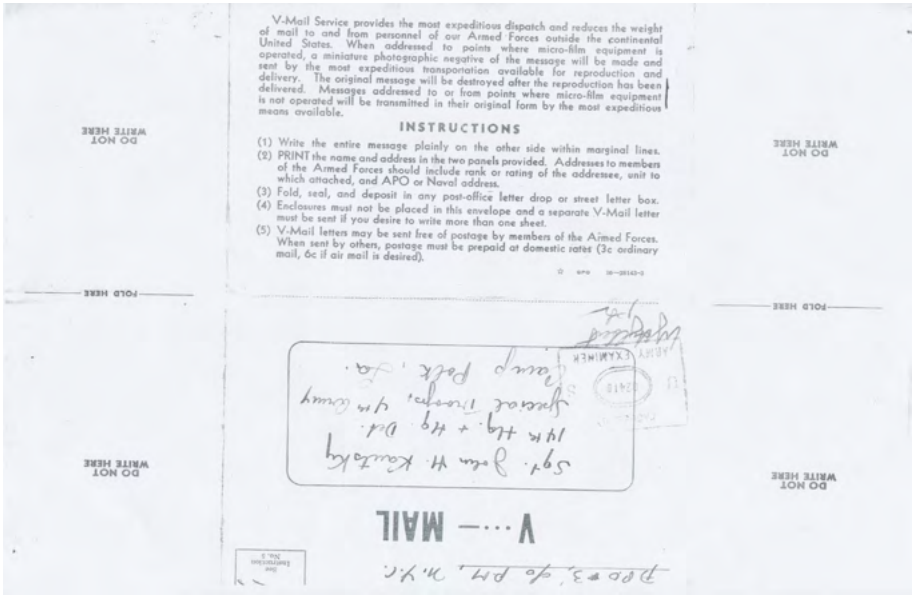
Das Schreiben selbst bildet den Denkprozess ab, der schließlich handlungsleitend wird: Schreiben bedeutet für die Freunde Planen und das Ausloten künftiger Handlungsräume.

> „Ich beginne mit diesem neuen System gleich heute und Ihr legt also einfach Eure Briefe an Paul und Ali bei, die diesmal Willy an Paul (c/o [?] Fritschi, Hottingerstrasse 6, Zuerich 7) abschickt. Bitte, legt alle wenigstens ein paar Zeilen bei, selbst wenn Ihr busy seid, damit wenigstens der Anfang des neuen Systems ein Erfolg wird."

Dieser Brief zeigt, wie sich im Schreiben Handlungsmöglichkeiten für die Jugendlichen eröffnen. Darüber hinaus betont Kautsky, wie sehr der Erfolg des Unterfangens von der Beteiligung jedes Einzelnen in der Gruppe abhänge. Er schätzt die Schwierigkeiten der Situation ein und entwickelt Ideen, um den Austausch innerhalb der ganzen Gruppe am Leben zu erhalten. Auch wenn die Briefe von außerhalb der USA nach Kriegseintritt manchmal nicht oder nur mit Verzögerung ankamen, gaben die Rundbriefschreiber auf allen drei Kontinenten nicht auf und schrieben mehrfach an denjenigen, von dem sie lange nichts gehört hatten.

Die Verbindungen zwischen Europa und den USA bzw. den USA und Palästina stellten sich anders als erwartet her. Am 16. März 1942 meldet Hans in einem Brief an Paul, dass die Verbindung zwischen den USA und Ägypten, wo Ali in der Royal Air Force diente, gut funktioniere. Im Gegensatz dazu schreibt Paul am 30. März 1942, dass die Briefe aus den USA viel länger bräuchten als früher – acht Wochen statt zwei bis vier. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war der Kontakt zwischen Europa und den Vereinigten Staaten unterbrochen. Der letzte Brief von Paul aus dieser Zeit wurde am 3. Oktober 1942 abgeschickt und von Turl Kupfermann am 23. Dezember empfangen. Im Gegensatz dazu blühte der Kontakt zwischen Ali und den ‚Amerikanern' ab 1943 dank dem Airgraph-System und den Armee-V-Briefen auf. Die Victory-Briefe, die auf Microfiche kopiert und dann abgeschickt wurden, kosteten die Soldaten nichts.[18] Ali schreibt am 4. April 1943 das erste Aerogramm:

> „Here I am again and this time with an airgraph as rumors have reached even our remote coin that this kind of correspondence is now possible with the States. I have been waiting for that a long time for it may enable me to give you short accounts of what is happening to me and to the M.E. more often than before; and I hope that you too, […] will let me have one of these little photo-letters soon."


V-Mail Service provides the most expeditious dispatch and reduces the weight of mail to and from personnel of our Armed Forces outside the continental United States. When addressed to points where micro-film equipment is operated, a miniature photographic negative of the message will be made and sent by the most expeditious transportation available for reproduction and delivery. The original message will be destroyed after the reproduction has been delivered. Messages addressed to or from points where micro-film equipment is not operated will be transmitted in their original form by the most expeditious means available.

INSTRUCTIONS

(1) Write the entire message plainly on the other side within marginal lines.
(2) PRINT the name and address in the two panels provided. Addresses to members of the Armed Forces should include rank or rating of the addressee, unit to which attached, and APO or Naval address.
(3) Fold, seal, and deposit in any post-office letter drop or street letter box.
(4) Enclosures must not be placed in this envelope and a separate V-Mail letter must be sent if you desire to write more than one sheet.
(5) V-Mail letters may be sent free of postage by members of the Armed Forces. When sent by others, postage must be prepaid at domestic rates (3c ordinary mail, 6c if air mail is desired).

DO NOT WRITE HERE
FOLD HERE
V ···— MAIL
EXAMINER

18 Siehe eine Reihe von Eintragungen über V-Briefe auf der Webseite vom Smithsonian National Postal Museum, https://postalmuseum.si.edu/victorymail/introducing/index.html (5. März 2019).

Im Juli bekam Ali den ersten V-Brief, was die Wiederbelebung des Kontakts zwischen ‚den Amerikanern' und Ali bedeutete.

Mit ihrer Hartnäckigkeit bewiesen die Rundbriefschreiber, wie wichtig ihnen die Verbindung mit der Gruppe aus ihrer Vergangenheit war und dass sie den sich permanent ändernden Umständen der Gegenwart durchaus gewachsen waren.

Sehr früh schon erkannten die jungen Schulkameraden die Bedeutung des Rundbriefs als Dokument eines wichtigen Abschnitts ihrer persönlichen Lebensgeschichte. In einem Brief vom 10. Jänner 1939 bittet Turl seine Schulkameraden: „Bitte vergeßt nicht, alle Briefe gut aufzuheben. Es wäre sehr schön, wenn wir die ganze Korrespondenz nach Jahren vollkommen rekonstruieren könnten." Um die Einordnung bzw. das spätere Archivieren der Briefe zu erleichtern, bzw. um zu sehen, ob sie durchgekommen waren oder nicht, wurde schon zu Beginn der Korrespondenz vereinbart, Rundennummern anzugeben und auf den einzelnen Briefe zu vermerken, wann der Rundbrief erhalten und abgeschickt wurde. In einem Brief vom 22. Juli 1939 bemerkt Hans Kautsky:

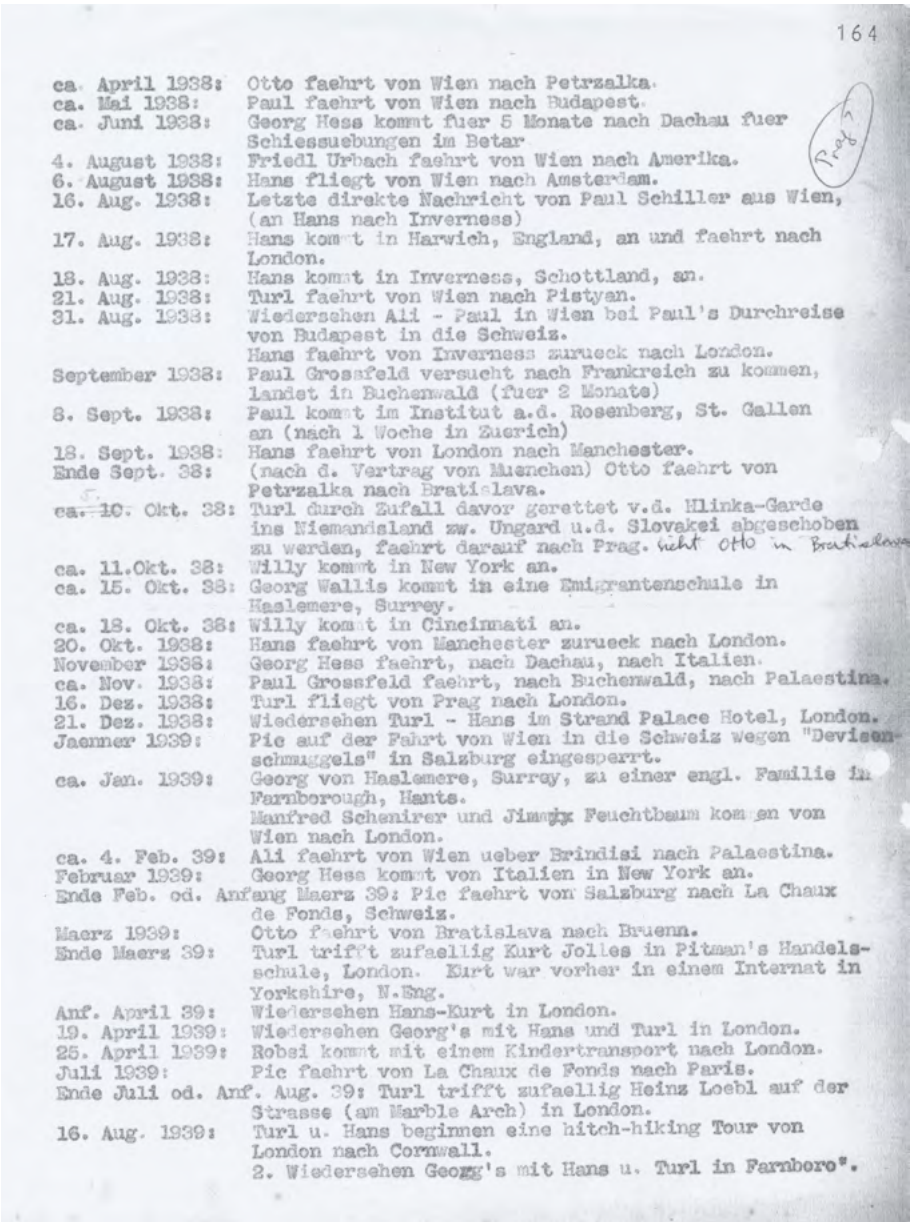
> „Bevor ich zu den individuellen Behandlungen übergehe, möcht' ich Euch noch einmal alle auffordern, die Rundennummern zu schreiben. Wenn ich oder ein anderer einmal Zeit hat, könnte ich od[er] er alle Briefe sammeln, und dann ist die Nummer eine grosse Hilfe. Hebt bitte alle Briefe auf! Und schreibt mir, was Ihr davon denkt, dass mir jeder einmal alle Briefe, die er hat, einschickt, ich sie ordne, mit Durchschlägen für jeden abtippe und eventuell die Briefe dann an Euch zurückschicke."

Knapp ein Jahr später geht Kautsky in seinem Brief vom 20. Mai 1940 ganz explizit auf die historische Bedeutung der Korrespondenz ein und verweist auf die Wichtigkeit des sorgfältigen Archivierens:

> „Now to the individual treatment of your letters. I think in general and taken all together they are so interesting because they give such a good picture of the life and worries of a present-day refugee. And that's why I believe that our letters will one time – I hope very soon – be quite a valuable document if properly collected. And that's why I again urge you to keep and collect the letters that remain in your hands and also to be careful about such details as round-numbers, dates, etc. But here I'm lecturing again!"

Die Freunde schrieben pflichtbewusst die Rundennummern und notierten auch die Daten. Diese Gewissenhaftigkeit zeigt nicht nur, wie wichtig der Zusammenhalt und die Verbindung mit der Vergangenheit für sie waren, sondern auch, dass sie sich der Besonderheit ihres Vorhabens bewusst waren. Dass die Bedeutung des Briefwechsels bald über den aktuellen persönlichen Bereich der einzelnen Teilnehmer hinausreichte, führte dazu, dass viele Briefe aufgehoben wurden und bis heute erhalten geblieben sind. Es ging Kautsky bereits am Anfang um das Aufbewahren der Briefe und das Notieren von Runden. Als die Sammlung wuchs, sah er die Briefe als Beleg für die Lebensgeschichte(n) der ehemaligen Schüler, nachdem sie Wien verlassen hatten müssen. In einem Brief vom 6. Februar 1941 fasst er die Fluchtwege seiner Schulkameraden sowohl in einem Narrativ als auch tabellarisch zusammen und stellt den Freunden sein Unterfangen vor: „Beiliegend schicke ich Euch verschiedene alte Bilder, die ich alle gerne bald zurueckhaben moechte. Zweitens lege ich Euch 2 Aufstellungen ueber unsere Kollegen bei, die ich teilweise auf Turl's Anregung, teilweise ohne die selbe waehrend meiner Semesterferien vollbrachte." Kautsky wollte den Freunden damit zeigen, was sie als Gruppe erreicht hatten. Dass er Arbeit in dieses Projekt investieren konnte, deutet auch auf eine Veränderung in seinem Leben hin. Sein Vater hatte Arbeit, und im Februar 1941 hatte Kautsky als Student Semes-

terferien und damit auch die Muße, die Geschichte der Schulkameraden anhand der Rundbriefe und Information über das daraus entstandene Netzwerk zusammenzustellen. Anhand des beiliegenden Narrativs und der Tabelle präsentiert Kautsky mit Stolz den Beweis ihres Zusammenhalts trotz der weiten Entfernungen und anderer Hindernisse.



164

ca. April 1938: Otto faehrt von Wien nach Petrzalka.
ca. Mai 1938: Paul faehrt von Wien nach Budapest.
ca. Juni 1938: Georg Hess kommt fuer 5 Monate nach Dachau fuer Schiessuebungen im Betar
4. August 1938: Friedl Urbach faehrt von Wien nach Amerika.
6. August 1938: Hans fliegt von Wien nach Amsterdam.
16. Aug. 1938: Letzte direkte Nachricht von Paul Schiller aus Wien, (an Hans nach Inverness)
17. Aug. 1938: Hans kommt in Harwich, England, an und faehrt nach London.
18. Aug. 1938: Hans kommt in Inverness, Schottland, an.
21. Aug. 1938: Turl faehrt von Wien nach Pistyan.
31. Aug. 1938: Wiedersehen Ali - Paul in Wien bei Paul's Durchreise von Budapest in die Schweiz.
Hans faehrt von Inverness zurueck nach London.
September 1938: Paul Grossfeld versucht nach Frankreich zu kommen, Landet in Buchenwald (fuer 2 Monate)
8. Sept. 1938: Paul kommt im Institut a.d. Rosenberg, St. Gallen an (nach 1 Woche in Zuerich)
18. Sept. 1938: Hans faehrt von London nach Manchester.
Ende Sept. 38: (nach d. Vertrag von Muenchen) Otto faehrt von Petrzalka nach Bratislava.
ca. ~~10.~~ 5. Okt. 38: Turl durch Zufall davor gerettet v.d. Hlinka-Garde ins Niemandsland zw. Ungard u.d. Slovakei abgeschoben zu werden, faehrt darauf nach Prag. sieht Otto in Bratislava
ca. 11.Okt. 38: Willy kommt in New York an.
ca. 15. Okt. 38: Georg Wallis kommt in eine Emigrantenschule in Haslemere, Surrey.
ca. 18. Okt. 38: Willy kommt in Cincinnati an.
20. Okt. 1938: Hans faehrt von Manchester zurueck nach London.
November 1938: Georg Hess faehrt, nach Dachau, nach Italien.
ca. Nov. 1938: Paul Grossfeld faehrt, nach Buchenwald, nach Palaestina.
16. Dez. 1938: Turl fliegt von Prag nach London.
21. Dez. 1938: Wiedersehen Turl - Hans im Strand Palace Hotel, London.
Jaenner 1939: Pic auf der Fahrt von Wien in die Schweiz wegen "Devisenschmuggels" in Salzburg eingesperrt.
ca. Jan. 1939: Georg von Haslemere, Surrey, zu einer engl. Familie in Farnborough, Hants.
Manfred Schenirer und Jimmy Feuchtbaum kommen von Wien nach London.
ca. 4. Feb. 39: Ali faehrt von Wien ueber Brindisi nach Palaestina.
Februar 1939: Georg Hess kommt von Italien in New York an.
Ende Feb. od. Anfang Maerz 39: Pic faehrt von Salzburg nach La Chaux de Fonds, Schweiz.
Maerz 1939: Otto faehrt von Bratislava nach Bruenn.
Ende Maerz 39: Turl trifft zufaellig Kurt Jolles in Pitman's Handelsschule, London. Kurt war vorher in einem Internat in Yorkshire, N.Eng.
Anf. April 39: Wiedersehen Hans-Kurt in London.
19. April 1939: Wiedersehen Georg's mit Hans und Turl in London.
25. April 1939: Robsi kommt mit einem Kindertransport nach London.
Juli 1939: Pic faehrt von La Chaux de Fonds nach Paris.
Ende Juli od. Anf. Aug. 39: Turl trifft zufaellig Heinz Loebl auf der Strasse (am Marble Arch) in London.
16. Aug. 1939: Turl u. Hans beginnen eine hitch-hiking Tour von London nach Cornwall.
2. Wiedersehen Georg's mit Hans u. Turl in Farnboro".

Heute bietet uns dieser Brief wichtige Einsichten in die Fluchtwege der Schüler. Die am Briefwechsel Beteiligten verließen Wien zwischen April 1938 und April 1939. Vier landeten in den USA, drei davon auf dem Umweg über England, einer davon mit einem Kindertransport. Ein weiterer, der sich in England aufhielt, wurde inhaftiert und anschließend auf dem Dampfer Dunera nach Australien gebracht. Einer überlebte in der Schweiz in einem Internat, zwei erreichten ohne Eltern Palästina, einer reiste legal aus, der andere illegal und ein weiterer wurde mit seinen Eltern auf dem Weg nach Frankreich in Salzburg wegen Devisenschmuggels verhaftet. Andere Klassenkollegen, mit denen die Kerngruppe unregelmäßig korrespondierte und über die sie etwas in Erfahrung bringen konnte, retteten sich nach Shanghai,

Palästina, Südamerika oder Nordamerika. Ein paar von ihnen konnten aus Europa fliehen, aber erst nachdem sie aus dem Konzentrationslager entlassen worden waren. In demselben Brief gibt Kautsky die von den Briefschreibern und anderen jüdischen Schülern zurückgelegten Kilometer an.

Er leitet die Zusammenfassung der „Längenrekorde" mit folgenden Worten ein: „Aus dieser Aufstellung unserer ‚Wanderungen' ist ein wichtiges Stueck Geschichte und viele interessante Tatsachen ueber unser Leben seit Maerz 1938 zu ersehen." Am Ende der Aufstellung stellt er fest: „Zusammen haben wir ehemaligen Schulkollegen daher eine Entfernung von ca. 176.000 km zurueckgelegt (ueber 100.000 mi.), d.i. mehr als 4 mal um den Aequator." Auch wenn sie in verschiedene Ecken der Welt verstreut waren, schafft es Kautskys Aufstellung letztlich die Gruppe auf eigenartige Weise wieder zusammenzubringen.

Aufgrund des Einfallsreichtums, der Hingabe und der Hartnäckigkeit der Beteiligten überlebte der Briefwechsel bis nach dem Krieg. 1945 beteiligten sich noch sieben an der Korrespondenz. In den nächsten Jahren wurden es immer weniger: 1946 waren es sechs, 1947 und 1948 noch fünf, zwischen 1949 bis 1952 nur mehr vier: 1953 waren nur mehr zwei an der Korrespondenz beteiligt.

Der Rundbrief scheint nach dem Krieg seine Funktion verloren zu haben. Auch die weiterem Lebensläufe der einzelnen mögen zu seinem Auslaufen beigetragen haben. In einem Brief vom 24. März 1947 schreibt Hans:

> „There's no denying that what you're saying about our growing somewhat apart from each other is true, Bill [Willi]. It's probably inevitable that, for instance, you, as a family man with a good position in industry, would have a different outlook on life from me, a college student with few, if any, responsibilities, that both of us would probably feel differently on many things than, say Turl, and that all three of us must necessarily have different attitudes from Ali's. Yet, I wouldn't go so far as to say that we have become estranged, for I know that we all have a very real and sincere interest in the each other's lots."

Wenn die frühen Briefe den jungen Flüchtlingen als eine Art Informationsbörse gedient und ihnen darüber hinaus auch einen inneren Zusammenhalt vermittelt hatten, schien dies, da sie nun ein geregelteres Leben führten, nicht mehr vonnöten gewesen zu sein. Statt mehrmals im Jahr von den anderen zu hören, beschränkte sich nun die Korrespondenz hauptsächlich nur mehr auf Weihnachtsbriefe und Karten. Im Gegensatz zu den Beispielen von anderen Rundbriefen, die den Teilnehmern ein jährliches Resümee boten, hatte diese Korrespondenz eine andere, von den zeitlichen Umständen diktierte Funktion: Die ehemaligen Schüler des Stubenbasteigymnasiums brauchten einander, um einen schmerzhaften Einschnitt in ihr Leben zu verkraften und zu bewältigen.

Das Überleben der Briefe und deren Rückkehr nach Österreich

Aufgrund der Überzeugung, dass die Briefe von Interesse für die Geschichte der Flüchtlinge im 20. Jahrhundert sein könnten, wurden sie aufgehoben.(Aufgehoben und bewahrt wurden die Briefe letztlich nur, weil einige ihrer Verfasser zur Überzeugung kamen, dass sie für die Geschichte von Flucht, Exil und Emigration im 20. Jahrhundert von Bedeutung sein könnten.) Während ihre Entstehung und ihr Überleben in erster Linie eine Geschichte von *Shared Agency,* von bewußt gesetzten Handlungen ist, so ist ihre Rückkehr nach Österreich eine Geschichte der reinen Zu-

fälle. John (Hans) Kautsky, der viele der Briefe über Jahre und Jahrzenhnte aufbewahrte, wurde Professor für Politologie an der Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Dank seines Kollegen, des aus Wien stammenden Germanisten Egon Schwarz, der auch Schüler der Stubenbastei und Professor für Germanistik an der Washington University war, kam der Briefwechsel im Jahre 1994 in den Besitz des Archivs für die Geschichte der Soziologie in Österreich an der Universität Graz.

Als die Briefe Anfang der neunziger Jahre ins Archiv kommen sollten, schrieb John (Hans) Kautsky an die noch erreichbaren Beteiligten, um ihre Zusage einzuholen.[19] Diese blickten oft mit einem Augenzwinkern, aber auch mit kritischer Distanz und Skepsis auf ihr jugendliches Unterfangen zurück. Paul Berkovits meinte im Dezember 1993, früheren Behauptungen zum Trotz: „The last thing we suspected at the time was certainly that our letters would be of interest to ‚mankind'. Of course I agree to your sending the letters to Graz and I won't claim any rights (or lefts)." Art Cooper (Turl Kupfermann) äußerte sich in einem Brief vom Dezember 1993 eher skeptisch:

> „To someone like you who has spent virtually his whole life in the world of academia this whole business of ‚scientific research' about ‚emigration' probably does not appear scurrilous, if not surrealistic as it does to me. What possible purpose the results of this ‚research', whatever they may turn out to be, could serve is beyond me. Except perhaps to provide work […] I shudder to think how many more people will then get involved in identifying and exploiting further sources, in indexing and cross-indexing reports and analyzing them, in drawing conclusions and publishing the fruits of all these efforts; […] And when all this is done, there isn't going to be anybody who can, or will even want to, do anything useful with it."

Jakof Hermon (Ali Hechter) wiederholte Turls Standpunkt in einem Brief vom 9. Jänner 1994:

> „Of course I agree to your sending my letters to Austria (although it is a very common, if not questionable phenomenon now that academics all over Germany and Austria try to gain laurels by delving into a history of persecution and suffering their fathers – or even they themselves brought on us). But after this aside, perhaps it is just as well if some remembrance of it all is kept somewhere and I have no objection to my letters to be used or published."

Die unterschiedlichen Meinungen über die Bedeutung ihrer Korrespondenz spiegeln die verschiedenen Lebenswege und im Falle von Cooper/Kupfermann und Hermon/Hechter eine kritische Einstellung gegenüber Österreich wider. Hätten jedoch nicht alle, die Kautsky noch erreichen konnte, ihre Einwilligung gegeben, wären die Briefe nicht ins Archiv gekommen. Auch dies kann als Echo ihrer früheren *Shared Agency* betrachtet werden.

Resümee

Als die Schüler sich auf der Schwedenbrücke ‚für immer' voneinander verabschiedeten und sich zu schreiben versprachen, konnten sie natürlich nicht ahnen, was aus dem Versprechen werden würde. Ihre gemeinsamen Anstrengungen waren Ausdruck ihrer kollektiven Handlungsmöglichkeiten oder *Shared Agency.* Das Überle-

19 Je nachdem, wie der Brief unterschrieben wurde oder an wen der Brief adressiert war, steht der angenommene Name entweder vor oder in Klammern. Die Briefe, aus denen ich hier zitiere, schenkte mir John Kautsky.

ben der Korrespondenz erschien ihnen besonders wichtig, in einer Zeit, in der sie selbst mit dem Überleben kämpften. Der Briefwechsel ist daher Beweis für einen hohen Grad an Flexibilität, Erfindungsreichtum und wohlüberlegten Entscheidungen. Durch das Bewahren eines Handlungs- und Kommunkationsraums konnten die Schüler eine Gemeinschaft aufrechterhalten, die die Nationalsozialistinnen und Nationalsozialisten bewusst zerstören wollten.

Die Planung, die Ausführung und Aufrechterhaltung des Briefwechsels zeigen, wie die Handlungsmächtigkeit der Klassenkollegen auf Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft bezogen war. War der Impetus für den Rundbrief, die Gemeinschaft unter ihnen aufrechtzuerhalten, so war es seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart der Jugendlichen, der ihn zum Erfolg machte. Dank ihrer Überzeugung, dass der Briefwechsel ein bedeutendes, historisches Dokument werden könnte, bauten sie eine Brücke zur Zukunft und zu uns. Darüber hinaus liefert der Rundbrief wichtige Einblicke in die Schreibbedingungen während der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung, und zeigt, wie sehr der Wandel des Postwesens, sich ändernde Transportwege und Zensurwesen auf die Schreibenden einwirkten und zeichnet die komplexen Fluchtwege – mit allen Zwischenstationen – der Schüler nach. Als Zeugnisse aus dem Zeitgeschehen selbst geben die Briefe Auskunft über das konkret verfügbare Wissen über Einreisebestimmungen, Visamöglichkeiten, und Lebensbedingungen in den potenziellen Aufnahmeländern und führen dem heutigen Leser „life and worries of a present day refugee“ vor Augen.

Rundbrüder	Geburtsdatum (Geburtsort) Staatsbürgerschaft Religionsbekenntnis	Adresse	Vater Beruf des Vaters	Stationen der Emigration
Paul Berkovits	8. Juni 1922 (Wien) ungarisch israelitisch	1, Wiesingerstraße1	Michael B. Kaufmann	Budapest, Sankt Gallen, Genf, Vernier
Joachim (Pick) Felberbaum	12. Dezember 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	2, Praterstraße 70	Simon F. Zivilingenieur	Limoges, Lyon
Otto Fried	8. Februar 1922 (Wien) čechoslovakisch israelitisch	3, Krieglergasse 8	Leopold F. Kaufmann	Petržalka, Bratislava, Brünn, Prag, Ekron
Alfred (Ali) Hechter (Jacob Hermon)	29. Mai 1922 (Baden) österreichisch israelitisch	3, Jacquingasse 6	Ludwig H. Kaufmann	Rodges, Tel Aviv
Kurt Jolles (Keith E. Jolles)	25. März 1922 (Wien) österreichisch röm. kathol.	1, Dominikaner-bastei 6	Dr. Siegfried J. Arzt	Yorkshire, London, Birmingham
Hans (Xavier) Kautsky (John H. K.)	5. März 1922 (Wien) österreichisch konfessionslos	21, Smolagasse 1 → 13,Trauttmansdorff-gasse 52	Felix K. Ingenieur	Amsterdam, Inverness, London, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cambridge/Mass., Saint Louis/Miss.
Artur (Turl) Kupfermann (Arthur T. Cooper)	15. März 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	2, Böcklinstraße 82	Simche K. Kaufmann	Piešťany, Prag, London, Indianapolis, New York, Wien
Wilhelm (Willy) Mandl (William B. M.)	31. Juli 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	3, Dapontegasse 73	Fritz M. Dentist	Cincinnati, San Francisco
Paul Schiller	31. Jänner 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	9, Kolingasse 9	Friedrich Sch. Musiker	Shanghai
Robert (Robsi) Singer	18. Oktober 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	20, Raffaelgasse 1	Max S.	London, Elkins Park, Philadelphia
Friedrich (Friedl oder Fufu) Urbach	6. September 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	1, Schottenring 7	Dr. Erich U. Arzt, Dozent	Philadelphia
Georg Wallis	14. Mai 1922 (Wien) österreichisch israelitisch	9, Türkenstraße 31	Dr. Alfons W. Redakteur	Haslemere, Farnborough, Liverpool, Australien, Providence

„Abgangsklausel vom 24. März 1938“: Fried
„Ausgeschult nach Rg 2 am 28. April 1938“: alle anderen
(zusammengestellt von Frau Mag. Regina Erdinger)

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Zitierweise: „Bitte vergeßt nicht, alle Briefe gut aufzuheben" Shared Agency in einem Briefwechsel österreichisch-jüdischer Schüler in der Emigration, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 6 (2019) 1, 4-20.

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Article

Lektorat:
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Between Self-Defence and Loyalty

Jewish Responses to the Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary, 1920–1928

Abstract

Enacted in September 1920 in Hungary, the numerus clausus law, the first antisemitic law in post-war Europe, introduced discrimination against Jews in higher education. Ostensibly a remedy against the "overcrowding" of universities, the law breached the previous liberal era's concept of equal citizenship. This survey of Jewish responses to the law between 1920 and 1928 is based on the coverage of *Egyenlőség*, the representative weekly of assimilated Neolog Jews. The arguments voiced by contemporary commentators against the numerus clausus law highlight their precarious position between fighting to maintain full membership in the Hungarian nation while also nurturing a sense of Jewish identity. Ultimately, they reflect their views on the prospect of assimilation itself.

In the postwar era of resurgent ethnic nationalisms, the universities of East Central Europe became a battleground between competing elites. From Warsaw to Vienna and from Budapest to Bucharest, anti-Jewish violence erupted within the walls of academia.[1] Academic antisemitism in its many forms, ranging from tacit discrimination against Jewish faculty and students to open physical violence, was far from exclusive to East Central Europe: A de facto Jewish numerus clausus was practiced at the most prestigious North American universities into the 1950s.[2] Yet only in Hungary would it be affirmed by legislation.

Enacted in September 1920 by the Hungarian Assembly, Act XXV/1920, the so-called numerus clausus law introduced a "closed number" for university admissions. Replacing the previous practice of open enrolment, guaranteed by a diploma from a gymnasium, the law authorised the Minister of Education to annually determine the number of university students to be admitted. More importantly, the law set quotas for students of Hungary's "races and nationalities" according to their ratio in the general population. Crucially, it departed from the liberal and still valid legislation governing Jewish emancipation, classifying Jews or "Hungarian citizens of the Israelite religion" as one of the "races and nationalities" and set the ratio of Jewish students at six percent, the percentage of Jews in the general population. In addition, universities

1 Recent scholarship on this phenomenon throughout East Central Europe in the interwar period includes Regina Fritz/Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe/Jana Starek (ed.), Alma Mater Antisemitica. Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939, Vienna 2016, especially the chapters by Raoul Cârstocea, Students Don the Green Shirt. The Roots of Romanian Fascism in the Antisemitic Student Movements, 39-66, and Natalia Aleksiun, The Cadaver Affair in the Second Polish Republic, 203-220; Alena Míšková, Die Lage der Juden an der Prager Deutschen Universität, in: Jörg Hoensch et al. (ed.), Judenemanzipation – Antisemitismus – Verfolgung in Deutschland, Österreich-Ungarn, den Böhmischen Ländern und in der Slowakei. Essen 1999, 108-128; Werner Hanak-Lettner/Danielle Spera (ed.) Kampfzone Universität (1875–1945). Vienna 2015.

2 Michael Brown, On Campus in the Thirties. Antipathy, Support, and Indifference, in: L. Ruth Klein (ed.), Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses. Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War, Montreal/Kingston 2012, 177-215.

were to take into consideration applicants' "loyalty to the nation and upstanding morals",[3] reinforcing previous ministerial decrees from February and June 1920 that barred or expelled from all universities any student associated with the 1919 revolution.[4]

The makers of the law used the supposed overcrowding of universities and the liberal professions as a pretext, overstating its acute, negative impact on the prospects of the Christian (in contemporary parlance understood as non-Jewish) middle class in post-Trianon Hungary – but contemporaries on both sides of the law were aware that its agenda went far beyond a corrective to educational policy. Hungarian Jews rightly regarded it as not only an attack on their freedom of education but a breach of the liberal principle of equal citizenship. Right-wing politicians, ideologues, and radical right-wing student organisations, on their part, saw it – and expressed their view in no uncertain terms[5] – as the first step to solving the 'Jewish question', reducing the Jewish presence in the professions and cultural life that had long been resented by the Christian middle classes.

As we are approaching the centennial of both the Treaty of Trianon and the numerus clausus law, there are clear signs that government-supported historians in Hungary are ready to revive this argument. By invoking the hardships and economic and social trauma wrought by Trianon, they justify, in retrospect, the numerus clausus as a necessary measure that served Hungary's national interests in the interwar period.[6] Bona fide historians of the numerus clausus, by contrast, point to the dubious nature of statistical evidence used to support this argument then and now, as well as the persistent myths surrounding it.[7] Refuting the revisionist view that minimises the law's impact, they argue that the normalisation of discrimination against Jews on religious and, increasingly, racial grounds deeply penetrated Hungarian society, preparing the ground for the anti-Jewish laws of the late 1930s and, ultimately, the Holocaust in Hungary.[8]

This article is part of a larger study on the long-term social and cultural impact of the numerus clausus law. As part of the study's intended survey of Jewish responses to the law, it will begin by enumerating the reactions of representatives of its main intended target, namely assimilated Hungarian Jews. It will do so by looking at the reactions of the editors and writers of *Egyenlőség* (Equality), the main political and

3 Mária M. Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva. A Numerus Clausus Magyarországon 1920–1945 [Wronged by Legislation. The Numerus Clausus in Hungary 1920–1945], Budapest 2012 is the most comprehensive, recent account of the parliamentary debate, political context, details, and significance of the numerus clausus law. See also Katalin N. Szegvári, Numerus Clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon. A zsidó és nőhallgatók főiskolai felvételéről [Numerus Clausus Decrees in Counter-Revolutionary Hungary. On the University Admission of Jewish and Female Students], Budapest 1988, and Victor Karady/P. T. Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe, (=Research Reports on Central Central European History 1), Budapest 2012.

4 Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva, 214. The administration of Budapest University followed up by expelling or barring all students who had been members of the banned Galileo Circle, a left-wing student organisation. Ibid., 228.

5 Kinga Frojimovics, "Mételyes már közéletünk, és fojtó-fullajtó lett levegője." A numerus clausus magyarországi rabbik templomi beszédeiben ["Our Public Life has Turned Noxious and its Air is Stifling." The Numerus Clausus in Rabbinical Sermons in Hungary], in: Judit Molnár (ed.), Jogfosztás–90 év: tanulmányok a numerus claususról [Stripped of Rights – Ninety Years. Studies on the Numerus Clausus], Budapest 2011, 233-243, analyses the parliamentary debate to show the unmistakable objective of the law, directed against the supposed "Jewish takeover" or subordination of Hungarian intellectual and economic life.

6 http://ujkor.hu/content/interju-ujvary-gaborral and http://hvg.hu/kultura/20180321_homan_balintrol_maskent_veritas (13 August 2018).

7 Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva, especially 13-59 and idem, The Numerus Clausus in Hungary 1920–1945, in: Regina Fritz et al. (ed.), Alma Mater Antisemitica, 85-111.

8 Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva; Tibor Hajdu, Trianon, középosztály, zsidókérdés [Trianon, Middle Class, Jewish Question], in: Molnár (ed). Jogfosztás–90 év [Stripped of Rights], 70-77; Karady/Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 17.

cultural weekly of the Neolog community, and identifying their arguments against the numerus clausus. The reports and commentaries published in the weekly offer an unparalleled source, one that reveals both the immediate impact of the law on Hungarian Jewish youth and the efforts of their families and the larger community to find practical solutions, mainly through charity, to counter it.

At a time when widespread physical violence and state-sanctioned, official antisemitism threatened the life of Hungarian Jews daily, the numerus clausus may not have seemed the most pressing concern for Jewish community leaders to address. Nevertheless, whether they addressed it directly or not, admitted it or not, contemporaries on both sides of the law realised its singular importance and the break it represented with the liberal tradition and the process of Jewish assimilation. At the same time, Hungarian Jews most invested in the assimilationist project recognised that as the ones most directly targeted and affected by the numerus clausus law, they had an obligation to respond to it. The development of strategies and arguments against it as articulated by their representatives on the pages of their main press outlet, at this crucial junction in the history of Hungarian Jews, thus reveals their views not only on the numerus clausus, but on the perceived, long-term prospect (or chances) of assimilation itself.

Historical Context and Scholarship

The numerus clausus law capped the most tumultuous and traumatic two years of modern Hungarian history to date. In the wake of Austria-Hungary's defeat in the First World War, the monarchy's dissolution, and a liberal followed by a Bolshevik-inspired revolution, in August 1919 Entente pressure and internal resistance ended the radical left-wing experiment. The January 1920 elections, conducted amidst the ongoing White Terror, brought to power a coalition government of right-wing, nationalist parties and acclaimed Miklós Horthy, the commander of the counter-revolutionary national army, as regent. However, the new post-war Kingdom of Hungary was much diminished: Following the Trianon Treaty signed in June 1920, Hungary lost three quarters of its pre-war territory and two thirds of its pre-war population to Romania and the new states of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria.

The counter-revolutionary regime built its popular support on a militant nationalistic agenda of *revanche.* It demonised and lumped together communists, socialists, liberals, feminists, and above all Jews, and blamed them all for the disaster of Trianon. Well before the rise of Nazism but prefiguring some of its noxious rhetoric, antisemitism thus became a vital part of the post-war Horthy regime's agenda. It was an antisemitism that amalgamated older, religious, Christian, as well as new-fangled, political, and racial elements and represented a clear break with the previous liberal era – delivering a devastating blow to Hungarian Jews committed to the project of assimilation.[9]

9 Miklós Szabó, Az újkonzervatizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története, 1867–1918 [The History of New Conservatism and Right-Wing Radicalism, 1867–1918], Budapest 2003 explores the roots of extreme-right ideology in the pre-war period; while János Gyurgyák, Ezzé lett magyar hazátok. A magyar nacionalizmus és nemzeteszme története [This is Your Hungarian Homeland. The History of the Hungarian Nation and Nationalism], Budapest 2007 provides exhaustive detail on its development throughout the interwar period; Chapter 4 of my recent monograph, Hungarian Women's Activism in the Wake of the First World War. From Rights to Revanche, London 2018, 87-113, traces the emergence of antisemitic myths from 1916 onwards.

The period lasting from 1867 to 1918 had represented the longest prosperous and liberal period in modern Hungarian history, during which the Hungarian Jews both contributed to and benefited to a great degree from its political, economic, and cultural achievements. Jews received full citizenship rights as individuals in 1867 and collectively in 1895 when Judaism became one of the so-called accepted religions. This is not to say that there were no bumps on the road, such as the infamous Tiszaeszlár blood libel trial in 1882/1883. In retrospect, the trial and the antisemitic riots following the acquittal of the accused would seem to signal a breakdown of the assimilation process – yet the liberal political establishment at the time presented a reassuringly united stance in condemning the accusation, a leading Hungarian writer and liberal deputy took on the defence, and even the iconic revolutionary leader Lajos Kossuth protested the trial from his exile in the name of European civilisation. As for the Antisemitic Party, founded in the wake of Tiszaeszlár and as a reaction to the massive immigration of Galician Jews from the monarchy's periphery to central Hungary, it experienced only brief success, before flaming out in the early 1890s.

By the outbreak of the First World War, Hungarian Jews – at least those who were invested in assimilation – had come a long way in breaking down economic, social, and cultural barriers. The willingness of the Hungarian political elite to grant full citizenship and social acceptance to Jews – in exchange for concessions ranging from the abandonment of religious orthodoxy to the embrace of Hungarian language and culture, the changing of German-sounding family names to Hungarian ones, and conversion to Christianity – is often explained in slightly simplistic terms as a social contract. As long as Hungary ruled large ethnic minorities within its borders, so goes the argument, this unwritten social contract of the traditional political elite with Hungarian Jews assured Hungarian majority. Conversely, following the peace treaty, when Hungary became ethnically almost homogenous, Hungarian Jews no longer held the balance and the social contract was off. The introduction of the numerus clausus law a mere three and a half months after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon would seem to confirm with this explanation.[10]

In fact, cracks in the assimilationist project had begun to show well before that. Leaders of the emerging Social Catholic movement had voiced antisemitic arguments well before 1914 and, in the last two years of the First World War, antisemitic myths such as the stereotypical figures of Jewish black marketeers and Jewish shirkers had gone from marginal to mainstream.[11] The two revolutions in 1918 and 1919, their failure to stop the disintegration of multi-ethnic Hungary, and the relatively high number of Jews – even if they had long broken their ties with the Jewish community – among the revolutionary political leaders, especially in the leadership of the Republic of Councils, further fuelled this pre-existing, popular, and increasingly racial antisemitism. By the time the revolutions were defeated, leading right-wing ideologues tied liberalism, Bolshevism, and Judaism, firmly together as all part of an international conspiracy and established a Hungarian version of the *Dolchstoßlegende*.[12]

During the final weeks of the Republic of Councils, Horthy's paramilitary detachments unleashed pogroms in the countryside and afterwards were allowed to extend

10 Guy Miron, The Waning of Emancipation. Jewish History, Memory, and the Rise of Fascism in Germany, France, and Hungary, Detroit 2011, 157.

11 Péter Bihari, Lövészárkok a hátországban. Középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországán [Trenches on the Home Front. The Middle Class, the Jewish Question, and Antisemitism in Hungary during the First World War], Budapest 2008, 203-207.

12 A prime example is: Cécile Tormay, Bujdosó könyv. Feljegyzések 1918–19-ből [The Proscribed Book. Notes from 1918/19]. Budapest 1920, reprint accessible in the Hungarian Electronic Library: http://mek.oszk.hu/17400/17435/pdf/17435_1.pdf (13 August 2018).

their terror to the streets of Budapest, which went on for months. In the autumn of 1919, the violent occupation of universities by extreme right-wing student organisations forced the faculties to suspend the academic year. After the election of January 1920, right-wing students engaged once more in unpunished physical violence against Jewish students, blocking them from entering the buildings, demanding the introduction of numerus clausus, and putting pressure on legislators.[13]

The parliamentary debate on the numerus clausus law in September 1920 took place mere weeks after the signing on 6 June of the devastating peace treaty, providing the chance for politicians to affirm their nationalist credentials and lay the blame on the revolutions. It also allowed them to demonstrate that they were addressing an immediate social need. Ostensibly intended to reserve university spaces for student refugees from the detached territories, the numerus clausus law in fact addressed ideological and political rather than practical needs.[14] It ended the much-maligned "overrepresentation" of Jews in higher education and the professions that the Christian middle classes had resented – and felt threatened by – for at least a decade.

For reasons grounded in the particularities of Hungarian social history, including the reluctance of the traditional, Christian middle classes to participate in the modernising economy, by the early twentieth century Hungarian Jews came to play prominent roles in the financial and commercial sectors and the emerging modern press and popular entertainment. They also became highly represented in the legal and medical professions (at a proportion of close to or more than 50 percent). Their ratio among university students in the legal, medical, and engineering faculties also reached high percentages – around 25 percent on average, rising to 35 percent and over at the end of the war.[15]

The numerus clausus law's six percent quota set for Jewish students, equal to the percentage of Jews in the general population, was based on the claim that Jewish "overrepresentation" was stifling the prospects of Hungarian Christian students; it overlooked such demographic considerations as the concentration of Jews in urban populations and their high ratio among high-school graduates.[16] The claim of a "Jewish takeover" of Hungary's cultural and intellectual life was not new, and even the idea of a Jewish quota was bandied around before the signing of the Trianon Treaty.[17] Leading right-wing antisemitic ideologues regularly called for measures to stop the Jewish influx and university administrators, on their part, used all available means to protect the faculties from the influence of left-wing student organisations. The emerging counter-revolutionary ideology that blamed the revolutions and most of all Jews for Trianon gave an opportunity to university administrators and militant right-wing student organisations to "cleanse" the faculties of Jewish, female, and left-wing students. Reversing the 1918 October liberal revolution's decree that opened all faculties to women, universities rushed to tighten the admission of women – in an extreme but not uncharacteristic example, the medical facul-

13 Andor Ladányi, Az egyetemi ifjúság az ellenforradalom első éveiben [The University Youth in the Early Years of the Counterrevolution], Budapest 1979; Róbert Kerepeszki, A Turul Szövetség [The Turul Association], in: Ignác Romsics (ed.), A jobboldali hagyomány, 1900–1948 [The Right-Wing Tradition], Budapest 2009, 364-367; Róbert Kerepeszki, "The Racial Defense in Practice." The Activity of the Turul Association at Hungarian Universities between the Two World Wars, in: Karady/Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 136-150.

14 Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva, especially 13-53.

15 Viktor Karady, The Restructuring of the Academic Market Place in Hungary, in: Karady/Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 112-135.

16 Ibid.

17 Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva, 221-222.

ty of Budapest University effectively banned women from enrolling until the 1926 school year.[18]

The numerus clausus law succeeded in drastically reducing the ratio of Jewish students to single-digit percentages throughout the interwar period while, in a demonstration of the intention of its authors, affecting no other ethnic or national group.[19] While the law interrupted the trend of Hungarian Jews' – including that of Jewish women's – participation in higher education, it failed to achieve the intended result, namely a significant rise in the number of non-Jewish university graduates. Even an admissions system extremely tilted to favour non-Jewish students could not prompt them to fill the available spaces – and this, rather than the oft-lamented lax application of the law accounted for the ratios slightly higher than the prescribed six percent of Jewish students. To fend off the objections of the League of Nations over the breach of minority rights, a modification of the numerus clausus law in 1928 deleted the reference to Jews but added a condition based on the profession of the applicants' fathers that resulted in a continuing discrimination against Jewish students. Moreover, university administrators were free to keep the previous practice intact, with the result of only a slight increase in the ratio of Jewish students until the 1938/1939 anti-Jewish laws, which introduced even severer restrictions.

The everyday physical violence against Jewish students may have abated following the early counter-revolutionary years and in 1922 the government did rein the paramilitaries in, yet sporadic anti-Jewish violence at universities remained the hallmark of the entire interwar era. This, along with the numerus clausus, led to the flight of thousands of Hungarian Jewish students to universities abroad. While the returnees may have been armed with degrees from the finest universities in Europe, they faced a long bureaucratic battle to validate their diplomas and further discrimination when looking for employment in the public sector.[20]

The political and legal history of the numerus clausus legislation has been well covered.[21] Andor Ladányi addressed the continuity of the practice of the numerus clausus throughout the interwar period, refuting the persistent myth that it was discontinued from 1928.[22] A collection published to mark the ninetieth anniversary of

18 Katalin Fenyves, "Se nő, se zsidó?" Diplomáselit felfogások és a numerus clausus ["Neither Woman nor Jew?" Views on the University-Educated Elite and the Numerus Clausus], in: Molnár (ed.), Jogfosztás – 90 éve, 215-230; in English: Katalin Fenyves, A Successful Battle for Symbolic Space. The Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary, in: Karady/Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 151-164; and Andor Ladányi, Két évforduló. A nők felsőfokú tanulmányainak száz éve [Two Anniversaries. One Hundred Years of Higher Education for Women], in: Educatio 3 (1996), 375-389, here 379.

19 Mária M. Kovács, A numerus clausus Magyarországon [The Numerus Clausus in Hungary], in: Molnár (ed.), Jogfosztás–90 éve, 29-59. The issue of how Jewish students were identified is complex and evolved over the period in question: In theory, the law used religion, in itself a paradoxical marker, to identify Jews as members of a "race" or "nationality". Jews who converted to Christianity after 1919 also counted as Jewish, revealing the inherently racial bias of the law. In practice, students were subjected to physical violence and discrimination by members of right-wing student organisations and the university administration based on their looks or suspected Jewish background.

20 This little-researched aspect of the numerus clausus law deserves a separate study. In her doctoral dissertation in progress, Ágnes Kelemen is exploring evidence of resistance to the validation – in the contemporary Hungarian usage "nostrification" – of foreign medical diplomas by the professional association of Hungarian physicians. Further studies, including the larger research project by the author of this article, should also shed light on the ratio of permanent exiles versus "returnees" among the numerous clausus exiles.

21 Andor Ladányi, Az egyetemi ifjúság az ellenforradalom első éveiben; Katalin Szegvári, Numerus Clausus rendelkezések az ellenforradalmi Magyarországon; Karady/Nagy (eds.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary; Molnár (ed.), Jogfosztás–90 éve; and, most comprehensively, Kovács, Törvénnyel sújtva.

22 Andor Ladányi, A numerus clausus törvény 1928. évi módosításáról [On the Modification of the Numerus Clausus Law in 1928], in: Századok (1994) 6, 1117-1148; and Andor Ladányi, A numerus clausustól a numerus nullusig [From the Numerus Clausus to the Numerus Nullus], in: Múlt és Jövő [Past and Future] 1 (2005), 56-74.

the law explored its wider domestic and international context.[23] Older and more recent studies explored the records of Hungarian Jewish students enrolled in Vienna, Prague and Brno, Berlin, and northern Italy respectively.[24] The article of Katalin Fenyves highlighted the important aspect of gender, arguing that misogynistic and antisemitic university policies and the law affected Jewish women disproportionally, evidenced by the temporary ban on women's admission at the faculties of medicine and arts that was in effect until 1926.[25]

Kinga Frojimovics surveyed the sermons of three leading Neolog rabbis for reactions to the numerus clausus.[26] She also identified a new strand, "Cultural Zionism", emerging from what she sees as the identity crisis of the Neolog community and the antisemitic policies of the early 1920s, which aimed to establish a more autonomous Jewish culture.[27] Ilse Lazaroms explored a unique source, the testimonies of the Legal Aid Office set up by the Jewish Community of Pest, which aimed to provide legal assistance to victims of paramilitary violence. Her analysis of the rhetoric of Jewish community leaders, read after the completion of this article, seems to reinforce its findings.[28]

Responses to the Numerus Clausus in *Egyenlőség,* 1920–1928

Since the early 1880s, *Egyenlőség* – the very name of the weekly, "equality", was a reminder of its founding in defiance against a previous attack on Hungarian Jews, the Tiszaeszlár blood libel case – served as the voice of the assimilationist Neolog Jews. Between 1868 and 1920, the Neolog and Orthodox communities, divided after the schism of Hungarian Jews in 1868, were about equal in number, with the Orthodox forming a slight majority.[29] In post-Trianon Hungary, the majority of Orthodox communities found themselves in the detached territories now belonging to Romania and Czechoslovakia, making the Neolog community the majority – representing approximately two-thirds of Hungarian Jews, as opposed to the one-third Ortho-

23 Molnár, Jogfosztás–90 éve.

24 Viktor Karady's pioneering study, Egyetemi antiszemitizmus és érvényesülési kényszerpályák. Magyar-zsidó diákság a nyugat-európai főiskolákon a numerus clausus alatt [University Antisemitism and Forced Career Trajectories. Hungarian Jewish Students at Western European Universities during the Numerus Clausus], in: Levéltári Szemle [Archival Review] 42 (1992) 3, 21-40 was followed, more recently by Tibor Frank, Double Exile. Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian Professionals through Germany to the United States 1919–1945, Oxford 2009; Michael L. Miller, From White Terror to Red Vienna. Hungarian Jewish Students in Interwar Austria, in: Frank Stern/Barbara Frank-Eichinger (ed.), Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900–1938. Akkulturation, Antisemitismus, Zionismus, Vienna 2009, 307-324; and Michael L. Miller, Numerus Clausus Exiles. Hungarian Jewish Students in Inter-War Berlin, in: Karády/Nagy (ed.), The Numerus Clausus in Hungary, 206-218; Ágnes Kelemen, Leaving an Antisemitic Regime for a Fascist Country. The Hungarian Numerus Clausus Refugees in Italy (MA thesis), Budapest 2014; Ágnes Kelemen, Migration and Exile. Hungarian Medical Students in Vienna and Prague, 1920–1938, in: János Kenyeres/Miklós Lojkó/Tamás Magyarics/Éva Eszter Szabó (ed.), At the Crossroads of Human Fate and History. Studies in Honour of Tibor Frank on his 70th Birthday, Budapest 2018, 222-241.

25 Fenyves, "Se nő, se zsidó?", 215-230.

26 Kinga Frojimovics, Mételyes már közéletünk [Our Public Life is Already Stagnant], in: Molnár (ed.), Jogfosztás–90 éve, 233-243.

27 Kinga Frojimovics, Meeting-Point Between Zionism and the Neolog Trend. Cultural Zionism in Hungary in the Interwar Period, in: Studia Judaica 15 (2007), 11-20.

28 Ilse J. Lazaroms, Marked by Violence. Hungarian Jewish Histories in the Wake of the White Terror, 1919–1922, in: Zutot. Perspectives on Jewish Culture 11 (2014), 1-10.

29 For an overview of the religious division of Hungary's Jews in the dualist period, see: Kinga Frojimovics, Szétszakadt történelem. Zsidó vallási irányzatok Magyarországon, 1868–1950 [History in Pieces. Jewish Religious Trends in Hungary, 1868–1950], Budapest 2008.

dox.[30] Consequently, *Egyenlőség* now took on a greater moral and intellectual responsibility, standing up for a more homogenous Jewish community under attack.

With universities becoming the battleground, the numerus clausus turned into the lightning rod of antisemitism – and the rare complaint the Jewish community was able to raise at a time it had no recourse against the anti-Jewish violence raging on the streets or at the gates of universities. The first issues of *Egyenlőség,* published in the aftermath of the enactment of the numerus clausus, illustrate the precariously narrow room Jewish leaders had to navigate between self-defence against physical violence, advocacy against the numerus clausus, and the continuing publication of the weekly against a relentless censorship.

The issue published on 25 September 1920 announced the enactment of the law on its front page, with the title "It is finished" invoking a disaster on a biblical scale – but with the censor erasing the lead's crucial sections.[31] Three weeks later, on 20 October, the weekly addressed the law on its front page again. In an editorial titled "Lament over a student suicide", it turned the suicide of a 21-year-old Jewish student, reportedly rejected by Budapest University's medical faculty, into an indictment against the numerus clausus. The article carried over to the next page where a perhaps strategically placed, short news item highlighted the extreme limitations faced by the weekly – and, by extension, the Jewish community – to address the threats to its existence and rights. Under the title "Fistfights at the university", the censor's hand left a blank space, save for the comment "deleted" in brackets.[32]

A somewhat more elaborate response to the numerus clausus was articulated in a front-page editorial only days after the enactment of the law. Written by the editor-in-chief Lajos Szabolcsi (1889–1943), it identified without reservation the intent to undermine equal citizenship and to define Hungarian Jews in racial terms. "With a majority they decided that from now on only 5 percent of university students can be Jewish and it was also decided – with 50 votes to 8 – that, going against the laws concerning the reception [of the Jewish religion, in 1895] and emancipation [of 1867, which declared Jews to be full citizens] Jews are a nationality, a race."[33] Szabolcsi went on to stress the law's intent to erase the achievement of the previous liberal era and reverse the trend of Jewish assimilation: "During the parliamentary debate the leaders of our enemies Ottokár Prohászka and István Haller, who submitted the legislation, pointed to the path that according to them Hungarian Jewry has to take", namely the path of Zionism.[34] Szabolcsi's rhetorical response, presumably to maintain pride in the assimilationist project, was almost fully excised by the censor.[35]

If Jewish leaders were powerless to stop or reverse the legislation itself, they would at least attempt to fight the myths that legitimised and justified it. To counter the claim that the two revolutions were masterminded by Jews, they advanced the counterclaim that the majority of Jews, far from advancing the revolutions, were among their victims. The article, entitled "How Communism destroyed Jewish religious

30 Kinga Frojimovics, Who Were They? Characteristics of the Religious Streams Within Hungarian Jewry on the Eve of the Community's Extermination, In: Yad Vashem Studies 35 (2007) 1, 143-177.

31 Egyenlőség, 25 September 1920, 1. The weekly is fully accessible on the website of the National Library of Israel. All following references to the weekly refer to the digitally accessible version. http://www.jpress.nli.org.il/Olive/APA/NLI/?action=search&text=Egyenl%C5%91s%C3%A9g#panel=document (13 August 2018).

32 Egyenlőség, 16 October 1920, 1-2.

33 Egyenlőség, 25 September 1920, 1.

34 Ibid. The charismatic Catholic bishop Ottokár Prohászka (1857–1927) was among the main exponents of antisemitism, while Haller was the Minister of Religion and Education who submitted the numerus clausus legislation.

35 Ibid.

life", pleaded that "good Jews" suffered their equal share under communist rule.[36] Countering the absurdity of the myth of an all-Jewish solidarity cutting across class boundaries, it pointed to the majority, law-abiding, patriotic Hungarian Jews and the "infinitely few Jews, when compared to the overall numbers in the population, who in any case long abandoned their faith".[37]

During the early days of counter-revolutionary violence, it would have been futile to appeal to common sense – namely that "communism is innately hostile towards Jews whom it regards as the embodiment of the bourgeoisie".[38] However, while this myth solidified into the dogma of the new regime without much opposition, the efforts of *Egyenlőség* to undercut the antisemitic myth of the Jewish shirker never ceased. In their view, the invocation of the significant bloodletting of Hungarian Jews in the war went to the heart of the fight for reclaiming equal citizenship; it was also an issue directly relevant to the numerus clausus, whose regulations, in theory at least, exempted and offered admission to Jewish veterans. Under the title "Hungarian Jewish soldiers in the World War", *Egyenlőség* published a list, based on its "war archive", of Jewish soldiers who had served.[39] Each line of the list contained a number, in this issue starting at 32092, and stated name, year and place of birth, rank, unit, length of service, and injury or death, if applicable.[40]

In perhaps the most consistent and longest-running argument used to fight exclusion from the nation, *Egyenlőség* appealed to a fundamental element of the pre-war social contract: Highlighting the Jewish contribution to Hungarian culture and learning, the weekly regularly referred to outstanding Hungarian Jewish poets, mathematicians, and scientists. While it would require a more thorough examination, one can perhaps take as a tacit acknowledgement that their patriotic rhetoric had failed to reach its intended result the fact that by the 1930s, such references were more and more directed at Jewish achievements in universal, rather than specifically Hungarian learning and science. Moreover, the weekly made a pointed use of historical references and language, upholding liberal political and historical traditions such as the contrast between the extreme right-wing student organisations that championed the numerus clausus and the "noble March youth", an allusion to the liberal students who spearheaded the national revolution of 1848.[41]

The weekly also seems to have come up with the term "numerus clausus exiles", using a Hungarian term (*száműzött*) that conjured up previous cohorts of Hungarian exiles from the late eighteenth century to 1848, who all fought for national causes.[42] The editorial comment added to the report – "Misery and pain, that is the share of our sons who remained true to their religion, their Hungarian identity, and science"[43] – served to reinforce the indivisible unity of Jewish, Hungarian, and universal values inherent in the assimilationist program. The contemporary reader of course would have found nothing wrong with the fact that only "sons" and no young women were mentioned. In this instance, it could have been explained by the allusion to historical eighteenth and nineteenth-century precedents, although one should not exclude the potential, chilling impact of the strong anti-modern tenor of the early counter-revolutionary discourse on the editors of the weekly.

36 Egyenlőség, 6 December 1919, 4.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Egyenlőség, 16 October 1920, 15.
40 Ibid.
41 Üzenet a zsidó diákoknak [Message to the Jewish Students], in: Egyenlőség, 24 June 1922, 4.
42 A numerus clausus száműzöttei [The Exiles of the Numerus Clausus], Egyenlőség, 29 July 1922, 6.
43 Ibid.

Yet another argument voiced on the pages of the weekly turned the discriminatory logic of the numerus clausus around. If Hungarian Jews were now considered a "race" or "nationality", then they should be entitled to the rights secured by the Trianon Treaty's clause of minority rights. According to articles 54 and 55 of the Hungarian parliament's Act XXXIII of 1921 that enacted the peace treaty, minorities had the right to freedom of education. As a result, representatives of the Jewish community would voice the demand for a Jewish university as early as in the parliamentary debate of the numerus clausus law,[44] a demand that continued to be voiced throughout the entire interwar period. It is difficult to determine whether it was offered as a genuine proposition – after all, other stipulations of the Trianon Treaty were regularly breached by the Hungarian government – or perhaps merely as rhetoric, to highlight the absurdity of the law.

In every issue, *Egyenlőség* invoked the financial and emotional hardship of Hungarian Jewish students who were forced by the numerus clausus law to study abroad and used its reach within the Neolog Jewish community to organise financial and practical assistance for them as early as the autumn of 1920.[45] By 1922, a Central Committee for the Aid of Jewish Students [Központi Zsidó Diáksegítő Bizottság] took over these activities that had by then outgrown the editorial office.[46] The editors also kept invoking the deeper impact of this charitable initiative. They referred to its roots in the centuries-long tradition of Jewish learning and its result: the contribution to the Hungarian national community in the fields of science, the arts, industry, and commerce. Assessing the financial results of the charitable organisation in 1928, they provided a balance sheet in terms of the total donated and took pride in the committee's success and well-oiled work. At the same time, they also pointed to the unintended, paradoxical result of the numerus clausus in strengthening the solidarity between various Jewish religious strands and socioeconomic classes.[47]

The Elusive Female Numerus Clausus Exile: A Rare Testimony

A memoir published in 1929 offers a rare testimony to the experiences of female "numerus clausus exiles".[48] In contrast to most written and oral testimonies, the memoir was published immediately after the author's university years abroad in the 1920s. It is thus untainted by the later, more traumatic events, from the growing discrimination of the late 1930s to the war and the Holocaust – events that retroactively coloured and to a large degree obscured the memory of the 1920s in most testimonies. The value of this source is amplified by its ability to provide insight into the specific experiences of Hungarian Jewish women, often rendered invisible in the primary sources and the available scholarly studies.

The writer was a young woman, a student at the medical school in Florence in the mid-1920s. Her lively vignettes depicting financial deprivation, alleviated by the beauty of the Renaissance city and the solidarity of fellow Hungarian Jewish and Italian students, scholarly success, youthful exuberance, and heartbreak offer valu-

44 Egyenlőség, 25 September 1920, 1. Kovács, Törvénytől sújtva, 227.
45 Egyenlőség, 20 November 1920, 8.
46 Egyenlőség, 27 November 1920, and Egyenlőség, 1 April 1922, 3.
47 A numerus clausus mérlege [The Balance Sheet of the Numerus Clausus], in: Egyenlőség, 28 January 1928, 2. I thank Ágnes Kelemen for information on the Central Committee.
48 Lili Fenyő, Pillanatképek a külföldön élő magyar diákság életéből [Snapshots from the Life of the Hungarian Students Living Abroad], Budapest undated.

able insight into the specific experience of women students. Fenyő also offered barely filtered reflections on her complex identity and that of her classmates. She described Passover in Florence spent with a local Jewish family and the joy upon receiving the much-awaited allowance from the Central Committee for the Aid of Jewish Students, highlighting the sense of Jewish solidarity reaching beyond national boundaries.[49] At the same time, she related the persistent commitment to a Hungarian national and cultural identity: Fenyő and her friends recited Hungarian poetry to anyone who would listen and at friendly gatherings sang Hungarian songs, with popular, faux-folk songs being particular favourites.[50]

One would be tempted to interpret the memoir's title, "Snapshots from the Life of Hungarian Students Studying Abroad", as further evidence of Fenyő's self-identification as Hungarian – but it could be equally or more likely ascribed to the potential readers' ability to read between the lines. A particularly interesting episode described the plan by Italian students to submit a letter to the local newspaper, condemning the numerus clausus – and implicitly the Hungarian government – and the agonising decision of Hungarian Jewish students to veto the planned action, because "the child does not complain about her mother, even if she spanked her unjustly".[51]

These episodes seem to suggest that the ambiguous stance of *Egyenlőség*, attempting to maintain a Jewish cultural identity while also maintaining a commitment to the Hungarian political nation, played out in the everyday experience of "numerus clausus exiles". This source reinforces the message of the countless letters to the editor, printed in almost every issue of the weekly during the 1920s, by Hungarian Jewish students studying abroad. They all relate their struggle to reconciling rather than choosing between these two commitments: an unabashed Hungarian identity and a growing awareness of Jewish identity.

Conclusions

The numerus clausus law represented an early case of social engineering: It regulated access to higher education, previously left to its own devices. It attempted and to a large degree succeeded in overwriting social mobility by repressing the previous trend, the rise of a merit-based elite from the ranks of Hungarian Jews, in the name of protecting Hungarian national interests – but without accomplishing the intended result, the strengthening of an ethnically "pure" Christian elite. Further studies should reveal more about the long-term impact of the law on Hungarian academia and intellectual life, beyond the loss of such eminent "numerus clausus exiles" as the oft-cited, famed "Martians", the great émigré scientist generation of John von Neumann, Eugene Wigner, Edward Teller, Leo Szilárd, and Michael Polanyi or the social scientists Karl Polányi and Karl Mannheim, to name but a few.[52]

A more in-depth exploration of socioeconomic and cultural developments among assimilated Hungarian Jews (a self-identification shared by the majority in this period) represented in the interwar period could shed further light on the specific ways the numerus clausus law reinforced or weakened a Jewish or, conversely, Hungarian

49 Ibid., 71-73.
50 Ibid., 20, 29, 34, 51.
51 Ibid., 66-67.
52 Frank, Double Exile; István Hargittai, Martians of Science. Five Physicists Who Changed the Twentieth Century, reprint, Oxford 2008. The "Martians" in the title refer to a contemporary anecdote, a comment on the Hungarian, impenetrable to outsiders, spoken among themselves by these famous émigrés.

identity – or, as the above examples seem to indicate, a more complex dynamic of these and other political and cultural factors of identity. Further studies would be needed to determine the law's impact on family and gender dynamics within Hungarian Jewish families of various degrees of religious affiliation and/or commitment to modernisation and assimilation – all before the anti-Jewish laws of the late 1930s and the following war and persecution took their deadly toll.

The responses to the numerus clausus law in *Egyenlőség*, the flagship of the Neolog Jewish community in the early 1920s, shed light on the perspective of Hungarian Jews who were the main targets and victims of the law. They suggest a continuing commitment to full membership in the Hungarian nation and a reluctance to cultivate – even if only in cultural terms – a separate Jewish identity. This conclusion raises more questions to explore about the intellectual leaders of the Neolog community: Why their insistence on staying the course, the program of full assimilation? How were they able to continue to believe in and advocate its future, with such strong evidence pointing to its failure? And why the hesitation, the ambiguity, when proposing a Jewish cultural autonomy, even if only to defend such elementary rights as the freedom of education?

As for the arguments articulated in their valiant fight against the numerus clausus, we find them, for the most part, drawn from previous decades. Historians working today may find it challenging to keep hindsight in check. Yet assimilated Hungarian Jews could be forgiven if, following the most successful decades of the liberal assimilationist project, they still hoped that the post-revolutionary antisemitic wave would prove to be temporary and eventually die down. These considerations may help us to understand and interpret the ambiguity between hope and despair, between the maintaining or waning of commitment to the assimilationist project.

Faced with the impossible task of defending their community against unprecedented physical violence and a state-sponsored, legal measure stripping them of full citizenship, the leadership and members of the Neolog community could not change direction, could not stray from the path of loyalty. Whether they genuinely believed their own arguments or not when combatting the official antisemitism of the early interwar years, they had already been invested in the path of assimilation for at least three generations with a deeply felt loyalty and commitment. Despite all the warning signs, such as the murderous physical violence unleashed on them in the early counter-revolutionary period, the noxious antisemitic rhetoric penetrating public discourse throughout the entire interwar era and the continuing discriminatory practice of the numerus clausus stifling the prospects of the next generations, they maintained their commitment to the pre-war, liberal programme of assimilation, even as that very programme was increasingly hollowed out. They entertained no illusions about the interwar regime's deeply rooted antisemitism and yet, on the tenth anniversary of the legislation vowed to raise the next generation "in the service of Hungarian national spirit and loyalty to the Jewish faith" – in that order.[53] This may offer an explanation for the unknown but likely numerous cases of "numerus clausus exiles" returning to Hungary, many of them, in the satirical writer Pál Királyhegyi's famous quip, "just in time to catch the express to Auschwitz". This may also account, at least in part, for the willingness of the survivors to enter into a new contract, with a new ruling political elite, after 1945.

53 Egyenlőség, 18 August 1928, 5.

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Article

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An Open Secret?

The Dissemination and Reception of News about Auschwitz in Hungary in 1944

Abstract

In this paper, I analyse diaries from 1944 to explore the extent to which ordinary Hungarian civilians were informed of the genocide of the Jewish population. The diaries indicate that information was sparse among the Hungarian population, and mainly obtained, directly or indirectly, from BBC radio broadcasts. The reactions of individual Christian and Jewish diarists varied according to the amount of credit they gave to the broadcasts or the rumours circulating within their social circles. However, both Jews and Christians tried not to give credit to the rumours as the idea of gas chambers and mass gassings was simply inconceivable to the majority of the examined diarists. Even Jewish diarists who had received news of the on-going genocide and feared for their lives thought it more likely that they would be executed by volley fire. For them, this method of mass murder posed a more realistic danger.

The issue of how much information contemporary citizens possessed about the Holocaust is still debated today, and it is especially important to examine this question with regard to Hungary, for several reasons. Within the context of Holocaust history, the Hungarian Holocaust was a unique episode inasmuch as the Germans only occupied Hungary in March 1944, which meant that the deportations took place near the end of the war, by which time even ordinary civilians should have been able to access information about the genocide. Moreover, similarly to other Central Eastern European countries, Hungary has yet to confront its historical past, with postwar non-Jewish generations still collectively exempting themselves from responsibility by claiming that they and their ancestors had not known about the death camps and were therefore in no way responsible for the genocide of the Jewish population. In order to debunk this myth of non-Jewish ignorance, it is worth examining how much information ordinary citizens actually possessed of the death camps in the course of 1944.

Due to a lack of available sources, contemporary horizons of knowledge, especially those of ordinary civilians, are rather difficult to trace, because diaries appear to be the only suitable sources on the subject. In terms of genre, diaries are non-retrospective ego-documents that record what information was available to the diarist at the time of a given event, which makes them especially useful for mapping the dissemination of information among contemporary civilians. However, Holocaust publishing continues to focus on victims, which is why I supplemented published or publically available diaries with privately owned and unpublished diary manuscripts written by bystanders and currently unknown in scholarly literature. In accordance with applicable Hungarian law on the protection of personal information, I completely anonymised the authors of the unpublished diary manuscripts.

For my research, I examined eleven manuscripts written by ordinary civilians, meaning that these diarists did not belong to Hungary's political, military, or eco-

nomic elite. On the other hand, if we consider their social situation or level of education, they did not represent the average Hungarian citizen, as the examined diarists were predominantly middle-class and had all completed high school education or even higher education.

For the purposes of this paper, I included every published or unpublished diary where the diarists explicitly mentioned listening to wartime radio broadcasts or hinted at news or rumours of the death camps and Auschwitz. Some of these diaries are published (the diaries of Miksa Fenyő, Fanni Gyarmati, Ármin Bálint, Éva Weinmann, Lilla Ecséri, Mária Sárdi, and István Pius Zimándi), while the rest are unpublished manuscripts, including Éva Kornássy's diary (which belongs to a public collection), and the diaries I collected by publishing calls for historical ego-documents (the diaries of Matild Forgács, Margit Molnár, and Katalin Horváth). It is important to note that the examined diarists belonged to various religious denominations. With the exception of Zimándi, who was Roman Catholic, the rest of the published diarists were all classified as Jewish during the war, while the authors of the unpublished manuscripts were Christians: Kornássy belonged to the Reformed Church and the others were Roman Catholics.

Historical Background

Before I begin my analysis, I shall provide a brief overview of the persecution of Hungarian Jews between the two world wars, with a particular focus on 1944, as the diaries I examined date back to this period.

As early as 1920, the Hungarian government introduced the *numerus clausus,* a quota system which limited the number of Jewish and female students at universities. Then, from the second half of the 1930s, more extensive antisemitic regulations were introduced, including four major anti-Jewish laws which entered into force between 1938 and 1942.[1] These laws and regulations defined Jewishness in various and increasingly restrictive ways, first on the basis of religious denomination, then based on racial or ethnic background, in order to extend these measures to an increasing number of social groups.

From 1920 onwards, the primary aim of the Horthy system was to reclaim the territories that had been annexed from Hungary after the loss of the First World War. To this end, and in the wake of the global economic crisis, the Hungarian political elite began to gravitate towards Nazi Germany in the hopes of furthering its own foreign policy goals. In 1941, Hungary entered the war on the side of the Axis Powers by launching an offensive against the Soviet Union. During the occupation of the Ukrainian parts of the Soviet Union, both the German and the Hungarian troops played an active role in the genocide of the local Jewish population.[2] However, in January 1943, the Hungarian Army suffered a devastating blow from the Red Army at the Don Bend, which forced the Hungarian political elite to reconsider its alliance with Germany. Germany was aware of their dissent and, to prevent Hungary's withdrawal from the war, on 19 March 1944 German troops occupied Hungary. After the German occupation, from April 1944 onwards, wearing the yellow star in public became compulsory for Jewish citizens and the authorities soon established temporary

1 Randolph L. Braham, The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary, Detroit 2000, 208.
2 Tim Cole, Holocaust City. The Making of a Jewish Ghetto, New York 2003; Krisztián Ungváry, A Horthy-rendszer mérlege. Diszkrimináció, szociálpolitika és antiszemitizmus Magyarországon [An Account of the Horthy Regime. Discrimination, Social Policy, and Antisemitism in Hungary], Budapest 2012.

ghettos in every major settlement except Budapest, where instead of establishing a single ghetto, the authorities designated certain apartment buildings as 'yellow star houses' for the relocation of citizens who were classified as Jewish under the anti-Jewish laws.[3]

In May 1944, the mass deportation of the Jewish population from the Hungarian provinces began at an alarming rate. By 6 July 1944, more than 400,000 Jewish citizens had been deported. On this date, due to widespread international protests, Regent Horthy halted the deportations, but by that time, only Budapest residents and the labour service units remained in the country, since virtually all other Jewish citizens had been deported to Auschwitz.

Three months later, on 15 October 1944, Regent Horthy made an ill-prepared attempt to withdraw Hungary from the war and join the Allied Forces, but his attempt was sabotaged by the occupying German forces and the extreme right-wing Arrow Cross Party. Upon seizing political power, the Arrow Cross immediately began the violent persecution of Jewish citizens in the capital, during which they and the German troops raided 'yellow star houses', forced the residents to leave the buildings, then marched them to the bank of the River Danube, where the troops murdered them by volley fire.

The Difficulties of Examining Contemporary Horizons of Knowledge Regarding the Mass Gassing of Jewish Deportees

In Hungarian scholarship, the issue of how much information ordinary Hungarian citizens actually possessed about the death camps during the Second World War has not yet been examined, while in international Holocaust scholarship, the issue has predominantly been examined only with regard to the Third Reich. Current research emphasises that from the end of 1942 onwards, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) gave detailed reports of the mass executions and that by June 1944, radio broadcasts also featured news of the death camps and gas chambers, while Nazi propaganda hinted at the genocide by way of propaganda posters and public speeches.[4] According to Claudia Koonz, in Nazi Germany, knowledge of the unfolding genocide was available to anyone who chose to pursue the subject, which meant that millions of German citizens knew enough to understand that they were better off not knowing.[5] Ian Kershaw also confirmed that the genocide was an open secret in Nazi Germany, as rumours and gossip came from several channels, including BBC broadcasts, soldiers returning from the front, and the stories of various witnesses.[6]

According to Kershaw, from 1941 onwards German citizens had access to information about the deportations and mass executions and the anti-Jewish atrocities committed by German troops, although their knowledge of the gassings and death camps remained rather limited. Peter Fritzsche argues that German citizens were better informed than the citizens of other countries, but even their information was fragmentary, so they had no knowledge of the entire process of genocide nor access

3 Ágnes Nagy, Harc a lakáshivatalban. Politikai átalakulás és mindennapi érdekérvényesítés a fővárosban, 1945–1953 [Struggle at the Housing Office. Political Transformation and Everyday Advocacy in the Capital], Budapest 2013, 81-88.

4 Claudia Koonz, The Nazi Conscience, Cambridge 2005, 267-269.

5 Ibid., 272.

6 Ian Kershaw, Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution, Jerusalem 2008, 201-207, 223-224.

to the details of its various stages.[7] Despite the circulation of available information, German bystanders nevertheless continued to regard the rumours with disinterest and moral apathy, mainly because they considered the deaths of Jewish citizens to be but one aspect of the wartime brutalities, one that could not be held comparable to the tragic deaths of more than 5.3 millions of German soldiers on the war front.[8] According to Fritzsche the failure to recognize these anti-Jewish atrocities as systematic mass murder was also due to the fact that the German government and military carefully filtered all information regarding the gassing of Jewish victims. Although German party leaders often spoke of the murder of Jews in public speeches, they never mentioned the gas chambers, which meant that ordinary German civilians had to rely on rumours and only knew of gassing by vehicles, rather than the use of gas chambers for mass executions.[9] In summary, rumours of mass execution by gassing were too general and vague in the Third Reich to compete with the more dominant images of mass executions on the Eastern front, where civilian victims were forced to dig their own graves before being executed by volley fire.

Similarly to Germany, in Hungary both the political elite and ordinary civilians had access to information about the ongoing genocide. In 1941 and 1942, the Hungarian Jewish press occasionally hinted at the anti-Jewish mass murders being perpetrated by German troops, while news of the atrocities committed by the Hungarian authorities might have reached the population through Polish refugees or reports from the labour service units.[10] Regent Miklós Horthy and the secular political elite had received news of the genocide as early as 1942 and by November 1943, Hungarian Zionist circles had also received news of the existence of Auschwitz.[11] Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly claimed that prior to the German occupation of Hungary, the vast majority of Jewish Hungarians did not believe the rumours of genocide, if these rumours even reached them, or were convinced that if the rumours were true, then only unassimilated Jews would be targeted by the authorities.

In Hungary, László Karsai and Krisztián Ungváry studied the issue of the circulation of Auschwitz-related information within the upper echelons of the political and religious elite. Due to the recent publication of the Auschwitz Records, a document recorded in April 1944 based on the testimonies of escaped prisoners Walter Rosenberg and Alfred Wetzler[12] and brought to Hungary via Zionist leader Rezső Kasztner, György Haraszti also examined the issue with regard to the Hungarian Jewish Council.[13] All three researchers claim that in 1944, even before the deportations began, both the Hungarian Christian and Jewish political and religious elite had learned of the existence of the death camps, but did not inform the general public or the persecuted Jewish minority in order to avoid panic among the Hungarian populace. Consequently, ordinary Hungarian citizens could only obtain information about the goal of the deportations by listening to BBC radio broadcasts.[14]

7 Peter Fritzsche, Life and Death in the Third Reich, Cambridge 2008, 236-240.
8 Jay Lockenour, Review of Deutsche militärische Verluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg by Rüdiger Overmans. German Studies Review, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Oct., 2000), 620-621. here 621.
9 Ibid., 264.
10 Christian Gerlach/Götz Aly, Das letzte Kapitel. Realpolitik, Ideologie und der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944–1945, Stuttgart 2002.
11 Ibid., 15.
12 György Haraszti, Auschwitzi jegyzőkönyv [Auschwitz Records], Budapest 2016, 5-15.
13 László Karsai, Holokauszt [Holocaust], Budapest 2001, 279-280; Ungváry, A Horthy-rendszer mérlege, 527-538.
14 Frank Chalk, The BBC Hungarian Service and Rescue of Jews of Hungary, 1940–1945, in: Jacques Semelin/Claire Andrieu/Sarah Gensburger (ed.), Resisting Genocide. The Multiple Forms of Rescue, Oxford 2014, 313-330.

According to a contemporary survey conducted during the Second World War, some forty per cent of Hungarian citizens with radio receivers listened to foreign broadcasts (whether British, American, or Soviet), which suggests that news of the genocide of Jews could have potentially reached a wide Hungarian audience. At the same time, we must account for the realities in Hungary during the 1940s, when the majority of the country did not have electricity, which meant that most settlements had no means of listening to the radio at all. Therefore, although historical research suggests that listening to the radio had become a widespread social activity in Hungary,[15] we must remember that this pertained predominantly to the urban middle class, which at the time constituted a rather small portion of Hungarian society. Furthermore, only those living in cities and larger settlements (such as industrial, administrative, or cultural centres) could afford to purchase a radio, which meant that rural Hungary had virtually no access to radio broadcasts.

A regulation issued on the day of the German occupation of Hungary, but only entered into effect on 2 April 1944, prohibited listening to foreign radio broadcasts, including news and music programs. The regulation was later amended to include exceptions, such as the radio broadcasts of countries in military alliance with Hungary, but listening to the broadcasts of the Allied forces had effectively become a criminal offence in Hungary, punishable by two to three months in prison or in camp.[16] From mid-April 1944, Jewish Hungarians were also required to surrender their radio receivers to the authorities, which ensured that a large number of citizens were barred from listening to the news. The criminalisation of listening to foreign radio broadcasts may have also kept some diarists from recording such activities in their diaries. However, not all citizens complied with these regulations, and those who did still had limited access to major news through rumours and gossip.

In my analysis of the diaries of Christian and Jewish Hungarians, especially those who had access to foreign radio broadcasts, I shall indicate BBC radio broadcasts under the umbrella term "BBC", without identifying the exact version, as these broadcasts were translated into several languages, including the English-language *Home Service,* the German, Slovak, Czech, and Polish services, and the Hungarian service. Due to the fact that the examined diaries only mention these broadcasts as "the BBC" or "the British radio", without specifying which broadcasts they had listened to, and the fact that some diarists received their information second-hand, I did not attribute any of the information to the broadcasts of the Hungarian service. It is likely, however, that most people listened to the Hungarian-language broadcasts.

The fact that some of the examined diaries contain no information about the genocide does not necessarily mean that the diarists themselves knew nothing of the genocide. However, it is difficult to interpret the apparent silence of these diarists, which prompts the question of what circumstances, expectations, and cultural or moral frameworks could motivate diarists to record such information in the first place. I would argue that several factors were at play, and we can readily identify two

15 Gabriel Milland, The BBC Hungarian Service and the Final Solution in Hungary, in: Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television 18 (1998) 3, 353-373, here 355.

16 Heléna Huhák/András Szécsényi/Erika Szívós (ed.), Kismama sárga csillaggal. Egy fiatalasszony naplója a német megszállástól 1945 júliusáig [A Young Mother with a Yellow Star. The Diary of a Young Wife from the German Occupation until July 1945], Budapest 2015, 65; Zsuzsa Boros, A Magyar Rádió a német megszállás és a nyilas uralom idején [Hungarian Radio during the German Occupation and the Reign of the Arrow Cross], in: Tibor Frank (ed.), Tanulmányok a Magyar Rádió történetéből, 1925–1945 [Studies from the History of Hungarian Radio, 1925–1945], Budapest 1975, 203–238; Zoltán Szász, A Magyar Rádió a második világháborúban [Hungarian Radio during the Second World War], in Frank (ed.), Tanulmányok a Magyar Rádió történetéből, 149-202.

closely intertwined factors. The first source of motivation would be whether such information was relevant or applicable to the diarists themselves. This would explain why diarists who were persecuted under the anti-Jewish laws frequently recorded news and rumours of the genocide, while diarists who did not face persecution might have been less concerned about the genocide and therefore did not record related information in their diaries. Another important factor might have been political affiliation, or the extent to which the diarists identified with the political objectives of the Hungarian leadership. Until the second half of 1944, at which point the war front had reached Hungary, the Christian majority supported the war efforts and antisemitic measures of the Hungarian government, and did not question the justness of the war. In other words, as long as they remained safe, the majority did not question the information propagated by official Hungarian radio stations and accepted these official accounts as authentic and truthful. Once the war front reached Hungary, however, these same radio listeners might have been more motivated to turn to the BBC for information, because even those loyal to the Hungarian regime might have been worried about an Allied victory and interested in hearing from those who might ultimately determine their fate.

In addition to personal relevance and political affiliation, I also observed a clear denominational pattern across the examined diaries, with Jewish diarists often having recorded news or rumours about the genocide in their diaries, while Christian diarists almost never mentioned it, not even when evidence clearly suggests that they had listened to the BBC. As mentioned above, how we should interpret their silence is a difficult matter. On the one hand, it is possible that some of these diarists did not listen to broadcasts that pertained specifically to news of the death camps. However, it is highly improbable that news or rumours of the genocide, especially during the mass deportations of the regional Jewish population, never reached those living in Budapest. The lack of information or discussion in Christian diaries suggests a general antisemitic sentiment, closely intertwined with the idea that the Christian diarists largely regarded the news as fearmongering and therefore dismissed such information as irrelevant. However, it is certain that within persecuted Jewish circles, news spread faster and more intensively than among Christian bystanders.

Finally, before I begin my analysis, it is important to note that in the past seventy years, the majority of Hungarian society and its institutions (museums, archives, and so forth) have shown no interest in preserving documents that prove the majority's knowledge of the death camps, since the existence of such documents would disprove their persistent claims of ignorance, still a widespread defensive strategy and an important aspect of collective self-exemption from responsibility. István Bibó, one of the greatest Hungarian political thinkers of the twentieth century, addressed the issue of contemporary horizons of knowledge and the responsibility of the Christian majority as early as 1948. During the German occupation of Hungary, Bibó was working as a ministerial clerk, a position that allowed him to save a number of persons classified as Jewish by issuing fake protection documents. As a contemporary, he examined the role of the majority Christian population in the genocide of the minority Jewish population, as well as their lack of accountability and self-reflection, and confirmed that the majority population did know of the death camps and therefore knew something of the goal of the mass deportations as well.[17]

17 István Bibó, Democracy, Revolution, Self-Determination. Selected Writings, Boulder 1991, 186-187.

Information about the Genocide as Described in Christian and Jewish Diaries

According to the diaries I examined, the political stance of families and individuals greatly determined their radio listening habits. For instance, since Hungarian regulations prohibited listening to the radio broadcasts of non-allied countries, certain Christian diarists regarded listening to foreign radio broadcasts as an act of disloyalty. One example would be Matild Forgács, whose family was so loyal to Regent Horthy and the contemporary political system on account of the fact that her father was a military officer that her diary never even hinted at listening to any foreign radio broadcasts. At the same time, Forgács still received, through her classmates, news unavailable on Hungarian radio stations, but frequently broadcast by foreign stations in 1942. Consider the following excerpt, which pertains to the failed German offensive at Stalingrad: "The Stalingrad counterattack of the Russians has begun. I heard this at school, from girls whose fathers listen to foreign radio broadcasts at home."[18]

Éva Kornássy, born 1925, a Protestant diarist who was attending university during the war, decided to listen only to Hungarian radio broadcasts and eschewed listening to foreign radio broadcasts. However, in March 1944, she received news from fellow students that, following the German occupation of Hungary, Hungary would be bombed by the Allied forces because it had failed to defy Germany: "[…] they listened to the British radio yesterday and they announced that the Hungarian privilege of not being bombed will be suspended."[19] As these examples show, civilians did not have to tune into foreign radio stations in order to receive news exclusively broadcast through these channels, since such news, if sufficiently interesting or important and relevant to a given audience, would inevitably circulate in the course of everyday communication.

Certain diarists decided to document the radio listening habits of their families, including when they had listened to enemy radio broadcasts, and how they began to question the official Hungarian broadcasts they had once considered truthful and trustworthy. One example is Margit Molnár, born 1927, a Roman Catholic diarist born into an antisemitic lower middle-class family in Budapest, who were extremely loyal to the Hungarian political system and the Hungarian media until the German occupation of Hungary. In 1941, when Hungary launched an offensive against Yugoslavia, despite the fact that just a few months prior both countries had signed a Hungarian-Yugoslavian treaty of eternal friendship, the Molnár family accepted the reasons offered by Hungarian broadcasts as legitimate and just. Molnár herself also agreed with the assertions of the radio broadcasts, which were to the effect that following the separation of Croatia, Yugoslavia as an entity had ceased to exist, which rendered the treaty null and void. Her diary shows that by April 1941, the adolescent diarist had adopted the arguments of Hungarian radio broadcasts as her own and contrasted these views to those of the BBC broadcasts, which she considered the work of the enemy: "Just now, Hungarian radio responded to the vulgar attacks of the British radio. Yugoslavia fell to pieces, so it is no more. And the Croatians have become independent."[20]

18 Matild Forgács, Memoár [Memoirs], 83. Unpublished manuscript from the author's private collection.
19 Budapest Főváros Levéltára [Budapest City Archives, hereafter BFL], XIII. 41. – Sz. Éva Kornássy, Naplók 1942–1947 [Diaries 1942–1947].
20 Margit Molnár, Naplók 1941–1949 [Diaries 1941–1949]. Unpublished manuscript from the author's private collection.

Following the German occupation of Hungary, the nationalist and Roman Catholic Molnár family had become so disillusioned with the current Hungarian political situation that they abandoned their old radio listening habits in favour of foreign radio broadcasts. Although they had once adopted the objectives of the Germans as in line with Hungary's interests, the family rejected the official interpretation of the German occupation as an allied country lending assistance to Hungary and began to regard Germany as an enemy. As their views now clashed with the official views broadcast by Hungarian radio, they turned to the BBC for information, despite the fact that they continued to regard the British as an enemy of Hungary. The BBC broadcasts were such a novelty to Molnár that on 24 March 1944, she wrote an entry about her family listening to the radio in secret:

> "We listened to the British radio at night (it has a very frightening tum-tum sound), they were really threatening and jeered that it took the Germans long enough to get a government together. And they said that Sztójay is a satellite government. They called on us to resist the Nazi Germans, because they want to eat up all our food anyway, and gave the good advice of burning the food. We are no such fools, I hope … Then came a huge beat of a gong, and the good Jewish announcer recited the following: 'Hungary is not privileged anymore when it comes to air strikes. We shall destroy the Hungarian targets as mercilessly as the German ones!!!!!'"[21]

It is interesting to note that Molnár presumed the announcer of the foreign broadcast to be Jewish, a presumption inspired by antisemitic prejudice where Jewishness was associated with betrayal and being in the service of the enemy. At the same time, in spite of these notions, Molnár accepted the announcements of the 'Jewish' announcer as truthful.

For the purposes of this paper, I decided to examine published diaries that had not yet been analysed with regard to contemporary horizons of knowledge of the genocide. In this regard, one of the most important published sources is the diary of Hungarian writer and intellectual Miksa Fenyő (1877–1972), who had converted from Judaism to Roman Catholicism a few years after the conclusion of the First World War.[22] In the 1930s, Fenyő became a parliamentary representative and as such belonged to a group of liberal politicians that was specifically targeted by the Gestapo during the German occupation of Hungary and later by the Arrow Cross upon their rise to power. In the summer and winter of 1944, Fenyő was forced into hiding in the capital and started keeping a diary where he often recorded news of the gas chambers and the mass deportations to Poland. It is worth noting that at the time Fenyő wrote these entries, it was still uncertain whether Regent Horthy would surrender to international pressure and halt the deportations.

In Fenyő's diary, the first mention of gassing appears in an entry from 25 June 1944, when the deportation of the regional Jewish population to Auschwitz was still ongoing in Hungary. Fenyő, who contemplated the fate of the Jewish residents of Budapest and wondered why Budapest had not yet erected ghettos the way major provincial regional settlements had, composed the following entry:

> "They could gun down [the Jews], or cram them into train wagons, where half of them would die on the road, and the other half could be claimed by the Nazis. But no, they have to suffer the various stages of destruction right

21 Ibid., unpaginated.

22 Maya J. Lo Bello, The Holocaust Journal of Miksa Fenyő, in: Hungarian Cultural Studies. E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association 9 (2016), http://ahea.pitt.edu; DOI: 10.5195/ahea.2016.230 (12 December 2018).

> here in Budapest, before murderous hands will seize them at last. In the realisation of this ritual, beyond beauty, goodness, and justice, the eager line of thought that the British might not launch an air strike on Budapest the size of the Hamburg or Berlin air raids while the city had a Jewish population might have played a role as well. In other words, they had to establish the conditions for gradual extinction, to destroy them through starvation, disease, all kinds of physical and mental torture, and providing groups of about ten thousand people to the Germans for gassing tests, and whoever remained despite all this would be executed in the event of a German victory. But also in the case of a Russian and British victory, since it is advisable to dispose of the witnesses."[23]

On 29 June 1944, a few days after the above entry, which only mentioned gas as a means of execution without specifying the exact method, the term 'gas chamber' started appearing in Fenyő's diary, which is no coincidence, as on 26 June 1944, the evening news of the BBC *Home Service* announced "mass gassing in the lethal chambers of the notorious German camp in Polish Galicia".[24]

As Gabriel Milland's article on Hungarian BBC broadcasts contains a transcript of the relevant BBC News announcement, I was able to compare it with Fenyő's diary entry from 6 July 1944. Fenyő's entry from that day read as follows:

> "I heard in the British radio: Eden, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that according to reliable reports from Poland, entire wagons of Hungarian Jews are being transported there to be killed in gas chambers by the Germans. The British government observes the actions of the Hungarian government with horror and disdain and will do everything in its power to convince Hungary to cease these abominable measures."[25]

In the same entry, the gas chambers are mentioned once more: "Eighty of them, spending days or weeks in a closed wagon, without food or water, and for those who survive, the gas chamber."[26]

According to Milland, the corresponding BBC News announcement read as follows:

> "The Germans transport the Jews from Hungary to Poland by rail. According to Polish authoritative information, between 15th and 22nd May six trains left Hungary a day, packed with Jews. According to Polish estimates more than a hundred thousand of them have already been murdered. The present government of Hungary is assisting in this horrible job. The resolute strategy of the United Nations is to bring into the hands of justice everyone who is guilty of participation in this terrible act. Until then I turn with confidence to my fellow railway workers in Hungary, and ask them to obstruct, delay and hinder the railway transportation of these poor victims to the utmost of their power and to help them flee from the scene of their agony. I ask for this in the name of workers' solidarity, of Hungary's future and its national honour, which will otherwise have been stained forever in the final phase of a lost war."[27]

23 Miksa Fenyő, Az elsodort ország. Naplójegyzetek 1944–1945-ből [The Foundering Country. Diary Entries from 1944–1945], Budapest 2014, 19.
24 Milland, The BBC Hungarian Service, 361.
25 Fenyő, Az elsodort ország, 42.
26 Ibid., 44.
27 Milland, The BBC Hungarian Service, 363.

When we compare the BBC broadcast quoted above with Fenyő's diary entries, it becomes clear that the broadcast did not mention the gas chambers, which means Fenyő had heard of them before, and when listening to the broadcast, he instinctively linked the murder of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews to previous mentions of gas chambers. It is also interesting to note that although the BBC often urged Hungarian workers in charge of the logistics of the mass deportations to commit sabotage, Fenyő failed to mention this fact in his diary.

Following the entries discussed above, on 8 July 1944, Fenyő wrote another diary entry based on BBC broadcasts and pertaining to the fate of the deportees:

> "According to their [the Polish government-in-exile in London – G.K.] reliable information, to date Hitler's Hungarian subjects have provided the Führer with some four hundred thousand Hungarian Jews, a small number of whom – those in good condition – were coerced into forced labour, while the majority were sent directly to the gas chambers, where six thousand Jews were gassed daily."[28]

Previously, Fenyő only specified the destination country of the deportations, but on 30 July 1944, thanks to the BBC broadcasts, he also recorded the actual site of the mass murders:

> "Fanciful dreams, in which, even if you are being persecuted, it is through regions of old, beautiful memories, to Paris, Arles, Vicenza, and never to Osvice (or what is it called?), where the Germans erected gas chambers and fitted them with every modern convenience known to man."[29]

According to Milland, the BBC broadcasts always specified the location of the death camps and used the Polish name (Oświęcim) instead of its more widely known German counterpart (Auschwitz), which clearly shows that Fenyő got his information from the BBC broadcasts, even if he did not remember the exact name at the time of writing his diary.

The fact that citizens classified as Jewish by the anti-Jewish laws had heard of the death camps did not necessarily mean that they believed the news or recognised it as an actual threat to their lives, as exemplified by the diary of Fanni Gyarmati (1912–2014), the wife of one of the greatest Hungarian poets of the twentieth century, Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944).[30] Gyarmati and Radnóti both hailed from non-religious Jewish families and both were high school teachers, but due to the anti-Jewish laws, neither was allowed to work for state institutions. They married in 1935, and in 1943 both converted to Roman Catholicism and became devout Christians as a symbolic rejection of their Jewishness. The time of their conversion was deliberately chosen, as they wanted to impress upon Hungarian society that they converted on the basis of religious conviction rather than the desire to exempt themselves from the anti-Jewish laws, which now classified citizens as Jewish based on ethnic background rather than religious denomination. Radnóti was drafted into forced labour service several times, which for Jewish men meant unarmed forced labour on the front lines or, in certain cases, in the hinterlands. At the end of May 1944, he was drafted into labour service for the last time and in November 1944 was executed by a soldier.

The diaries of Miklós Radnóti, written between 1934 and 1943, have been published in several editions in Hungary,[31] while the more extensive diaries of Fanni Gyarmati, written between 1935 and 1946, were only published after her death in

28 Fenyő, Az elsodort ország, 61.
29 Ibid., 126.
30 Fanni Gyarmati, Napló 1935–1946 [Diary 1935–1946], Budapest 2014.
31 Miklós Radnóti, Napló [Diary], Budapest 1989.

2014. The couple belonged to contemporary intellectual circles in Budapest and, based on Gyarmati's diary, rumours and news spread relatively fast in these circles, so their primary channel of information was not the contemporary political papers or the radio, but acquaintances and friends.

Gyarmati's diary offers an extensive account of how news of the deportations and genocide spread in Budapest, both in the circles of the persecuted Jewish minority and among the bystander Christian majority. For instance, just two days after the German occupation of Hungary, Gyarmati recorded in her diary that during their visit to a friend, said friend made a joke about crematoriums. The person in question was a Hungarian and German language teacher called Albert Gerhauser, an important and frequent member of Gyarmati and Radnóti's intellectual circle and the only one who was exempt from the anti-Jewish laws. Like most contemporaries, Gerhauser probably received his information from the BBC[32] and, based on Gyarmati's entries, he must have been well-acquainted with the mechanics of genocide, because he also claimed that the deportation of Hungarian Jewish citizens would go according to the 'fool proof' scripts of former deportations elsewhere, and knew that the deportations were being orchestrated by one Adolf Eichmann, even if Gerhauser mistakenly presumed that Eichmann was the town major of Budapest (a misconception shared by other contemporaries as well).[33] The fact that Gyarmati expressed surprise at Gerhauser's account shows that this information was new to her, which means that Gyarmati and Radnóti had received the news from Gerhauser himself. This in turn suggests that news of the genocide spread rather fast in intellectual circles, so we must conclude that the death camps and Auschwitz were not unheard of in Budapest.

Gyarmati's diary clearly shows that both bystanders and the persecuted Jewish minority refused to take the news and rumours seriously. For instance, on 21 March 1944, Fanni Gyarmati and her husband discussed different strategies of escaping from Hungary after the German occupation, during which they mentioned poet Ágnes Erdélyi,[34] who at the time lived in Nagyvárad (today's Oradea in Romania) and who was ultimately deported and killed in Auschwitz. Erdélyi was Radnóti's half-sister, and the discussion mentioned in Gyarmati's diary revolved around potential ways of saving her from deportation.

> "Aczél is coming around at noon with his fantastic (Swiss?) passport plan. And then Pista Vas and Gerhauser. That monster was at it again with his impossible fancies, regarding Ági [Erdélyi] too, and then told us that our town major was the Eastern European expert in "genocide" and how three hundred thousand Jews, roughly the number living in Hungary, were nothing for the Polish crematoriums, and we had these and these options for escape. [Gerhauser] is a detestable guy, I was completely out of it after that visit, though I did not show it, I just froze."[35]

In March 1944, just two days after the German occupation of Hungary, the Radnótis had theoretically received information regarding the impending genocide, which became a constant source of fear in their lives. Consider Gyarmati's entries between April and July 1944, which pertain to the ghettos, the end of the deportations, and the potential fate of the Jewish population after the German occupation. When the ghettos were first established, Gyarmati primarily feared that they would

32 Anna Valachi, József Jolán, az édes mostoha [Jolán József, the Sweet Stepmother], Budapest 2005, 205.
33 Gyarmati, Napló, 285.
34 Ibid., 538.
35 Ibid., 285-286.

have to leave their home: "Now they write about how Jews must be roped into production. Probably into the most dangerous war factories, for twelve-hour workdays. What do I care, I just want this situation to stabilise, and not be followed by extermination. And let us sleep at home."[36] As we can see, the possibility of extermination as a source of fear was already present in the diary at this time. Towards the end of April, Gyarmati recorded the following entry:

> "The plan right now is to intern Jews into endangered areas, into barrack camps. Lord have mercy, I would rather they just shot us dead all at once, instead of these day-to-day surprises and roaming the streets like a hunted animal, looking left and right, pretending to be the most ordinary pedestrian in the world."[37]

In mid-May 1944, while Jewish citizens held in the provincial ghettos were being deported en masse, Gyarmati recorded her speculations of what fate might await Budapest residents:

> "[The deportation] is already in progress in the countryside. The Nyírség, Kassa [Košice], and Kanizsa camps have been deported of the country. We had completely wilted by the time Feri [one of their friends – G.K.] left. Not that we were expecting anything good, but sometimes I kind of forget that there is a volcano ready to erupt beneath our feet, that there are actual horrors awaiting us. If I could be certain that a well-aimed gunshot to the nape of the neck was waiting for me, I would not mind, but the things that might come before it. The internment, the misery over the suffering of others, and then the end, when no one can find you, and the calcareous moving lime pits, moving graves we have to dig ourselves, into which we will be thrown indiscriminately."[38]

We may conclude from this excerpt that entries where Gyarmati envisioned "a well-aimed shot to the nape of the neck" as a desirable and efficient form of mass murder were motivated by her fear of the atrocities committed on the Eastern front by Hungarian and German troops. Gyarmati, whose husband was drafted into labour service several times, must have received news of these atrocities from soldiers and labour service workers, who were participants and bystanders of these events. News of these murders haunted Gyarmati and often emerged in her diary entries from this period, but she never mentioned the gas chambers, which suggests that she was unable to believe that they existed. Compared to her husband's accounts of the mass execution of forced labour service units, the gas chambers simply did not seem like a real source of danger. For instance, in her entries from the end of April, when the deportation of the regional Jewish population was already in motion, Gyarmati wondered where they were being transported, when two weeks earlier, she had made a diary entry in which she explicitly designated Poland as their destination: "Now they are taking them out of the country in locked wagons, to God knows where."[39] It is also important to note that by May, Gyarmati had precise information of the horrible reality of the 'transportation' of deportees.

> "They keep taking people away. The entirety of Szabolcs county and the Jewry of Szatmár county as well, they say some 1500 people fit on one train, possibly more. I don't know if this is accurate or not, they just said that people were crammed into the trains like we often are when taking the worst

36 Ibid., 293.
37 Ibid., 299.
38 Ibid., 308.
39 Ibid., 300.

> trams in Pest, but there we have open windows, and hopes of getting off at any moment. Meanwhile, they were locked down, they had to do everything in there, and did not get to eat, so very few survived, definitely not the elderly."[40]

While diarists like Gyarmati acquired their information on the genocide through acquaintances, other diarists kept track of the events via Hungarian media, including Ármin Bálint (1875–1945), an non-religious Jewish banker. Bálint started keeping a diary after his retirement and dedicated his entries to his son, writer and journalist György Bálint (1906–1943), who had been conscripted into labour service on the war front. The first few volumes of Bálint's diary were lost, so I only had access to entries from 1944, according to which in 1943, Bálint received news that his son had died on the Eastern front during labour service. Bálint refused to believe the news and, hoping that his son might still be alive, he started keeping records to share them with his son on his return. Bálint was almost seventy years old at the time and through legal channels, including approved Hungarian media and Hungarian radio broadcasts, he came to the conclusion that the Jewish population was being threatened with extermination, though he did not know any particulars about the methods of genocide.

Following the German occupation of Hungary, Bálint recorded the statements of various Hungarian politicians who had either mentioned the extermination or hinted at it at any way, sometimes specifically by denying it. We must note that inverse interpretations were widespread in Hungary at the time, where the audience automatically understood a piece of information as meaning its polar opposite, so whatever was being denied was accepted as the truth, and whatever was stated with certainty was questioned. A good example would be Bálint's entry from May 1944, where he simply put a question mark after a statement to signal that he did not believe its veracity: "Minister of Industry Lajos Szász: 'Nobody is aiming to exterminate, exile, or exploit the Jews.'?"[41] A few weeks earlier, Bálint also noted a statement by State Secretary László Endre, who cooperated closely with Adolf Eichmann and played a key role in the deportation of the Jewish population: "[…] the goal is not the extermination of Jews, but to turn rich Jews into beggars and exile the beggars."[42] At the end of June, Bálint recorded yet another statement by László Endre, in which the State Secretary talked of the "ultimate danger" and said that "it is first and foremost the Jews who must resolve the issue of the Jews, or due to reasons beyond our power, the ultimate danger threatening the Jewish population will irrevocably and relentlessly turn into reality."[43] Within another week, Bálint clearly came to expect violence and death when he contemplated the fate of the Jewish residents of Budapest: "What else is left? The last two stages: concentration camp, then deportation and the end."[44]

With regard to contemporary horizons of knowledge, it is also important to examine the entries of adolescent diarists, who recorded news they had heard from their parents and acquaintances.

One of the adolescent diaries I examined belonged to sixteen-year-old Lilla Nagyecséri Ecséry (1928–1986), who was born into an non-religious Jewish family of

40 Ibid., 311.
41 Ármin Bálint, Feljegyzések Gyuri fiam részére. Napló 1944-ből [Notes for My Son Gyuri. Diary from 1944], Budapest 2014, 28.
42 Ibid., 26.
43 Ibid., 40.
44 Ibid., 43.

landholders and bankers and grew up in Budapest. She kept a diary in 1944 and 1945, in which she recorded the following news:

> "We have never been closer to death than right now. No! I cannot die right now, when I have not even lived yet. But everyone is telling us that unless a miracle happens, the sealed cars will soon take us to our DOOM. They already have in the countryside. One more month and it will be our [Budapest's – G.K.] turn."[45]

Another adolescent diarist, Éva Weinmann (1928–1946), who hailed from an non-religious petty bourgeois family, also mentioned the deportees in her diary, but in her case, it was an assumption rather than certain knowledge that they were being killed: "Now, only we are left in the whole of Hungary. Where the others are, only the good Lord knows. All my friends have been taken away […] God, please save them from the worst, from death! My heart aches so much for them."[46]

According to the adolescent diary of Mária Sárdi (1929–), an non-religious Jewish girl from a petty bourgeois family, her relatives were informed of the genocide of the Jewish population relatively early by listening to radio broadcasts from London. In February 1944, one month before the German occupation, fourteen-year-old Sárdi noted that the family discussed the subject of extermination: "The Germans have already done a lot of nasty things, they say that the London radio always announces how they took the Jews to the camps and how there are no more Jews in Poland by now, because they gas them and burn them."[47]

To this day, diaries that were written by bystanders – Christians, for example – remain scarce, and only a few pertain to the subject of the present analysis. Therefore, to counterbalance the lack of available sources, I included unpublished diary manuscripts from bystanders such as Katalin Horváth, born 1933, a Roman Catholic girl who was only eleven years old when she started keeping a diary in 1944. In an entry presumably dating from 1 November during the reign of terror of the Arrow Cross Party:

> "The Germans are committing horrible and hair-raising acts against the Jews. Not only do they have to wear a yellow star on their left side, but they are also taken to the ghetto. They write rude and tasteless jokes about them. And they cannot go out, only at such and such times. Jews are not allowed to correspond with anyone or go to Christian houses. Furthermore: they take away their cars and clothes and their nice apartments, they put them on trucks and take them to the ghetto or to Siberia. And there are those, most of them, who are killed (by the German soldiers of course) and turned into soap after they are killed. And out of fear, they either imprison or kill Christians who are anti-German."[48]

The above excerpt is especially interesting because in spite of the fact that the most prevalent dichotomy during the Second World War in Hungary was to talk of 'Jews' versus 'Hungarians', Horváth perceived the difference as a matter of religious denomination, rather than race, and also mixed personal experiences, rumours, as well as old and more recent events in her diary entry.

In her entry, Horváth mentioned Siberia as a possible site of deportation, which raises several questions, because unlike other Jewish diarists, Horváth did not even

45 Lilla Ecséri, Napló, 1944 [Diary, 1944], Budapest 1995, 18.
46 Éva Weinmann, Weinmann Éva naplója (1941. okt. 10.–1945. január 19.) [The Diary of Éva Weinmann, 10 October 1941–19 January 1945], Budapest 2004, 12.
47 Mária Sárdi, Pokoli karácsony [A Hellish Christmas], Budapest 1994, 22.
48 Katalin Horváth, Napló. 1941. december 25.–1946. április 3. [Diary, 25 December 1941–3 April 1946]. Unpublished manuscript from the author's private collection.

mention Poland. To make better sense of her assumptions, it is important to note that in Hungarian social consciousness, Poland was mostly associated with positive imagery, as political propaganda continued to emphasise, even during the interwar period, the idea of Hungarian-Polish friendship and a shared destiny of the two nations. By contrast, the general perception of Russia had been negative ever since 1849 due to Russia's role in the repression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848/1849. Russia's reputation only deteriorated during the First World War, when Hungarian prisoners of war were deported en masse to Siberia. The idea of Soviet internment continued to haunt Hungarian social consciousness during the Second World War as well, and was one of the key points of anti-Soviet propaganda at the time, which might explain why Horváth designated Siberia as a potential site in her diary.

Although Horváth's entry was written in the autumn of 1944, months after the deportations to Auschwitz, her diary clearly shows that even adolescents had access to information on certain specifics of the genocide, including the idea that the Germans turned the remains of their Jewish victims into soap. With regard to the subject of analysis here, it is also interesting to note that according to Horváth, the majority of deportees were killed by the Germans, a claim that has since been disproved by historical research. This idea, as well as the fact that Horváth designated Siberia as a place of genocide also suggests that she was not aware of the mass executions that were being committed by the Arrow Cross in the streets of Budapest.

We know of very few published diaries written by Christians who explicitly wrote of the deportations of Jews or the fate of the deportees, but their collective ignorance and neglect is itself representative of the general apathy that ultimately facilitated the persecution of the Jewish population. With regard to the horizons of knowledge of contemporary Christian diarists, one source worth examining in detail is the diary of Pius Zimándi (1909–1973), a Cistercian monk who lived in a monastery in Gödöllő, a town near Budapest, and taught Hungarian literature at a local high school. Zimándi began keeping a diary in 1944 at the age of 35, and explicitly documented how Christian circles had received news of the mass executions, which proves that various rumours were in circulation regarding the fate of the deportees. Nevertheless, these rumours mutually weakened their own credibility, which might have played an important role in people refusing to believe them, especially if they themselves were in no danger of deportation. Moreover, in some cases the rumours simply seemed absurd, such as the idea that the deportees were being turned into soap or fertiliser:

> "Nobody knows anything certain of the fate of Jews transported abroad. There are various horrific rumours in circulation: the thin ones are turned into fertiliser and the fat ones into soap. Another rumour: in Poland, they corral them into chambers and kill them with toxic gas, etc. Official circles do not inform the nation of the actual state of affairs and the newspapers do not mention any of these facts at all."[49]

Unfortunately, we do not know how and from where Zimándi had received his information of the genocide, as he never stated his sources nor mentioned listening to the BBC broadcasts. However, his diary clearly shows that ordinary civilians also knew of the goal of the deportations, even if they refused to believe the rumours. If ordinary high school teachers like Zimándi (or Gerhauser, discussed earlier) had access to information about the genocide of the Jewish population, then the genocide

49 István Pius Zimándi, Egy év története naplójegyzetekben: 1944. március 19.–1945. március 17. [The History of One Year in Diary Entries. 19 March 1944–17 March 1945], Budapest 2015, 110.

could not be considered a secret at all. Zimándi repeatedly returned to the rumours of soap and fertiliser manufacturing, which was often discussed at the time, whether seriously or as a joke, to the effect that the victors of the war would apparently turn the losers into soap. In fact, these rumours were more widespread in Hungary than the method of gassing, to the extent that some Hungarians even believed that in the event of losing the war, the Soviets would also turn them into soap. For instance, as the Soviets approached the war front, Zimándi noted the following exchange during a fleeting conversation with one of his friends: "And then off he went, rushing to Pest. As we parted, he joked: 'See you at the Kiev soap factory!' 'I hope I'll be turned into toilet-soap', said I. Pali Sz. looked at me. 'I'd say fertiliser, you're mostly bone!'"[50]

In conclusion, my analysis of the diaries of Hungarian Christian and Jewish citizens shows that in 1944, rumours of the death camps, while not common knowledge, were in fact circulating among the residents of Budapest. Some had access to concrete information by listening to the BBC broadcasts, but rumours also spread to those who did not listen to these broadcasts, which clearly refutes the still widespread belief that nobody in Hungary knew of Holocaust. News and rumours of the death camps were even available to adolescents of the era, who might not have known the specifics, but heard from relatives and acquaintances that the deportees were being killed. The majority of examined diaries were consistent, however, in giving little credit to these rumours, and not considering the death camps to be a real, actual source of danger, with the exception of Miksa Fenyő, who never questioned the veracity of the news and believed the information broadcast by the BBC. In rejecting rumours of the genocide, Christians were often motivated by a general and pervasive antisemitism, while many Jewish citizens hoped they might be spared individually. Whenever either group heard rumours of the death camps, the rumours seemed so absurd and inconceivable that they were unable to take them seriously, and instead envisioned the genocide as mass executions by volley fire.

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50 Ibid., 240.

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Article

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"By the Country and within the Country"

The Union of Native Jews and its Struggle for Emancipation in Romania before the First World War

Abstract

Romania was the last European country to offer equal rights to its Jews, as it granted them citizenship only after the First World War. In 1909/1910, a handful of Romanian Jewish leaders founded the Union of Native Jews (Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni), which aimed to unify all Romanian Jews in their fight against antisemitism and for emancipation. The Union understood itself as a true political organisation, which sought to achieve its political goals "by the country and within the country". Obviously, this statement came as a reaction to the main nationalist narrative, which suspected Romanian Jews of either instigating or at least providing the pretext for the Great Powers to interfere in Romania's domestic affairs. However, it also reflected the Union's conviction that fighting for equal rights was above all in the interest of Romanian Jews and had to be achieved first and foremost out of their own volition and through their own efforts. This article focusses on the Union's history prior to the First World War and analyses the Union's policies towards the Jewish population, the Romanian state, and towards Western Jewish organisations.

Romania was the last European country to offer equal rights to its Jews, as it granted them citizenship only after the First World War in 1918/1919. However, the so-called 'Jewish question' had preoccupied Jewish leaders as well as ruling elites both in Romania and Western Europe ever since 1866, when Romania's first constitution stated that only Christians could become Romanian citizens. The question of Jewish emancipation was fiercely disputed and regularly renegotiated in the aftermath of wars, such as the Russo-Turkish War in 1877, better known as the War of Independence in Romania, the Second Balkan War in 1913 and, finally, the First World War. In 1878, the debate over emancipation was not voluntarily conducted by the Romanian government, but demanded by the Great Powers, who made the granting of civil rights to the Jewish population a condition for the recognition of Romania's independence. After heated debates, the Romanian parliament changed the article of the constitution which made citizenship conditional on Christianity, but stated that the naturalisation of foreigners, irrespective of their religion, would be carried out individually. This procedure was highly restrictive. Only those who were considered valuable to the country were entitled to apply for citizenship and applications had to be submitted to the government and voted upon individually by both chambers of parliament with a two-thirds majority.[1] Under these circumstances, only 371 Jews successfully underwent the naturalisation process and

1 Constantin Iordachi, Citizenship and National Identity in Romania. A Historical Overview, in: Regio. Minorities, Politics, Society 13 (2002), 12.

achieved Romanian citizenship by 1912.[2] Thus, according to the 1912 census, 4,668 out of 241,088 Jews living in Romania held Romanian citizenship, the bulk having been naturalised collectively after the War of Independence either as participants of the war or as inhabitants of the newly annexed Dobrudja region.[3] In addition, 7,987 Jews with foreign citizenship resided in Romania at the beginning of the twentieth century.[4] One's legal status was decisive, as it determined if one could own land, choose one's place of residence, or practice certain professions. The possibilities of those without citizenship were restrained by more than 200 laws issued by the Romanian government through the years, which privileged Romanian citizens over 'foreigners'.[5] Although almost all Jews were excluded from public service, public schools, and certain occupations and professions, they still had to pay taxes and were liable for military service.[6] This discriminatory legislation had its origins in widespread antisemitic beliefs. It was in the context of the debates surrounding Jewish emancipation in 1878 that Romanian politicians and intellectuals increasingly portrayed Jews as a threat to the country's national independence and identity. Espoused by some of the most prestigious political and cultural personalities in the country, antisemitism became an integral part of public discourse in Romania towards the end of the nineteenth century.[7] Because of this unfortunate combination of legal discrimination and widespread antisemitic discourse, "prewar Romania had a well-deserved reputation for being, along with Russia, the most anti-Semitic country in Europe", as Ezra Mendelsohn pointed out.[8]

The precarious situation of Romanian Jewry mobilised various Western Jewish organisations, which repeatedly protested against these discriminatory practices and tried to prevail on their governments to intervene on behalf of Romanian Jewish rights.[9] Yet it was not only Western Jewish organisations who campaigned for a political change. In 1909/1910, a handful of Romanian Jewish leaders founded the Union of Native Jews (Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni). The Union was initially established as a pressure group to protect the interests of Romanian Jews, thus following the example set by Western Jewish organisations such as the Centralverein deutscher

2 For an annual statistic of individually naturalised Jews, see: Carol Iancu, Lupta internațională pentru emanciparea evreilor din România, Documente și mărturii [The International Struggle for the Emancipation of the Jews in Romania], Vol. I: 1913–1919, translated by Ţicu Goldstein, Bucharest 2004, doc. 17, 86-87.

3 Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România. Centrul pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din România [Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania. The Centre for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania] (ed.), Evreii din România în Războiul de Reîntregire a Ţării, 1916–1919 [The Jews in Romania during the War That United Romania, 1916–1919], compiled by Lya Benjamin/Dumitru Hîncu, Bucharest 1996, 19; Mariana Hausleitner, Intervention und Gleichstellung. Rumäniens Juden und die Großmächte, in: Yearbook of the Simon Dubnow Institute 1 (2002), 507.

4 Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România, Evreii din România, 19.

5 Carol Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor din România (1913–1919). De la inegalitatea civică la drepturile de minoritate. Originalitatea unei lupte începând cu războaiele balcanice și până la Conferința de Pace de la Paris [The Emancipation of the Jews in Romania (1913–1919). From Civic Inequality to Minority Rights. The Originality of a Struggle from the Balkan Wars to the Paris Peace Conference], Bucharest 1998, 37.

6 On the conscription of Jews in Romania, see: Dietmar Müller, Erwünschte Soldaten – unerwünschte Staatsbürger. Juden und das rumänische Militär (1866–1942), in: Yearbook of the Simon Dubnow Institute 12 (2013), 195-219.

7 On antisemitic discourse among Romanian political and cultural elites, see: Leon Volovici, Ideologia naționalistă și 'problema evreiască'. Eseu despre formele antisemitismului intelectual în România anilor '30 [Nationalist Ideology and the 'Jewish Problem'. An Essay on the Forms of Intellectual Antisemitism in Romania in the 1930s], Bucharest 1995 (originally published in English under the title: Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism. The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s, Oxford/New York 1991); Dietmar Müller, Staatsbürger auf Widerruf. Juden und Muslime als Alteritätspartner im rumänischen und serbischen Nationscode. Ethnonationale Staatsbürgerschaftskonzepte 1878–1941, Wiesbaden 2005; William O. Oldson, A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth Century Romania, Philadelphia 1991.

8 Ezra Mendelsohn, The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars, Bloomington 1983, 174.

9 Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 42-45.

Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens in Germany.[10] However, the Union soon diverged from its Western European counterparts. When it became known in 1912 that the Liberal Party planned to revise the constitution once in government, fuelling expectations that a change of the article concerning naturalisation might also come under deliberation, Jewish leaders made every effort to transform the Union from an elite pressure group to a mass organisation uniting all Romanian Jews in their fight for equal rights. Despite the Union's liberal bourgeois concept of emancipation, various Jewish factions gathered under its flag. Liberals, socialists, and Zionists alike agreed to suspend their ideological differences for the time being and to fight in unity for civil and political rights. As a consequence, the Union claimed to have attracted up to 12,000 members within a few years,[11] making it not only the most influential Romanian Jewish organisation before the First World War, but also one of the biggest political movements in the country at that time.

However, very little is known about the Union's role in the struggle for equal rights. When dealing with the emancipation of Romanian Jews, most scholars have focussed either on Romanian antisemitic discourse and its repercussions on the Romanian concept of citizenship[12] or on the role played by Western Jewish organisations and the Great Powers in this process.[13] Only a handful have included the perspective of Romanian Jewry and even fewer have specifically examined the role of

10 The fact that the Union established legal aid offices explicitly following the example of Jewish organisations in Germany and Austria indicates that Romanian Jews looked upon Western Jewish organisations as models for their own political aspirations. For the Union's references to Germany and Austria, see: Reprezentanța Evreilor Pământeni [The Representation of Native Jews], Raportul Comitetului Central pe 1910 [Annual Report of the Central Committee for 1910], Bucharest 1910, 8. For a history of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, see: Avraham Barkai, "Wehr Dich!" Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.) 1893–1938, Munich 2002.

11 Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni [Union of Native Jews], Opt ani de activitate [Eight Years of Activity], Bucharest 1918.

12 Volovici, Ideologia naționalistă; Andrei Oișteanu, Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central European [The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture. A Study of Imagology in the Central-East European Context], Bucharest ²2004; Oldson, A Providential Anti-Semitism; Müller, Staatsbürger auf Widerruf; Silvia Marton, La construction politique de la nation. La nation dans les débats du Parlement de la Roumanie (1866–1871) [The Political Construction of the Nation. The Nation in Romanian Parliamentary Debates (1866–1871)], Iași 2009; Constantin Iordachi, The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship. The Emancipation of 'Non-Citizens' in Romania, 1866–1918, in: European Review of History – Revue Européenne d'Histoire 8 (2001) 2, 157-186; Raul Cârstocea, Uneasy Twins? The Entangled Histories of Jewish Emancipation and Anti-Semitism in Romania and Hungary, 1866–1913, in: Slovo 21 (2009) 2, 64-85.

13 Carol Iancu, The Struggle for the Emancipation of Romanian Jewry and Its International Ramifications, in: Carol Iancu/Liviu Rotman (ed.), The History of the Jews in Romania, Vol. II: The Nineteenth Century, Tel Aviv 2005, 97-127; Carol Iancu, Adolphe-Isaac Crémieux, Gerson von Bleichroeder and the Jewish Politics of 'Shtadlanut' in the 19th Century, in: Studia Judaica 15 (2007), 67-81; Hausleitner, Intervention und Gleichstellung; David Jünger, Am Scheitelpunkt der Emanzipation. Die Juden Europas und der Berliner Kongress 1878, in: Arndt Engelhardt et al. (ed.), Ein Panorama der Moderne. Jüdische Geschichte in Schlüsselbegriffen, Göttingen 2016, 17-38; Nathan Michael Gelber, Jüdische Probleme beim Berliner Kongress 1878, in: Robert Weltsch (ed.), Deutsches Judentum, Aufstieg und Krise. Gestalten, Ideen, Werke. Vierzehn Monographien, Stuttgart 1963, 216-252; Nathan Michael Gelber, The Problem of the Rumanian Jews at the Bucharest Peace Conference. 1918, in: Jewish Social Studies 12 (1950) 3, 223-246; Theodor Armon, Luigi Luzzati's Intervention in Favor of the Jews of Romania in 1914, in: Shvut. Jewish Problems in the USSR and Eastern Europe 16 (1993), 247-256; Mark Levene, War, Jews, and the New Europe: the Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf. 1914–1919, Oxford 2009; Björn Siegel, The Vienna Jewish Alliance (Israelitische Allianz zu Wien) and Its Attempt to Modernise Central Europe, in: Tullia Cattalan/Marco Dogo (ed.), The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe from the 19th Century to the Great Depression. Combining Viewpoints on a Controversial Story, Newcastle upon Tyne 2016, 205-226; Egmont Zechlin, Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg, Göttingen 1969, 238-250.

the Union of Native Jews.[14] Therefore, this article attempts to look at the history of emancipation from a Romanian Jewish perspective.

The Union sought to achieve its political goals "in the sense of justice and higher interests of the nation by the country and within the country", as the Union stated in an address to the Romanian prime minister in 1911.[15] Obviously, this statement came as a reaction to the main nationalist narrative, which suspected Romanian Jews of either instigating or at least providing the pretext for the Great Powers to interfere in Romania's domestic affairs. However, it also reflected the Union's conviction that fighting for equal rights was above all in the interest of Romanian Jewry and had to be achieved first and foremost out of its own volition and by its own efforts. Therefore, the Union acted not only against the prejudices of the Romanian political elite, but also against those of Western Jewish organisations, which are well illustrated by an article published in a German Jewish journal in 1918, which stated that "we have always been under the impression that Romanian Jews are a dull, passive mass, a horde of oppressed slaves, who never took any action to free themselves, but instead slothfully waited for their Western European brothers, who were supposed to think, speak, and act for them".[16] Therefore, the establishment of a Romanian Jewish political organisation was perceived by its founding fathers as an act of empowerment, enabling Romanian Jews to represent their interests in a self-determined way, acting on their own authority. However, despite the fact that the overall aim of the Union was to level out differences, these differences – between the various Jewish factions in Romania, between ardent Romanian nationalists and activists of the Union and between Romanian and Western Jews – became all the more visible during the Union's campaigns prior to the First World War, as this article will argue.

A Time of New Departure

The Union of Native Jews was founded on 27 December 1909/8 January 1910[17] by Adolphe Stern, who at that time was also president of the B'nai B'rith lodges of Romania. Stern, a Bucharest lawyer and activist in Jewish affairs, started his career in 1870 as secretary to Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, the first consul of the United States to Romania. As an advocate on behalf of Romanian Jews, Peixotto was also the one to encourage the establishment of B'nai B'rith lodges in Romania. Following the example of the American fraternal organisation initially founded in 1843 in New York City, its Romanian branch was intended to both organise and shape a cadre of

14 Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 42-82, 151-160; Carol Iancu, Les Juifs en Roumanie 1866–1919. De l'exclusion a l'émancipation [The Jews in Romania 1866–1919. From Exclusion to Emancipation], Aix-en-Provence 1978, 265-268; Carol Iancu, Problema emancipării evreilor români în contextul realizării Marii Uniri [The Issue of the Emancipation of the Romanian Jews in the Context of the Realisation of the Great Union], in: Analele Științifice ale Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași. Istorie [Scientific Annals of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași – History], LXIV (2018), 469-489; Harry Kuller, Opt studii despre istoria evreilor din România [Eight Studies on the History of the Jews in Romania], Bucharest 1997, 267-283; Emanuela Costantini, Neither Foreigners, Nor Citizens. Romanian Jews' Long Road to Citizenship, in: Cattalan/Dogo (ed.), The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe, 2-22; Adi Horațiu Schwarz, Acțiuni ale Uniunii Evreilor Pământeni pentru emancipare, în documente interne românești (1913), [Actions by the Union of Native Jews for Emancipation in Light of Romanian Sources], in: Analele Universității din Craiova. Seria Istorie 14 [Annals of the University of Craiova. History Series 14], 16 (2009) 2, 229-234.

15 Jahresbericht des Zentral-Komitees des Verbandes der einheimischen Juden (Uniunea Evreilor Pamanteni) erstattet der Generalversammlung des Verbandes am 7. Januar 1912, Berlin, undated, 8.

16 S. Schiffer, Rumänien und seine Juden XIII., in: Ost und West 7 (1918), 223-244, here 243.

17 Romania only adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1919, therefore the first date refers to the Julian calendar, the second to the Gregorian calendar.

Jewish leaders.[18] In 1909 however, Adolphe Stern ascertained that the lodge as an elite organisation was not the best suited to carry out the political fight. "I understood", he wrote in his diary, "that we need a change of methods, a new strategy. That we have to act vigorously and openly, with tooth and nail. And that these actions are not to be carried out by groups, but have to be conducted by an organisation of the masses."[19]

By emphasising the need for a "mass organisation", Stern followed lessons learned from the past. In 1878/1879, when emancipation was being discussed by the Romanian government, Jewish leaders disagreed over the question of whether to accept the individual naturalisation of 3,000 Jewish men offered by the Romanian government as a compromise solution or to persist in their demand for collective emancipation. In the end, the Action Committee, an assembly of Jewish notables delegated by the communities, opened negotiations with the government and agreed to the compromise, much to the dismay of those championing collective rights, who accused the former of having betrayed the Jewish cause and obstructed emancipation. This conflict eventually contributed to the "non-solution of the problem"[20] and left the Jewish community deeply divided.[21] As a consequence, various Jewish individuals, groups, and associations representing different interest groups with different agendas campaigned for legal equality over the course of the following years. One such group was the General Association of Native Israelites (Asociațiunea Generală a Israeliților Pământeni), founded in 1890 to represent Jewish men who had had completed their military service.[22] Despite the fact that some of these groups organised meetings attended by several hundred people, they ultimately failed to permanently mobilise the Jewish population behind their goals.

However, things were soon to change. In 1907, a major peasant revolt shook Romania and challenged the political status quo.[23] Up to that point, the political landscape had been dominated by two big parties that had succeeded each other in power since 1881: the Conservative Party (Partidul Conservator), representing mainly the interests of large landowners, and the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal), representing mainly the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. As Romania had a restrictive census voting system, which made political rights dependent on earnings and income, the right to vote was enjoyed by no more than 1.3 per cent of the population.[24] Although peasants made up 80 per cent of the country's population, they were massively underrepresented at the polls. In addition, most of them did not own enough land or no land at all to provide for their needs and were either obliged to hire themselves out to work on the latifundium of a local landlord or to

18 On Peixotto's mission to Romania, see: Iancu, Les Juifs en Roumanie 1866–1919, 106-118; Lloyd P. Gartner, Roumania, America, and World Jewry. Consul Peixotto in Bucharest, 1870–1876, in: American Jewish Historical Quarterly 58 (1968) 1, 24-117.

19 Adolphe Stern, Din viața unui evreu român [From the Life of a Romanian Jew], ed. Țicu Goldstein, Vol. II, Bucharest 2001, 216 (all subsequent translations by the author).

20 Iancu, Les Juifs en Roumanie 1866–1919, 169.

21 Ibid., 169-170; Saniel Marcus, Die Geschichte der Juden in Rumänien, in: Die Judenfrage in Rumänien. Eine Actensammlung vorgelegt dem Brüsseler Congress 'pro Armenia' vom 17. und 18. Juli 1902, Vienna 1902, 51-97; Stern, Din viața, Vol. I, 201-207; Victor Eskenazy (ed.), Moses Gaster, Memorii, (fragmente), corespondență [Memoirs, (Fragments), Correspondence], Bucharest 1998, 63.

22 Müller, Erwünschte Soldaten – unerwünschte Staatsbürger, 202.

23 On the 1907 Peasant Uprising, see: Philip Gabriel Eidelberg, The Great Rumanian Peasant Revolt of 1907, Leiden 1974.

24 Academia Română. Secția de Științe Istorice și Arheologie [Romanian Academy. Department of History and Archeology] (ed.), Istoria românilor. De la independența la Marea Unire (1878–1918) [The History of Romanians. From Independence to the Great Union (1878–1918)], Vol. VII, 2, compiled by Gheorghe Platon, Bucharest 2003, 77.

lease extra land in order to supplement their inadequate holdings.[25] In 1907, peasant dissatisfaction turned into violent unrest. Contemporaries cast Jewish leaseholders as the main culprits for the conditions of Romanian peasantry.[26] However, antisemitic discourse could not deflect from the fact that fundamental reforms were inevitable. In an effort to appease the peasantry and secure power, both parties promised agrarian reforms, the National Liberal Party even adding franchise reform to its platform in 1911.[27] However, the political establishment was not only challenged by the needs of a changing society, but also by newly established political parties, such as the Conservative Democratic Party (Partidul Conservator-Democrat), set up by Take Ionescu as a splinter group of the Conservative Party in 1908, the Nationalist Democratic Party (Partidul Naționalist-Democrat), founded in 1910 by Nicolae Iorga and Alexandru C. Cuza on an overtly antisemitic platform, demanding the exclusion of all Jews from Romanian society, who were blamed for the poverty of the Romanian peasants, and the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat Român), which was re-established in 1910 and campaigned for better working conditions, universal suffrage for men and women, and – as the sole Romanian party – for the emancipation of Romanian Jews.[28]

To be sure, almost all these parties expressed their support for a broadened franchise and a redistribution of land. However, the right to vote and the right to own land remained reserved for Romanian citizens only. Consequently, seen from a Jewish perspective, the question of citizenship took on a new significance and emancipation became imperative. It was under these circumstances that Adolphe Stern called for "vigorous actions" and the establishment of a Jewish "mass organisation".[29]

Organising the "Jewish Masses"

Despite its aspirations, the Union did not start off as a Jewish mass movement, but rather as an organisation of notables acting on behalf of the "general interests of native Jews" and protecting their rights against further infringement by the government.[30] The Union was founded as an immediate reaction to a new draft law intended to 'encourage' the national industry by reducing the total number of 'foreign'

25 Eidelberg, Peasant Revolt, 24-46.

26 Irina Marin, The Causes of Peasant Violence and Antisemitism. The Triple Frontier between Austria-Hungary, Tsarist Russia, and Romania, 1880–1914, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 5 (2018) 1, 125-134; Irina Marin, Raubwirtschaft and Colonisation. The Jewish Question and Land Tenure in Romania in 1907, in: Raul Cârstocea/Éva Kovács (ed.), Modern Antisemitisms in the Peripheries. Europe and its Colonies 1880–1945, Vienna 2018, 427-445.

27 For the party program of the National Liberal Party (1911) and the Conservative Party (1913), see: Iulian Oncescu, Texte și documente privind istoria modernă a românilor (1774–1918) [Texts and Documents Concerning the Modern History of Romanians (1774–1918)], Târgoviște ²2011, 602-604, 605-607.

28 For an overview of Romanian political parties before the First World War, see: Academia Română, Istoria românilor, 149-164; for the party program of the Conservative Democratic Party (1908) and the Nationalist Democratic Party (1910), see: Oncescu, Texte și documente, 596-602; for the party program of the Social Democratic Party, see: Institutul de Studii Istorice și Social-Politice de pe lângă C.C. al P.C.R. (ed.), Documente din istoria mișcării muncitorești din România. 1910–1915 [Documents from the History of the Labour Movement in Romania. 1910–1915], Bucharest 1968, doc. 1, 11-42; for a history of the Social Democratic Party, see: Mariana Hausleitner, Die nationale Frage in der rumänischen Arbeiterbewegung vor 1924, Berlin 1988; for a history of the Nationalist Democratic Party, see: Horia Bozdoghină, Antisemitismul lui A.C. Cuza în politica românească [A. C. Cuza's Antisemitism in Romanian Politics], Bucharest 2012, 35-63.

29 Stern, Din viața, Vol. II, 216.

30 The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem (CAHJP), RM/323, Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni. Reprezentanța Uniunei [The Union of Native Jews. The Representation of the Union], Statutul Uniunei Evreilor-Pământeni votat de Adunarea Generală din 23 Ianuarie 1911 [The Statute of the Union of Native Jews Voted by the General Assembly on 23 January 1911], Art. 2.

employees to 25 percent of all staff.[31] As this law would have hit thousands of Jewish workers, the Union's leaders decided to take action by petitioning the legislature and fighting prejudices. The first action along this line was the elaboration of a memorandum documenting the situation of the Jewish population, which listed over 150 laws, regulations, and administrative measures that affected them as non-citizens and refuted nationalist and antisemitic arguments with statistical and historical data.[32] The memorandum was published in several thousand copies, distributed throughout the country and submitted by special delegations of the Union to the king, the liberal prime-minister Ion I. C. Bratianu, the presidents of both chambers of parliament, and the leaders of the two opposition parties, namely to Petre P. Carp, leader of the Conservative Party, and Take Ionescu, leader of the Conservative Democratic Party.[33]

The memorandum was mainly the work of the central committee of the Union, which already had plans for further actions like publishing a newspaper and additional brochures and organising public debates. However, for their action plan they needed to attract financial and personnel support. In order to both increase the number of members and financial resources and to expand its reach and influence throughout the country, the Union's leaders decided to establish local sections in a number of cities with a significant Jewish population by co-opting leading local Jewish personalities. However, the first attempts to organise the Jewish population failed, as only two of these sections survived their first year of existence. After this initial lack of success, the central committee started over again in 1911, but this time with a more systematic approach. With a newly adopted statute, the Union was put on a broader and more democratic basis, transforming it into a membership-based organisation.[34] In addition, special delegates were sent across the country to actively recruit local staff and canvass for new members. As a result of this intensified effort, the Union succeeded in (re-)establishing local sections in nearly every major Jewish population centre.[35]

By the end of 1912, however, the activities of the Union gained new momentum. In the autumn of that year, the First Balkan War broke out. Although Romania did not participate in the conflict, there was a high possibility that the country might become involved in action. Since the Romanian army largely relied on the country's peasantry, signs increased that the National Liberal Party, at that time in opposition, would indeed push for social reforms when in power again.[36] The prospect of a constitutional amendment fuelled the Jewish leaders' expectations, as it was seen as a golden opportunity to renegotiate emancipation. Accordingly, the Union had to be put on a new basis. "If ever there has been a moment in time when the Jewish population needed a political organisation, then it is now", the central committee wrote to

31 Hans Kelsen, Industrieförderung in Rumänien (1912), in: Matthias Jestaedt (ed.), Hans Kelsen, Werke, Vol. III: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1911–1917, Tübingen 2010, 65-72.

32 CAHJP, RM/055, Petiția Evreilor Pământeni adresată Corpurilor Legiuitoare [Petition of Native Jews to the Legislative Bodies], 1910, unpaginated; Legi, regulamente și măsuri administrative îndreptate împotriva străinilor și aplicate Evreilor pământeni [Laws, Regulations, and Measures Against Foreigners Applied Against Jews], 1910, unpaginated; Cuvântul Evreilor-Pământeni [The Word of the Native Jews], 1910, unpaginated.

33 Raportul Comitetului Central pe 1910, 4.

34 Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni. Reprezentanța Uniunii [The Union of Native Jews. The Representation of the Union], Raportul Comitetului Central asupra activității sale în anul 1912 [Annual Report of the Central Committee on its Activities in 1912], Bucharest 1912, 12.

35 Jahresbericht erstattet am 7. Januar 1912, 13.

36 Anastasie Iordache, Viata politică in România. 1910–1914 [Political Life in Romania. 1910–1914], Bucharest 1971, 140.

its local branches in November 1912.[37] In April 1913 it officially proclaimed "the political emancipation, meaning the mass naturalisation, of native Jews"[38] as its new mission. Accordingly, its primary task was now to organise and lead a Jewish political movement. The Union insisted that Jews had to speak with one voice if they wished to be heard. Therefore, the enrolment of all Jews into the organisation was considered to be imperative. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, the Union's leaders decided to strengthen and professionalise the organisation once more. As of 1913, every local section had to name a permanent delegation, composed of two or three members, "which will work unceasingly, handling day by day the tasks at hand, the correspondence with the central council as well as with the members, etc." and to appoint a paid full-time secretary.[39] Moreover, special and specially trained propaganda commissions were established, their assignment being "to convince all native Jews of their localities to enrol in the Union, not just as paying members, but as enlightened and conscious people", "steeled for the fight we have to carry out", and willing to stay within the movement until the "final victory".[40] These commissions took over the task of distributing brochures, organising information events, and canvassing from door to door in every corner of the country, so as to mobilise the local Jewish population to join the Union.

Although the Union managed to establish 51 local sections by the end of 1912, rising to 80 by the end of 1914,[41] the central committee constantly complained about local sections which were either inactive or did poorly in recruiting new members. The "Jewish masses" turned out to be reluctant and especially hard to recruit in the region of Moldova, where most of the Jewish population lived. In 1911, the central committee complained that "there are entire areas, especially in Moldova, where Jews do not react to anything anymore, where apathy and the lack of confidence in the ability to succeed is so pervasive that all our efforts to set them in motion and win them over were in vain".[42] Of course, this narrative mainly served to sooth the egos of the Union's founding fathers. It was easier to blame the "apathetic masses" for this initial failure than to admit that the political goals promoted by the Union were actually met with scepticism and even open resistance. The Union did not only champion for emancipation but also for a certain understanding of Jewish identity. By using Romanian as its language of choice and by referring to the idea of "native Jews" in its title it placed itself in the tradition of assimilation. The concept of "native Jews" ("evrei pământeni" or "evrei români") emerged in the 1870s in Jewish historiography as a reaction to the allegation made by the anti-emancipationist camp, which claimed that the Jews living in Romania were either foreign subjects or recent immigrants and therefore not entitled to citizenship.[43] Jewish historians in turn tried to proof the contrary. They argued that the Jews living in Romania deserved equal

37 Arhiva Centrului Pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din Romania [Archive of the Centre for the Study of the History of Romanian Jews] (ACSIER), I 340, file 16RS, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, 1/14 November 1912.

38 ACSIER, I 340, file 48RS, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, 10/23 April 1913.

39 ACSIER, I 340, file 124, Report regarding the question of organisation, elaborated by Saniel Labin in preparation for the congress of the Union of Native Jews held on 25/26 December 1912.

40 ACSIER, I 340, file 52-52RS, all quotations from the circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees on instructions for the members of the propaganda commissions, 18/31 May 1913.

41 Opt ani de activitate.

42 Jahresbericht erstattet am 7. Januar 1912, 15.

43 Lucian-Zeev Herşovici, The Role of Historiography in the Emancipation of Romanian Jewry Before World War I, in: Shvut 16 (1993), 201-218.

rights because they had lived on Romanian territory since time immemorial, spoke Romanian, and "could no longer be placed side by side with the Polish or Russian Jew".[44] Following this reading, assimilation was promoted as a necessary condition to political emancipation. This position, however, did not remain unchallenged. The question of assimilation split the pro-emancipationist group. Some Jewish intellectuals argued that integration could also be achieved by preserving the features of Jewish identity, which according to them were especially represented by the Yiddish language, as this was the only language known by the majority of the Jews in Romania.[45] However, there were other factions within Romanian Jewry that not only rejected assimilation but also had an ambivalent attitude towards emancipation. Whereas orthodox Jews feared that the integration of individuals as citizens into the nation state would fracture their adherence to the religious community,[46] the admittedly small Zionist movement declined assimilation and emancipation as solutions to the 'Jewish question' and opted for the creation of a strong national Jewish identity and eventual resettlement in Palestine instead. Socialist Jews, on the other hand, sought for a revolutionary solution to the 'Jewish question' as they were convinced that in a classless society religious and ethnic differences would be overcome anyhow. Therefore, the Union had to recruit local leaders representing all factions in order to succeed. These local leaders in turn had to get creative if they wanted to persuade their communities of the necessity of joining the Union. Therefore, the strategies used by every local section differed from town to town and depended on the social, political, or religious leanings of its local leaders. Dr. L. Rabinovici for instance, rabbi and leader of the Union's local branch in Dorohoi, a city in northeastern Romania, began by organising meetings and inviting public speakers, but eventually failed to enthuse the local Jews with the Union's ideas. He therefore decided to make use of his position as a rabbi to reach out to them:

> "On the last day of repentance [Yom Kippur], I visited virtually all synagogues and with warm words I warned my brethren […] that they let an unforgivable sin persist, which consists in the disinterest towards a movement which has the most beautiful and sacred goal and which aspires to ensure a prosperous and dignified future for our children. The next day, almost the entire population of Dorohoi participated in the general assembly, the elderly assuring me that they had never seen such an impressive meeting before."[47]

The local section of Iași followed a different strategy. Iași, also a city in northeastern Romania, near the Russian border and at that time the country's second most populous city after Bucharest, was not only the stronghold of Romanian antisemitism but also the cradle of the Romanian socialist movement, to which a significant minority within the Jewish community was attracted.[48] Some of them saw no contradiction in also joining the Union, as they considered that Jews and the working class were the "victims of the same evil, namely the regime of privileges installed by

44 Moses Schwarzfeld, Ochire asupra istoriei evreilor în România din cele mai vechi timpuri până la jumătatea veacului al XIX. [A Look at the History of the Jews in Romania from the Oldest Times until the Nineteenth Century], in: Anuar pentru Israeliți [Annual for Israelites], X (1887/88), 19-72, here 38.

45 Augusta Costiuc Radosav, "Tsi vos toyg a yudish blat?" Of what Use Is a Yiddish Newspaper? Yiddish as a Language of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Romania, in: Studia Judaica, 22 (2017), 21-49.

46 Costantini, Neither Foreigners, 8.

47 Uniunea Evreilor-Pământeni, Procesul-verbal al congresului extraordinar ținut la București în zilele de 3 și 4 Noembre 1913 [Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting Held in Bucharest on 3 and 4 November 1913], Bucharest 1914, 41.

48 Hausleitner, Die nationale Frage, 100-106.

our oligarchy", and therefore had a mutual enemy.[49] One of them was the socialist journalist Jean Hefter. In line with his beliefs, he chose a different approach to win over the Jewish audience. At the extraordinary congress of the Union in 1913, he criticised the Union for isolating the Jewish cause from other social issues afflicting the population. "You cannot win over the masses with abstract and vague ideas such as demanding rights", he explained to the public.[50] Instead, their immediate interests needed to be addressed. According to Hefter, "we succeeded in attracting the masses to the Union"[51] only after directly addressing Jewish workers by explaining to them how the new Law on the Organisation of Crafts[52] – which was issued as an attempt to reduce conflicts of interest between workers and owners by creating joint guilds – not only undermined their interests as workers, but also infringed upon their rights as Jews, as only Romanian citizens were allowed to become members of the guilds' governing boards.

The local branch in the Moldovan city of Huși found yet another way to recruit new members. If rabbi Rabinovici turned to his community and the socialist journalist Hefter to Jewish workers, the members of the Huși section tried to use their business relations in order to force the local population into the Union. In January 1913, they decided that "members of the Union of Native Jews will maintain business relations only with those Jews who are members of the Union. An exception from this obligation will, of course, be made for Christians."[53] Although this decision was not implemented by the local section itself, some of its members led by example:

> "Dr. Carp follows this principle in his daily life and thanks to his tenacity (Mr. Carp left the shops of all those not enlisted in the Union, not without explaining to them the reason for his behaviour) many tradesmen, employees, and craftsmen were indirectly forced to become members of the Union in order not to lose their clientele."[54]

As these examples show, the Union indeed managed to attract members of different political orientations and eventually united within its ranks secular as well as religious Jews and socialist activists as well as ardent Zionists. However, the more influential the Union became, the more it polarised the Jewish population. By 1912, when the Social Democratic Party and the Union fought together against the Law on the Organisation of Crafts, the Jewish socialist movement was already divided over the question of whether to join the Union or the Social Democratic Party, the only Romanian party also calling for the full political emancipation of the Jewish population.[55] The gulf between the two factions deepened prior to and especially after the Second Balkan War. Whereas socialists opposed Romania's involvement in the war, the Union greeted it enthusiastically as a chance to once again prove the Jewish pop-

49 Rob.: Prin luptă [Through Fighting], in: Adevărul, 11 November 1913, 1.
50 Procesul-verbal al congresului extraordinar, 42.
51 Ibid.
52 Legea pentru organizarea meseriilor, creditului și asigurărilor muncitorești. Promulgată prin Decretul Regal No. 375 din 25 ianuarie 1912 și publicată în Monitorul Oficial No. 236 din 27 Ianuarie 1912 [Law on the Organisation of Crafts, Credit, and Labour Insurance. Promulgated by Royal Decree No. 375 on 25 January 1912 and Published in the Official Gazette No. 236 on 27 January 1912], Bucharest 1912. The law was strongly opposed by both the Union of Native Jews and the Social Democratic Party. On the latter, see: Documente din istoria mișcării muncitorești, doc. 94, 355-357 and doc. 117, 425-433.
53 ACSIER, I 340, file 165, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, 13/26 May 1915.
54 Ibid.
55 Protocol of the meeting of the Iași local committee, 5 February 1912, quoted in: Uniunea. Buletinul Uniunei Evreilor Pământeni [The Union. Bulletin of the Union of Native Jews] – Iași, 1 (February/March 1912) 2, 6-7.

ulation's patriotic loyalty to the country.[56] Consequently, the Jewish socialists started to attack the Union as "bourgeois, oligarchs, cowards, etc."[57]

Despite its assimilationist agenda, the Union also managed to attract Zionists to its ranks. Moreover, some of the Zionist movement's most active members ranked among the founding fathers of the Union and consequently most Romanian Zionists joined the Union, too. They even postponed their congresses in order not to disturb the Union's political activities.[58] Unsurprisingly, the Zionist press felt the need to explain and justify the marriage of these conflicting currents: "The considerable development the Union of Native Jews tends to take and the considerable participation of Zionists in its activities prompts the question: Is the idea of the Union of Native Jews compatible with the Zionist idea and are they not mutually exclusive?", the newspaper *Curierul Israelit* (The Israelite Courier) asked in one of its articles in March 1913. It concluded that "if we do not identify the final goal of the Union to be assimilation in a misinterpreted sense of the word or the complete denial of our past and of every ideal, then we find that there is no incompatibility between being both a Zionist and a member of the Union."[59] However, when the Union's campaign to put emancipation onto the agenda of the newly elected constituent assembly in 1914 failed because the activities of the assembly were suspended due to the outbreak of the First World War, Romanian Zionists became increasingly impatient. Thus the Zionist newspaper *Spre Răsărit* (To the East) called for a reorganisation of the Zionist movement in August 1915 and insisted that its future leaders should under no circumstances be enrolled in any other organisation: "Lay it on the line: either Zionist or Unionist."[60] The Zionist journalist Achille M. Finkelstein, who initially argued in favour of the compatibility of the two streams,[61] voiced his dissatisfaction with the Union even more bluntly: "Every Jew has the obligation to break with the so called Union of Native Jews, which is the vanguard of those groups [of renegades] who bring shame to the Jewish nation."[62]

Despite these conflicts, the Union continued growing: In 1912, as mentioned above, it numbered 51 and in 1914 as many as 80 local branches. Even though the number of members lagged behind the targeted number of 25,000-30,000, the number thought necessary to finance the Union's political activities, the Union managed to garner altogether about 10,000-12,000 enlisted members.[63] As always, these figures have to be treated with caution and might not be the best indicator for the Union's political influence. However, by comparison, all trade unions together claimed to have had 14,000 members in 1912.[64] Moreover, the Union's petitions were published in every major Romanian newspaper and its goals were supported

56 Hausleitner, Intervention und Gleichstellung, 515-516.
57 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 38.
58 Isac Leon, Punctul nostru de vedere față de UEP [Our Point of View on the UEP], in: Hatikvah, 19 June 1916, quoted in: Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România. Centrul pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din România [Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania. The Centre for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania] (ed.), Idealul sionist în presa evreiască din România. 1881–1920 [The Zionist Ideal in the Jewish Press of Romania. 1881–1920], compiled by Lya Benjamin/Gabriela Vasiliu, Bucharest 2001, 359.
59 Isac Avram, Sioniștii în Uniune [The Zionists Within the Union], in: Curierul Israelit [The Israelite Courier], March 17, 1913, quoted in: Idealul Sionist, 324.
60 Reorganizarea Mișcării Sioniste din Romania [The Reorganisation of the Zionist Movement of Romania], Spre Răsărit [To the East] 9 (July/August 1915), 10, quoted in: Idealul Sionist, 339.
61 Achille M. Finckelstein, Nevoia unei culturi naționale [The Need for a National Culture], in: Bar Kochba 2 (June 1914) 3, quoted in: Idealul Sionist, 332.
62 Achille M. F Finkelstein, O datorie de constiinta [A Duty of Conscience], in: Bar Kochba 2 (October 1915) 8, quoted in: Idealul Sionist, 341.
63 Opt ani de activitate.
64 Hausleitner, Die nationale Frage, 215-216.

by the two left-oriented newspapers *Adevărul* and *Dimineața*, which had the widest circulation in Romania at that time. Therefore, the Union might not only have had more members than probably any political party in the country, as the secretary of the Union, Saniel Labin proudly stated at the extraordinary congress of the Union in November 1913,[65] it was also one of the country's biggest political movements, which managed to mobilise supporters and opponents of Jewish emancipation alike.

Enlightening Romanian Public Opinion

In line with the principles of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Union's founders were guided by the belief that antisemitism could be combatted through education and enlightenment of both Jews and Romanians. Therefore, its political activism did not only target the Jewish population, but also Romanian public opinion and the political class. After the peasant revolt in 1907 and the foundation of the Nationalist Democratic Party, antisemitism steadily gained ground in Romania. The Union assumed that the reason for this alarming increase of antisemitism was the fact that there had never been attempts to conduct counter-propaganda on behalf of Jewish interests in the past.[66] Accordingly, they regarded it as one of their most important tasks to enlighten the public on the 'Jewish question' and later "to organise an extensive political action in favour of the idea of the emancipation of Romanian Jews".[67] In this respect, the official newspaper of the Union – called *Înfrățirea* (The Fraternisation) – became the most important propaganda medium. The newspaper, which was first published in February 1913, reached over 10,000 readers, a quarter of them being non-Jewish.[68] The Union tried hard to reach all those who had a say on the national and local level and were in the position to exert influence on behalf of the Union's cause. They therefore sent their newspaper and brochures to former and actual members of the parliament, the local administration, to mayors, teachers, and priests in both towns and villages.[69] In its articles, the newspaper attempted to acquaint its readers with the life of various Romanian Jewish communities, to stress the benefits of Jewish writers, scientists, and intellectuals for Romanian society, and to fight antisemitic prejudices.[70] Apparently, the newspaper did indeed reach a non-Jewish audience. Thus, for instance, the local committee of Oltenița, a town in southeastern Romania, informed the central committee proudly that not only Jewish readers enjoyed the Union's newspaper, but also Romanian readers complained when the newspaper did not arrive on time. Moreover, the newspaper had stimulated conversations about the Jewish cause between the Union's local members and the Romanian readers of the newspaper.[71] Consequently, the Union made plans to expand the newspapers' coverage in order to reach even more Romanian readers, especially in rural areas, which were dominated by the antisemitic press. However,

65 Procesul-verbal al congresului extraordinar, 39.
66 Jahresbericht erstattet am 7. Januar 1912, 5.
67 Opt ani de activitate.
68 Ibid.
69 ACSIER, I 340, file 33, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, February 15/28, 1913; Ibid., file 38-38RS, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, probably from August 1913.
70 Kuller, Opt studii, 271-274.
71 Yad Vashem Archive (YVA), P. 6/ 12.1, file 80, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, 13/26 June 1914.

this plan had to be given up due to financial concerns and the outbreak of the First World War.[72]

The most important target group of the Union's propaganda was the Romanian political class. Via memoranda and petitions, sent to individual delegates, the legislative bodies, or the Romanian king, they repeatedly pointed to the situation of the Jews living in Romania and tried to raise awareness of the problems resulting from their legal status. Moreover, they repeatedly called on members of the government whenever a new law infringed upon their rights, such as the aforementioned Law for the Encouragement of the National Industry. The Union's protest against the latter was a huge success: After a change in the law, Jews were for the first time put on equal footing with Romanians. Although this legal interpretation was limited to this particular law, the Union celebrated it as partial success on the way to emancipation.[73]

Regarding its strategies, the Union emphasised "that we want to achieve the fraternisation of Romanians and Jews by legal and loyal means, conducting open propaganda throughout the country, both written and oral".[74] However, after the Second Balkan War this approach slightly changed as the dispute over emancipation become gradually more violent. As Adolphe Stern put it in his memoirs: The policy of "bowed heads" led nowhere, so "we took off our gloves".[75]

Battling for Citizenship from Within – The Union's Campaign after the Second Balkan War

Romania entered the Second Balkan War in July 1913. Compared to the First World War, this campaign, which lasted only two weeks, was merely a military march through Bulgaria. Romania did not count any combat casualties. Its worst enemy was an epidemic of cholera, which cut down 6,000 men.[76] When it became clear that Romania would enter the war, the Union greeted the war enthusiastically and called upon its members to join the armed forces. The day that Romania mobilised its army, the Union's central committee announced to its members that "historical and decisive moments for the Jewish question are about to come. Our question will be discussed in its entirety as soon as the war is over. […] The time for sacrifices has come!"[77]

Indeed, about 20,000 Jewish men took part in the campaign, a considerable part of them voluntarily.[78] The war seemed like the perfect opportunity to prove the Jewish population's loyalty to the Romanian state and to overcome hatred and prejudice. Jews all over Romania hoped that a victory in war would improve their situation. These hopes were nourished by leading Romanian politicians, intellectuals, and journalists, who in the initial enthusiasm of success seemed impressed by the patriotism of the Jews and advocated for citizenship for Jewish soldiers.[79] Yet the high hopes of Romanian Jewry were soon to be dashed. When the National Liberal Party, which came to power again in January 1914, announced its program of reforms,

72 Opt ani de activitate.
73 Kuller, Opt studii, 269; Schwarz, Acțiuni ale Uniunii Evreilor Pământeni, 231, 233.
74 Jahresbericht erstattet am 7. Januar 1912, 8.
75 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 51.
76 Richard C. Hall, The Balkan Wars 1912–1913. Prelude to the First World War, London 2000, 117-118.
77 ACSIER , I 340, file 68-68RS, Circular letter of the central committee of the Union of Native Jews to the local committees, 21 June/4 July 1913.
78 Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 60; Müller, Erwünschte Soldaten – unerwünschte Staatsbürger, 205.
79 Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 64-67; Iancu, The Struggle for the Emancipation, 144.

emancipation was not mentioned at all.[80] This drawback highly politicised the Jewish population, which felt betrayed. Consequently, the Union centred all its activities on the constituent assembly, which was expected to start work in June 1914. They published thousands of brochures and posters protesting against their exclusion from constitutional reform. However, not only the Union intensified its political fight – so did the opponents of Jewish emancipation. The most influential group and the Union's fiercest opponent was the Cultural League. Founded in 1890 by renowned cultural personalities, the League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians (Liga pentru Unitatea Culturală a tuturor Românilor) was initially a cultural association which sought to prepare the way for the political union of all the Romanians living in contiguous territories. The nationalism of the League blended with violent antisemitism.[81] To oppose the emancipation of the Jewish population for them was a question of national self-defence. According to them, every "true Romanian has the obligation to oppose by all available means, even violent ones, the naturalisation of the Jews".[82] Their campaign against emancipation was the most violent antisemitic campaign since the peasant revolt, as the League did not only instigate townsmen and villagers all over the country, but even called for pogroms.[83]

When the Union announced in November 1913 that they would hold an extraordinary congress in order to claim their rights, the League threatened to storm the meeting. Empowered by their war experience, the Jewish participants prepared to confront the League and to defend themselves. Therefore, Adolphe Stern, the president of the congress, considered it

> "a historical moment in the evolution of our movement. […] The Jews forcefully and full-throatedly claimed their civil rights and proclaimed to fight for them without fear or hesitation. They are even determined to defend themselves against any aggression. Amongst the delegates there were also some of those mobilised in Bulgaria determined to confront the hooligans who would dare to disrupt the meeting."[84]

Inspired with new self-confidence, the Union responded to the threats launched by the League by publishing an open letter stating that they would not be intimidated in their fight. "Whatever happens, we will not disarm. Certainly, no one wants to push the Jewish population to the utmost, because oppressed minorities who are refused their fundamental right of assembly are forced to defend themselves by any means."[85] In response to this warning, Romanian newspapers spoke of a "Jewish revolution".[86]

This warning was by no means empty rhetoric. In the run-up to one of the League's meetings, the Jewish population in the Jewish quarters of Bucharest started to set up

80 Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 152.

81 Müller, Staatsbürger auf Widerruf, 160-161.

82 Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni. Reprezentanța Uniunii [The Union of Native Jews. The Representation of the Union], Raportul Comitetului Central asupra activității sale în anii 1913 și 1914 [Annual Report of the Central Committee on its Activities in 1913 and 1914], Bucharest 1914.

83 On the League's campaign against the Union of Native Jews, see: Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 76-77, 155; Müller, Erwünschte Soldaten – unerwünschte Staatsbürger, 205-207; Hausleitner, Die nationale Frage, 240-241; Kopenhagener Bureau der Zionistischen Organisationen (ed.), Simon Bernstein, Die Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung, Copenhagen 1918, 120-123; Raportul asupra activității în anii 1913 și 1914; Opt ani de activitate.

84 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 46; on the minutes of the congress, see: Procesul-verbal al congresului extraordinar.

85 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 50.

86 Ibid., 51; During the congress of the League, Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, one of the League's leaders, also referred to the political movement initiated by the Union as a "revolution". See: Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, Ovreii Pământeni și Subpământeni. Discurs ținut în ziua de 10 Noembrie 1913, la întrunirea 'Ligei Culturale' din sala 'Dacia' [Native and Abysmal Jews. Speech given at the Meeting of the 'Cultural League' Held at the Dacia Hall on 10 November 1913], Bucharest 1913, 10.

armed self-defence forces. "Tomorrow there will be a meeting of the League in Bucharest", Stern noted in his diary. "The Jews in the Jewish quarters are arming. Let the hooligans come. They will be welcomed as they never would have expected from these always so patient Yids."[87] Fortunately, the conflict did not escalate into pogroms, but it did lead to a politicisation of the Jewish population, to a popularisation of the Union and its claims, as well as to a polarisation of Romanian public opinion. While the members of the League and the Union were both virtually and literally fighting over emancipation on the streets of Bucharest, Adolphe Stern backed up the activities of the Union with help from abroad.

Battling for Citizenship from Abroad – Adolphe Stern's Diplomatic Mission

As the Union's self-imposed task was to continually intervene against discriminatory legislation, Adolphe Stern regularly called on the king, the prime minister, and relevant ministries. Despite the fact that some of his interventions were crowned with success, he felt increasingly disappointed by the lukewarm reactions of the Romanian governing class. After yet another fruitless intervention, he noted in his diary:

> "We are constantly pressured to work exclusively 'within the country and by the country', and the Union of Native Jews adopted this motto in good faith. But how to respect it, if all those who are at the helm, even the best-intentioned, cannot do a little bit of justice, not to mention attacking the core of the problem?"[88]

After the outbreak of the First Balkan War, Stern pinned his hopes to a European peace congress, which would inevitably also deal with the question of minority rights and thus tackle the rights of Romanian Jews. He therefore decided to seize the moment and ask for help from abroad.

"I am leaving on a diplomatic mission!",[89] he enthusiastically wrote in his diary in January 1913 and, as a matter of fact, he would spend the following year travelling between London, Paris, and Berlin, trying to win the support of Western Jewish organisations and political leaders and convincing them to prevail upon the Romanian government to emancipate its Jewish population.

Stern paid his first visits to Lucien Wolf, secretary of the Conjoint Jewish Committee, in London and to Narcisse Leven, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, in Paris. Here he learned that both had already petitioned their governments on the occasion of the London Peace Conference, asking them to make the emancipation of Romania's Jews a condition for Romania's territorial expansion. As Stern expected that both organisations would – and indeed did – continue their campaign in favour of Romanian Jews, he volunteered to provide them with information about the situation of the Romanian Jews and the political developments in Romania.[90] However, Stern had his own ideas of how to effectively organise support from abroad:

87 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 48.
88 Ibid., 268.
89 Ibid., 9.
90 Adolphe Stern to Claude Montefiori, 4 April 1913 and to Narcisse Leven, 7 May 1913, quoted in: Iancu, Lupta internațională, Vol. I, doc. 10 and 11, 77-82; on the intervention of the Conjoint Jewish Committee and of the Alliance Israélite Universelle on the occasion of the First Balkan War, see: Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 54-55; on Lucien Wolf's campaign on behalf of Romanian Jews after the Second Balkan War, see: Levene, War, Jews, and the New Europe, 19.

"The method of the past, publishing a couple of articles every decade, has to be changed. The sporadic and disorganised protest has to be replaced by a veritable, carefully thought out and ongoing guerrilla fight."[91] As a means to coordinate and stabilise activity abroad, in May 1913 he proposed to "our friends in Rome, Paris, and London" the creation of an International Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom.[92] Stern's closest ally to this effect was to become the Italian statesman Luigi Luzzati. They first met in February 1913, when Stern successfully convinced Luzzati to support the cause of Romanian Jews. Subsequently, Luzzati published a couple of much-noticed articles. Especially his "Plea to European Diplomacy to Save the Freedom of Religion" instantly became famous as Luzatti herein urged Europe to finally attend to the situation of Romanian Jews, whom he referred to as "Europe's last slaves".[93] Furthermore, Luzzati intervened directly with the Romanian government, writing two letters to the Romanian prime minister, Ion I. C. Brătianu.[94] Luzzatis articles and interventions were based on information provided by Adolphe Stern, who deliberately kept to the side lines and declined any responsibility for the "agitation from abroad", as he was well aware that his involvement, if discovered, would have jeopardised the Union's goal to achieve emancipation "by the country and within the country".[95]

The idea of establishing an International Committee followed the same line of reasoning: It would have offered Stern and the Union a framework to operate from abroad without themselves coming into picture. At Luzzati's request, the Committee was to be composed of important, mainly non-Jewish personalities.[96] As he was willing to support the Committee only if a sufficient number of others would also be willing to cooperate, both elaborated an appeal which was to be bindingly signed by its future members and then officially published.[97] In order to collect enough signatures, Stern travelled throughout Europe, visiting prominent politicians and intellectuals. Furthermore, he met with representatives of every major Jewish organisation in Paris, London, and Berlin, who assured him of their support. With combined efforts, Stern and Luzzati managed by July 1914 to collect the signatures of French writer Anatole France, French philosopher Théodule Ribot, Italian statesman marquis Emilio Visconti-Venosta, French politician Georges Clemenceau, former French prime minister Alexandre Ribot, president of the Human Rights League Ferdinand Buisson, American statesman Franklin D. Roosevelt, and American industrialist Andrew Carnegie, and to obtain a letter of support from Lord Balfour.[98] However, Stern was already making plans for further actions. He planned to initiate

91 CAHJP, RM/167, undated and unsigned letter, probably written by Adolphe Stern to Jewish organisations in Germany, June or July 1914.

92 The initiative for the committee is usually ascribed to Luigi Luzzati. See: Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 73. However, judging from Stern's memoirs, Stern was the one to propose the creation of such a committee to Luzzati. See: Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 28.

93 For a Romanian translation of the article, see: Iancu, Lupta internațională, Vol. I, doc. 6, 67-70.

94 On Luigi Luzzati's campaign, see: Luigi Luzzatti, God in Freedom, New York 1930; Armon, Luigi Luzzati's Intervention; Cristiana Facchini, Luigi Luzzati and the Oriental Front. Jewish Agency and the Politics of Religious Toleration, in: Cattalan/Dogo (ed.), The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe, 227-245; Iancu, Emanciparea evreilor, 56-62, 72-81; Bernstein, Judenpolitik, 90-105; Dumitru Ivănescu, Die Emanzipation einer Minderheit. Die Geschichte der rumänischen Juden vom Ende des 19. bis zum Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: Flavius Solomon/Alexander Rubel/Alexandru Zub (ed.), Südosteuropa im 20. Jahrhundert. Ethnostrukturen, Identitäten, Konflikte, Iași 2004, 76-78.

95 Adolphe Stern to Luigi Luzzatti, 4 April 1913, quoted in: Iancu, Lupta internațională, Vol. I, doc. 9, 73-77.

96 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 28.

97 CAHJP, RM/372, undated and unsigned letter, probably written by Adolphe Stern to Jewish organisations in Germany, probably February 1914.

98 Stern, Din viața, Vol. III, 31-83.

a memorandum, written by various European and American members of parliament and addressed to the members of the Romanian parliament on the occasion of the first gathering of the constituent assembly, as well as a press campaign from abroad on behalf of Romanian Jewry. "What we want is publicity […]. To keep the question on the political agenda by all available means is of utmost importance for us", Stern informed the German Jewish organisations in summer 1914.[99]

If Luzzati allowed Stern to gain a foothold in international Jewish diplomacy, the International Committee was supposed to offer Stern the framework to implement his vision of a sustainable campaign in favour of Romanian Jews. It was a means to coordinate the various initiatives taken by western Jewish organisations and an attempt to entrench the Union – even if invisible as such – as an equal player in international Jewish diplomacy. However, Stern soon had to realise that bringing all organisations together was not an easy task, as they followed their own agenda rather than the Union's. As the First World War already started to cast its shadow, the Germans were unwilling to cooperate with their French counterparts if the Committee was to be based in Paris and vice versa.

When the First World War did break out in August 1914, an international cooperation between Jewish organisations and governments became impossible and all of Stern's ambitious plans had to be given up. Despite all efforts, the appeal was ultimately never published and the foundation of the International Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom was suspended. Not only the actions from abroad came to an end, the campaign "within the country" was also interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, as the Romanian government decided to postpone constitutional revision for the time being.

Conclusions

In the end, the Union failed to achieve its goal "by the country and within the country", as emancipation was first decreed in 1918 under the German occupation and out of geopolitical considerations.[100] At least the Union was not alone in this failure as neither universal suffrage nor agrarian reform was implemented in Romania before the end of the First World War. What the Union could claim as its accomplishment was the fact that it had managed to gather all the different Jewish factions under its flag. However, the party truce all the rivalling factions agreed to for the duration of their common fight turned out to be a fragile one. Although assimilationists, Zionists, and socialists agreed upon the necessity of emancipation, they disagreed over the question of to what end and consequently under whose lead it should be pursued. While assimilationists hoped for a full integration into Romanian society after emancipation, both Zionists and socialists regarded emancipation only as a necessary intermediate step – Zionists towards the creation of a Jewish national consciousness and socialists towards a classless society. Thus, the fight for emancipation was paralleled by a fight for the power to define what Jewish identity was. The more

99 CAHJP, RM/167, undated and unsigned letter, probably written by Adolphe Stern to Jewish organisations in Germany, June or July 1914.

100 Carole Fink, Defending the Rights of Others. The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938, New York 2004, 94-96; Elisabeth Weber, Befreier statt Barbaren. Rumänien, die Mittelmächte, die Entente und die Gleichstellung der rumänischen Juden während des Ersten Weltkriegs, in: Cârstocea/Kovács (ed.), Modern Antisemitisms in the Peripheries, 351-369; Ivănescu, Die Emanzipation einer Minderheit, 79-80.

influential the Union became, the more Zionist and socialists questioned the leading role assimilationists intended for themselves within the Union. Then again, on a bigger scale, the Union questioned the leading role which Western Jewish organisations had claimed for themselves in the process of emancipation up until then – and which they were not prepared to give up, as the Union's failed attempt to establish itself as an equal negotiation partner to the West sufficiently illustrates. The fight for emancipation was therefore not only a fight for rights. Eventually it became a means to renegotiate power structures – on a communal, national, and global level.

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Quotation: "By the Country and within the Country" The Union of Native Jews and its Struggle for Emancipation in Romania before the First World War, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 6 (2019) 1, 52-70.

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Article

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The Moral Witness

The Eichmann Trial and Its Aftermath

Abstract

This lecture addresses how "bearing witness to genocide" became a central trope of contemporary Western moral culture. The 1960/1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem put victims of genocide centre-stage and affirmed the pre-eminence of the Jewish Holocaust survivor in European and especially American politics and culture. The lecture revisits the Eichmann trial to understand its contribution not simply to bringing the world's attention to the Jewish dimension of the Holocaust, but also to understanding how the trial shaped the pervasive figure of the Jewish "witness" who marked the Holocaust as a caesura in human history. The Holocaust survivor remained the iconic witness even when, after the 1990s, the witness to genocide became a more generic symbol of suffering humanity in the shadow of all state-sponsored mass violence against persons and cultures. The lecture suggests that only by placing the witness to genocide in a longer historical trajectory can we understand why the Holocaust remains iconic in spite of the occurrence of many other genocides since.

By the end of the twentieth century, "bearing witness" to genocide was an increasingly common expression of social solidarity and of protest against the pain of others. The "witness to genocide" was a pervasive icon of suffering humanity in place of "human conscience" and the "conscience of mankind" to symbolise the affront caused by mass violence to human moral sensibilities. Today "witness to genocide", which first described the survivors of the Holocaust of European Jewry, is used as a title for books and conferences about the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides, as well as for articles in newspapers and museum events.[1] My subject is how the witness to genocide has become a central trope of contemporary Western moral culture. Like witnesses from earlier periods, including abolitionists fighting slavery, Jews condemning pogroms, and humanitarians denouncing mass atrocities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the witness to genocide is a moral witness for whom false testimony is a sacrilege.[2] But this recent "witness" is also a new figure that tracks the history of how Western Europeans' and North Americans' understanding of genocide changed over time, from an unconscionable, reparable, and at worst regrettable form of barbarism to a permanent feature of modern political formations. The witness traces a development in which "never again" has been replaced by the conviction that for now, we should do our best to prevent genocide.

How did this most recent witness take shape? How did this figure, now a ubiquitous and self-evident reference to the Western moral imagination, first appear and

1 A small sample (the list could go on) includes: Roy Gutman, A Witness to Genocide, New York 1993; Richard A. Salem (ed.), Witness to Genocide. The Children of Rwanda. Drawings by Child Survivors of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, with a foreword by Hillary Rodham Clinton, New York 2000; Bearing Witness to Genocide and the Plight of the Minorities in Iraq, panel presented by NGO leaders in Washington, D.C. on 16 April 2016.

2 The prohibition against false witness is the ninth commandment of the Hebrew Bible. On the "moral witness", see: Avishai Margalit, The Ethics of Memory, Cambridge, MA 2002, 163-168.

change over time? The usual discussion of the witness to genocide assumes that it emerged in the form of the Jewish Holocaust survivor during the 1961/1962 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. In this essay, I revisit the Eichmann trial, not to challenge the myriad accounts of the Israeli and broader reception of the trial, including the debate around Hannah Arendt's writings, or the assertion that the trial marked the recognition of Jewish survivors for the first time – it did. The "survivor", as has so often been argued, became an exemplar of heroic Jewish memory and later an icon in a new Jewish civil religion.[3] Instead, I make three other historical and conceptual claims:

First, the Eichmann trial is so widely remembered not only because it brought recognition to the Jewish dimension of Nazi persecution, but also because it first developed a novel concept of survival linked to the experience of genocide. The symbol of the Holocaust survivor was part of a broader shift that defined victims as authoritative sources and genocidal massacres as distinct from mass death in combat and colonial conquest. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, moral witnesses like abolitionists and humanitarians were dismayed spectators more often than victims because distance afforded them credibility that victims' accounts did not possess. Though first-hand accounts by war veterans after the First World War (1914–1918) were granted special status, it was only after the Second World War (1939–1945) that victims' voices more fully replaced the "civilised" spectator's dismay with the victim's experience and injuries. French and Italian anti-Nazi resistance members, like war veterans, were "witnesses" to the camps.[4] Jewish Holocaust survivors, the recognition of whose suffering emerged only belatedly in the 1960s, came to represent universally suffering humanity whose revelations derived not only from war or resistance, but from another experience of extreme degradation and near annihilation. Holocaust survivor testimonies represented the Nazi genocide as a particular violation of humanity and attributed a new meaning to survival, which was no longer merely a reference to bare physical sustenance but to having endured an ostensibly novel experience of human vulnerability. Jewish survivors symbolised the caesura created by genocide between two images of the West: an enlightened, progressive past committed to human betterment and a post-genocide recognition of Western barbarism. By the 1970s, Jewish survivors possessed authority derived from their experiences as the concentration and extermination camps became a metaphor not only of totalitarian repression, but also of modern destructiveness; the survivor's violated humanity represented modernity's and postmodernity's potential political and cultural consequences.[5]

3 Among the numerous discussions of the role the Holocaust plays in contemporary Western culture, see: Peter Novick, The Holocaust in American Life, New York 2000; Gary Weismann, Fantasies of Witnessing. Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust, Ithaca 2004; Larissa Allwork, Holocaust Remembrance as 'Civil Religion'. The Case of the Stockholm Declaration, in: Diana I. Popescu/Tanja Schult (ed.), Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era, New York 2015, 288-304. Another strain of thought that stresses the boundary between history and memory and the problems of Holocaust sensationalism is best represented by Annette Wieviorka, L'ère du témoin [The Era of the Witness], Paris 1998.

4 David Rousset, The Other Kingdom, translated by Ramon Guthrie, New York 1947. See also: Primo Levi, Testimonianza per Eichmann [Testimony for Eichmann], in: Il Ponte [The Bridge] 17 (1961) 4, 647, reprinted in Fabio Levi/Domenico Scarpa (ed.), Cosí fu Auschwitz. Testimonianze 1945–1986 con Leonardo De Benedetti [Thus was Auschwitz. Testimonies 1945–1986, with Leonardo De Benedetti], Turin 2015, 70. Levi proclaimed that "anyone who recounts massacres of women and children, by the hand of whomever, in whatever country, in the name of whatever ideology, is our brother, and we will be in solidarity with him."

5 I should note here that while international law did not retain Raphael Lemkin's idea of cultural genocide, treating it instead by reference to more tangible property crimes or theft, the symbol of the Holocaust survivor represented this dimension of Nazi murderousness. Leora Bilsky/Rachel Klagsbrun, The Return of Cultural Genocide?, in: The European Journal of International Law 29 (2018) 2, 373-396.

Second, the Eichmann trial rendered the evil of the Holocaust a source of moral consensus in Western Europe and especially in the United States. The definition of who is and who is not a symbolic witness is always linked to a moral consensus around victims whose suffering can be universalised and whose presence no longer inspires guilt and denial. Eichmann's trial generated a lasting moral consensus about Jewish death, itself belated, extremely fragile, and contested by Holocaust denial. In the aftermath of the Eichmann trial, Jews, once berated for not having resisted their persecutors and suspected of complicity in their own deaths, were recast as innocent survivors of unspeakable violence. Because Western powers still rationalised imperial conquest as subduing savagery and repressing rebellion rather than violating humanity, the Holocaust survivor rather than colonised victims of genocidal violence came to represent Western Europeans' and North Americans' discovery of their own destructiveness and to reflect their self-recognition. By the 1960s there was a thin consensus against the violence colonised victims had suffered but not against the colonial regimes that perpetrated it. By contrast, the consensus that developed around the Nazis' attempted annihilation of European Jewry rendered Holocaust survivors relatively uncontested reminders of the destruction of which human beings were capable.[6] Western reckoning with the legacy of colonial violence came later, in the wake of post-colonial protests against imperial nations.

Third, because of this moral consensus regarding Jewish victims of the Holocaust, they eventually became symbols of Western moral conscience. A decade after the Eichmann trial, Jewish survivors moved from the margins of the Holocaust to become its icons; as a new narrative of human and ecological survival developed in the 1960s and 1970s, Holocaust survivors became quintessential witnesses to genocide, especially in the United States, and shorthand for the moral obligations of Western populations to remedy the suffering of others. In spite of numerous other genocides since the Holocaust, the Jewish survivor remains a point of comparison when genocidal violence is imagined and conveyed. Indeed, the invocation of the Holocaust witness to summon the international community to invest resources or to act boldly has turned the Holocaust into an explanation, both by antisemites and anti-racists, for why other past and present genocides are marginalised or forgotten.

To address these claims, I will explore how the Eichmann trial rendered the survivor an object of moral consensus by erasing the guilt and ambivalence projected onto the victims. In so doing, it rendered stigmatised victims publicly blameless and worthy of recognition. Witness testimony was the first large public revelation, not only of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, but also of the psychological suffering endured by noncombatant victims targeted for extermination and industrial mur-

6 International human rights proclamations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Genocide Convention (1948) recognised the historical significance of the Holocaust as a vast exterminatory programme proper to authoritarian states, but also preserved state sovereignty in national and colonial undertakings, making it unlikely that genocide perpetrated by imperial powers would be prosecuted, at least in the short term. Moral witnesses emerged in colonial conflicts, such as Djamila Boupacha, who in 1962 publicised her torture at the hands of the French army during the Algerian War. Such witnesses were heroes to some but remained enemies to others. Without a clear consensus about the wrongness of colonialism, the humanity of the victims might be acknowledged, but violence against them was often justified by logics of raison d'état and racism, effectively minimising the real impact of persecution and repression. See: G. Daniel Cohen, The Holocaust and the 'Human Rights Revolution'. A Reassessment, in: Akira Iriye/Petra Goode/William I. Hitchock (ed.), The Human Rights Revolution. An International History, Oxford 2012, 53-72; Rebecca Jinks, Representing Genocide. The Holocaust as Paradigm? New York 2016; Simone de Beauvoir/Djamila Boupacha, Djamila Boupacha. The Story of the Torture of a Young Algerian Girl Which Shocked Liberal French Opinion, translated by Peter Green, New York 1962. Erik Lindstrum, Facts About Atrocity. Reporting Colonial Violence in Postwar Britain, in: History Workshop Journal 84 (2017), 108-127.

der. Unlike resistance fighters, also called "witnesses", Jewish victims had to prove in the face of skepticism that they could not have resisted and that their suffering was undeserved. They had to rebut insinuations that they had gone like "sheep to the slaughter"; their survival was a source of shame in Israel and of guilt and indifference elsewhere.

The head of the section of the Gestapo responsible for 'Jewish affairs' in 1941, Adolf Eichmann played an important role in organising transports of Jews to death camps in Eastern Europe. He escaped after the war but was kidnapped in Argentina by Israeli secret service agents and tried in Jerusalem after a lengthy investigation. He was finally sentenced to death and executed on 1 June 1962. How did the Eichmann trial lay the groundwork for transforming survivors into "survivors" and witnesses into "witnesses"? The Zionist narrative, the most important at the time, turned the trial into the last stage of an epic and heroic struggle to defend the Jewish nation, redeeming the victims' suffering by symbolically rectifying their statelessness. Some accounts of the trial also focus on how, outside of Israel, the trial universalised Jewish suffering and made it accessible to non-Jews as a story about the human capacity for evil.[7] Far less explored is how trial witnesses and observers shaped an alternative narrative about mass murder distinct from tales of tragic heroism like attorney general Gideon Hausner's Zionist account or the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. This alternative story cast survival not only in conventional heroic terms, but also as a source of unfathomable vulnerability more in keeping with the experiences the witnesses conveyed on the stand. The survivor recounted an inconceivable experience of terror and in the process challenged assumptions about the victims' purported failure to resist Nazi persecution.[8] These haunted figures articulated the difficulty of conveying their experiences by conjuring the dead in the courtroom, bringing them to life and bringing into presence the torment that had rendered resistance mostly desperate and survival a burden.

At the Jerusalem trial, survivor testimony actively supplemented the review of a multitude of documents with unusually rich, meaning-conferring narratives that placed victims centre stage by transforming Jewish survivors from passive objects, often of contempt, who did not fight back, into human beings constrained by unimaginable terror and despised by an enemy determined to wipe them off the face of the earth. Though Eichmann was under indictment, the witnesses were forced into a defensive position from the outset. Hausner famously asked them painful questions about why they had behaved weakly and passively in the face of the Nazi onslaught. The testimonies that recounted the pointlessness of resistance or escape punctuated the trial and were among its most harrowing moments. Hausner elicited this testimony because he aimed to undermine the then pervasive beliefs in Jewish cowardice and complicity, even at the risk of distressing witnesses. He forced survivors to describe the effects of terror, imminent death, the price of resistance, and the power of

7 Devin O. Pendas, The Eichmann Trial in Law and Memory, in: Jens Meierhenrich/Devin O. Pendas (ed.), Political Trials in Theory and History, Cambridge 2016, 226-228. Pendas historicises what is implicit in other accounts about the "globalisation" and "Americanisation" of the Holocaust.

8 Hanna Yablonka argues that the trial generated a "new heroism" by reference to Hansi Brand's testimony – one based on endurance rather than resistance – but she does not elaborate in any depth. Hanna Yablonka, Three Variations on the Testimony in the Eichmann Trial, in: David Bankier/Dan Michman (ed.), Holocaust Historiography in Context. Emergences, Challenges, Polemics, Achievements, New York/Jerusalem 2008, 577. One legal theorist argued that the prosecutor used nationhood to evoke heroism because efforts to emphasise the brutality of the Nazis alone could not confer "pride and respect" on survivors. Stephen Landsman, The Eichmann Case and the Invention of the Witness-Driven Atrocity Trial, in: Columbia Journal of Transnational Law 51 (2012) 69, 85. This is the sort of perspective Yablonka contested and that I call into question here, though clearly "new heroism" had its limits – it was not to emerge in earnest until the 1970s.

hope, compelling observers to grapple anew with their feelings that Jews should have put up more of a fight, which were as common in Israel as elsewhere. Hausner's questions about revolt were sometimes indirect, as when he asked why Jews continued to believe they would live in spite of what they knew about extermination camps after 1942. The testimony of Abba Kovner, leader of the Vilna ghetto resistance and also famous for regretting a statement he made about how Jews were led like lambs to the slaughter, described a hopeless world in which the illusion of hope prevailed and sealed Jews' fate.

> "*Judge Halevi:* At the end of your remarks you said: 'Between us and the enemy there was something more,' if I understood you correctly. What were you referring to?
>
> *Witness Kovner:* The illusion that we did not all share the same fate. That until the last moment, even if one knew that there was a Ponary [Paneriai, site of mass execution near Vilnius, Lithuania], they always gave us a spark, this distorted hope, that possibly you would be exempt. The frightful illusion produced frightful results of people wanting to prolong the life of some at the expense of others […] Only a minority that felt itself possibly less stricken, less misled, less under shock, due to its past, its education and its adherence to certain movements which trained people to give a personal example, perhaps only they could cope with it. And it is not, evidently, a matter of chance from where the people came in every ghetto, who formed the fighting nucleus. Perhaps it arose from the fact that they experienced less degradation, that they were less panic-stricken, and they knew better how to live in the ghetto as free men in every respect."[9]

Kovner emphasised the theme of hope and its ability to impede resistance. He speculated about the type of people who retained their humanity. They were a small minority, likely Zionists with training, who knew how to manage the degradation and panic from which even they were not free, as suggested by his use of the conditional "possibility" and "perhaps" in reference to "trained people".

Whatever his debt to Zionism, the memory of those too weak and too terrorised to fight was most engraved in Kovner's mind. In his testimony, the resistance hero remembered most acutely not an uprising, but the image of a terrified girl as she was shot. "If you will allow me", Kovner interrupted during Hausner's questions about the massacres at Ponary, "I shall describe the thing which is engraved in my memory most of all." He went on to describe the murder of a young girl about which a friend of his had told him, ending his story of how she was shot in the back by an Einsatzgruppen soldier with the words: "Why should I tell more?"[10]

Testimony refashioned survival as a form of extreme and miraculous endurance rather than conventional heroism, and as the experience of devastating and unfathomable loss. The dramatic contrast between received ideas about how human beings might fight and defeat their persecutors and the terror that discouraged all but the most desperate acts of resistance describes the incommensurable gap between the public's presumptions about how people might be expected to act under such circumstances and the survivors' experience. Participants, but also trial observers – Elie Wiesel, Hausner, Haim Gouri, Muriel Spark, Harry Mulisch, and others – figured the suffering that haunted most of the witnesses by invoking the deathly atmo-

9 The Trial of Adolf Eichmann. Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem [hereafter TAE], 9 vols., Jerusalem 1992–1995, Vol. 1, 466.

10 TAE, Vol. 1, 460.

sphere their testimonies brought into being. They also cast them as emissaries of the dead. Asked first by the attorney general and then by the judge whether he had worked in a Sonderkommando until July 1944, witness Avraham Karasik replied: "On 13 July 1944 they liquidated us."[11] Another witness, Dov Frieberg, who had been ordered to carry corpses in Sobibor, recounted how "the dead man – whom I believed to be dead – sat up and asked me: 'Is it still far to go?'"[12] Rivka Yoselewska's testimony was perhaps the most dramatic in this regard. It was given only one court session after Hausner announced that she had suffered a heart attack and might not be able to appear. She testified the next day. Shot along with her family and village, she was left for dead. As she put it: "the four whom we likened to Angels of Death shot each one of us separately."[13] She crawled out of the mass grave covered in blood, with nowhere to go. In despair, she sought to dig her way back into the grave, but it rebuffed her efforts. She slept on it for three nights and wandered around for several weeks, surviving because a sympathetic peasant took pity on her and gave her food, after which she joined a group of Jews hiding in the forest.

Yoselewska's testimony brought into being the dead and dying so dramatically that observers imagined her as a symbolic repository of cries from the mass grave. Her survival was miraculous, Elie Wiesel insisted, but she could not live in this "impure" world because her real home was with the dead.[14] Observers tried to imagine her powerlessness and subjection, which defied all narratives of heroic redemption. She was not only an Israeli heroine but also an otherworldly presence; she relived her death every day and was too pure to live on earth. As Moshe Perlman, writing on the trial for an English-language audience, stated: "She remarried, has two children, and now lives in the Ramat Gan garden suburb close to Tel Aviv. But you can tell from her face and the way she speaks that she relives her living death in the bloody pit every moment she is awake."[15]

Witnesses do not simply honor an oath to the dead by testifying, but bring their sacred bond with the deceased into being. These ghostly survivors took observers on a journey to hell, plunging them into flames, smoke, gas, and death. Israeli journalist Haim Gouri proclaimed: "One hundred eleven witnesses, an endless procession now receding from view, sinking and rising in a miasma of blood and smoke. One hundred and eleven proxies, each taking his or her turn on the witness stand, and leading us across the desolate landscape."[16] The witnesses spoke, the audience listened, and the room was transformed into an enormous meeting of the living and dead in which it was sometimes hard to distinguish between the two. It is as if the witnesses themselves had summoned the dead, the flames, and the souls into the courtroom.[17] Survivors not only testified about their experiences, they also appeared to observers as oracles of truth from another world: Some transmitted the voices of the dead in a flat, constrained, and humble delivery, as if self-abnegation would allow their agonised bond with the dead to surface and was a tone better suited to the enormity of

11 TAE, Vol. 1, 474.
12 TAE, Vol. 3, 1177.
13 TAE, Vol. 1, 516.
14 Elie Wiesel, Eichmann's Victims and the Unheard Testimony, in: Commentary 32 (1 December 1961) 6, 510-516. This essay is reprinted in revised form in Elie Wiesel, Legends of Our Time, New York 1968, 174-197, here 173.
15 Moshe Pearlman, The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann, New York 1963, 311. Interviewed in David Perlov's 1979 film Memories of the Eichmann Trial, Yoselewska repeated much the same thing about how she felt on a daily basis, but also remarked that many other people went through the same experience.
16 Haim Gouri, Facing the Glass Booth. The Jerusalem Trial of Adolf Eichmann, translated by Michael Swirsky, Detroit 2004, 140.
17 Here one might speak of secondary trauma.

the crimes committed against them.[18] Critics interpreted their testimony not only as free of sentimentality, but also as a form of self-surrender and an exercise in humility. The American writer Martha Gelhorn, covering the Eichmann trial for *The Atlantic Monthly*, wrote that "all of the witnesses were humble; none had anything much to say about his own life or acts. They were only reporting what they knew because they had seen and heard it, lived through it. […] They spoke of others."[19]

In his 1961 essay on the trial, Elie Wiesel, in despair about Hausner's questions about Jewish resistance, argued that Jews died without a struggle in order not to betray those who had perished before them.[20] "Knowing themselves abandoned, excluded, rejected by the rest of humanity, their walk to death, as haughty as it was submissive, became an act of lucidity, of protest, and not of acceptance and weakness."[21] Survivors preferred, he wrote, "not to hurl their defiance at men" but to "remain silent" in a monologue with the dead.[22] Hausner could not conceive the torment his questions must have inflicted on the witnesses, who now had to defend those who died not only from the usual suspects, but also from an Israeli prosecutor. Wiesel wrote:

> "It is by a strange irony of fate that the only ones who were, who still are fully conscious of their share of responsibility for the dead are those who were saved, the ghosts who returned from the dead. They do not feel this through any concept of original sin; they are Jews, they do not believe in original sin. The idea that rules them is more immediate, more agonizing, a part of their very being.
>
> Why did you not revolt? Why did you not resist? You were a thousand against ten, against one. Why did you let yourselves, like cattle, be led to the slaughter?"[23]

Angry at Hausner's provocation, Wiesel represented Jews courageously marching to their deaths with dignity, recasting Jewish resistance in keeping with the realities of death camps, and portraying Jewish survival in a new light. The dead now set an example for those still alive. In Wiesel's account, Jewish pride and protest are not intrinsic in resistance, but in the consciously chosen martyrdom of dying quietly without a struggle. He transformed behavior that the world stigmatised as weakness into a source of unheralded and magnificent strength that burdened survivors whose torments and responsibilities Hausner failed to comprehend.[24]

No longer cause for shame, survivors' stories of suffering recreated a world of horror and powerlessness that transformed the trial into a space of communal mourning and a forum for the transmission of terrible memories. Observers who were not survivors experienced testimony as a form of collective witnessing through which they were moved or illuminated. The trial represented a rhetorical erasure of the moral ambivalence that clung painfully to Jewish survivors of genocide. By capturing the harrowing nature of their experiences and the utter irrelevance of questions about why they had not resisted, the trial restored their dignity. The image of the 'living dead' expressed a relation to the dead that both redeemed suffering and in-

18 This tone of testimony is now most often equated with traumatised witnesses who narrate flatly what they feel in excess.

19 Martha Gelhorn, Eichmann and the Private Conscience, in: Atlantic Monthly (2 February 1962), 52-59. Available online: http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/62feb/eichmann.htm (7 October 2018).

20 Wiesel, Eichmann's Victims and the Unheard Testimony, 510-516.

21 Wiesel, Legends, 187.

22 Wiesel, Legends, 173.

23 Wiesel, Eichmann's Victims, quoted in Wiesel, Legends, 170.

24 Naomi Seidman, Elie Wiesel and the Scandal of Jewish Rage, Jewish Social Studies 3 (1996) 1, 1-19.

fused it with cultural significance. By transforming the survivor into a symbol of living death, trial observers imagined the survivor as a vulnerable victim who relives an unbearable past. Efforts to counter victim-blaming first accomplished by the Eichmann trial became pervasive in the United States after the late 1960s, and the symbol of the traumatized Jewish survivor expressed the unmitigated terror of modern violence and the possibilities for life after death. Critics questioned the victim-blaming work of Austrian-born psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim, who had accused Jews of going passively to their deaths; critics also took issue broadly with Hannah Arendt's interpretation of the complicity of the Jewish Councils in the Nazi genocide. By 1977, the American writer Terrence Des Pres could write that heroism was no longer reserved for tragic heroes, but was "commensurate with the sweep of ruin in our time".[25] The Holocaust survivor became central to perceiving and responding to the horror created by genocidal regimes in the late twentieth century, and supplanted heroic redemption with "survival".

By analysing testimonies of survivors in the light of the living death experience of Jewish Holocaust survivors, Des Pres and others, like the American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton, whose work was crucial in explaining the symptoms of surving mass death to a large audience, insisted that survival constituted the core experience of the twentieth century. "The survivor", Lifton wrote, "becomes Everyman. […T]he holocausts of the twentieth century have thrust the survivor ethos into special prominence, and imposed upon us all a series of immersions into death which mark our existence."[26] Lifton conceived survivors as psychologically injured people whose memory of the dead compelled them to strive for social justice, whether to campaign against the nuclear bomb (as did Hiroshima survivors) or against antisemitism and on behalf of Israel. Des Pres believed they possessed a luminous truth fit for dark times.

Survivors bore witness to the suffering they had endured and insisted on vigilance toward future suffering; they provided a model of social solidarity based upon a burning address to the world, in which the once-victim demanded that no one be abandoned to such a fate. After the 1970s, bearing witness to genocide became a modern, secular call to moral imagination and human conscience; survivors' "witnessing" turned them into "secular saints"[27] whose testimony was key to unravelling the "mystery" of the Holocaust.[28] The Eichmann trial's redemption of the survivor was essential to later Holocaust politics and its assertions of incomparable suffering. Survivors could not be cast in a 'heroic' role – the mere survival of victims who had not resisted but had endured their persecution had never before been a form of heroism. Survivors could not be heroes without the transformation of survival into a special form of endurance that gave cultural meaning to the distinct experience of genocide and restored dignity to the Nazis' Jewish victims. The Holocaust, as many have argued, became a "civil religion" in Western Europe and particularly in the United States, for many reasons: American Jews overestimated the force of antisemitism; younger Jews "fantasised" about having been "there" because they identified with their parents' suffering; the "religion" of the Holocaust substituted for a lack of ad-

25 Terrence Des Pres, The Survivor. An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps, Oxford 1976, 6.

26 Robert Jay Lifton, History and Human Survival. Essays on the Young and Old, Survivors and the Dead, Peace and War, and on Contemporary Psychohistory, New York 1961, 204; Robert Jay Lifton, Death in Life. Survivors of Hiroshima, New York 1968, 479.

27 David Roskies, Against the Apocalypse. Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture, Syracuse 1999, 7.

28 Alvin H. Rosenfeld/Irving Greenberg (ed.), Confronting the Holocaust. The Impact of Elie Wiesel, Bloomington 1978, xii.

herence to organised Jewish religion; and commemorative rituals evacuated memorialisation of substance and substituted cheap sentiment for a real engagement with Jewish death.[29]

All these arguments are important, if occasionally overstated. I want to argue differently that the moral role attributed to survivors in the late 1970s and now fading was not only a late symptom of sometimes empty forms of commemoration, but was also originally the *condition* for a positive Jewish as well as non-Jewish public memory of the victims of genocide. The Eichmann trial showed the world that camp conditions made any resistance at all a miracle, helped Israelis not to be ashamed of Holocaust victims, and redeemed victims' memory in the name of the Jewish state. Later, critics conferred moral authority upon survivors and transformed them into "secular saints". These truisms now make sense because the trial told a story about survivors that took on a life of its own over time. In the 1970s, mostly in the United States and less so in Western Europe, this haunted presence became the quintessential survivor, a purveyor of dark knowledge central to understanding the violence perpetrated by genocidal regimes in the twentieth century.

The Holocaust survivor symbolised an affirmative and universal message about human survival and its moral purpose. Bearing witness expressed the limits and possibilities of human becoming in the wake of Hiroshima and Auschwitz, not to mention the Soviet Gulag. Today those who "bear witness to genocide" are of course not Jewish witnesses alone. Bearing witness refers increasingly to the moral, legal, psychological, and physical labour of second- and third-party witnesses as well as traumatised victims all over the world; it describes the hard work of physicians and journalists in the field, lawyers as well as victims who testify at the International Criminal Court (ICC), and even the act of spectators looking at a photograph depicting atrocities. The Holocaust survivor has been replaced by a symbolic global victim of genocide in whose name we all "bear witness" – activists invoke this symbol as a rationale for the work of the ICC and of humanitarian organisations.[30] The global victim is thus a construction that, unlike the icon of the Holocaust survivor, refers to no specific time, place, or event, and no longer possesses the Holocaust witness's authority of experience. The Holocaust survivor symbolised Western Europeans' and Americans' belated discovery of their murderousness and their moral conscience. The global victim is also a moral symbol, but serves mostly as a haunting reminder of the pervasiveness and inevitability of genocide and represents the recognition conferred now on millions of victims. It represents the ubiquity and self-evidence of mass graves and traumatised survivors, not the shocked recognition that they exist.

In conclusion, if there is any 'lesson' to be learned from the reception of Holocaust survival in Western Europe and the United States, it is no longer that Jews were finally recognised. The history of how Jewish victims were belatedly recognised tells us much more about the social and cultural processes by which some victims and not others are mourned. From a Western perspective, the global victim of genocide for whom others "bear witness" now symbolises so many victims' woes that it is no

29 For these arguments, among others, see: Novick, The Holocaust in American Life; Gary Weissman, Fantasies of Witnessing. Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust, Ithaca 2004.

30 Sara Kendall and Sarah Nouwen discuss the idea of a symbolic victim on whose behalf the ICC pursues perpetrators of crimes against humanity and genocide. Their work is framed as a criticism of the ICC and global justice generally. Sara Kendall/Sarah Nouwen, Representational Practices at the International Criminal Court. The Gap between Juridified and Abstract Victimhood, in: Law and Contemporary Problems 76 (2014) 3-4, 241.

longer a referent for a specific event. Rather, the victim – Rwandan, Bosnian, Cambodian, and a vast array of others – on whose behalf human rights workers and courts labour, embodies a generic recognition that no one should be targeted for murder. Indeed, the image of genocide victims is now so symbolically versatile that their fate is also invoked, in more recent populist discourses, not only to refer to our responsibility for such victims but also to an overstrained Western conscience whose obligations to suffering others must have limits. Unlike the Holocaust survivor, who came to represent a shaken but determined Western moral conscience, the global victim of genocide is a symbol of an entirely new responsibility for victims that can no longer live up to its own promises.

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Das Buch Goldmann

Ingeborg Bachmanns Darstellung des postnazistischen Wien

Abstract

Ingeborg Bachmann applied the title *Das Buch Goldmann* to a writing project that preoccupied her from 1963/1964 until after the publication of her novel *Malina* in 1971. Yet her broad audience was not able to read and acknowledge this book as an independent work. Only with its publication in the Salzburg edition of Bachmann's complete works does it reveal her totally unusual ability to grasp politico-economic relationships (the immediate post-war period and the resulting Cold War in Vienna or the market mechanisms of the Frankfurt Book Fair …) and their tragic as well as comical repercussions for men and women – Jewish remigrants, ex-Nazis, untalented actresses, and writers without character. This novel's credibility is due to its highly unusual, precise, and unemotional language.

„Keine Lebensweisheit, keine Analyse, kein Resultat,
kein noch so tiefsinniger Aphorismus kann es an Eindringlichkeit und
Sinnfülle mit der recht erzählten Geschichte aufnehmen.“[1]

Geschichten, ja *die* Geschichte, die Geschichte ihres Landes, also Österreichs recht zu erzählen, war schon in der ersten Nachkriegszeit Ingeborg Bachmanns Ambition. Sogar ihre sorgsam verheimlichte Mitarbeit an der erfolgreichsten Radioserie dieser Jahre *Die Radiofamilie*[2] kann in dieser Richtung verstanden werden. Berühmt wurde sie aber als eine existentialistische, tragisch angehauchte deutsche Dichterin. Man denke an das Spiegeltitelblatt vom August 1954 mit schwarzem Rollkragenpullover, kurz abgeschnippelten Haaren, dunklem Lippenstift und traurigem, nach oben gerichteten Blick. Oder an ihre Selbstinszenierungen bei der Gruppe 47, als fragile, flüsternde Dichterin, die Taschentücher fallen ließ, damit dienstfertige deutsche Mannsbilder sie aufheben konnten.

In den 60er-Jahren ändert sich das alles, es ändert sich Bachmanns Leben und auch ihr Schreiben, ihr Stil, sie spricht von einem „großen Bruch“. „Es ist nicht nur die Zeit, die vergangen ist, ich habe mich wohl sehr verändert.“[3] Ihre Suche gilt nun einer neuen Form und Sprache für eine Prosa, die die historische, politisch-soziale Wirklichkeit darstellen soll. Es ist die Zeit ihrer ‚Heimkehr‘, obwohl sie in Rom bleibt, und diese Wirklichkeit ist die Nachkriegszeit in Wien. Sie erkennt, dass für dieses Projekt die poetische Sprache ihres 1961 erschienenen Erzählbandes *Das dreißigste Jahr* unangemessen ist. Unangemessen ist z. B., aus dem einzelnen Satz ein Kunstwerk machen zu wollen, jeden Satz hochzutreiben, denn:

1 Hannah Arendt, Gedanken zu Lessing. Von der Menschlichkeit in finsteren Zeiten, [Rede, gehalten am 28. September 1959 bei Entgegennahme des Lessing-Preises der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg], in: Ursula Ludz (Hg.), Hannah Arendt, Menschen in finsteren Zeiten, München, Zürich [2]1989, 17-48, hier 38.
2 Ingeborg Bachmann, Die Radiofamilie, hg. von Joseph McVeigh, Berlin 2011.
3 Ingeborg Bachmann, Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden. Gespräche und Interviews, hg. von Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, München, Zürich 1983, 108.

> „das ist nicht richtig in der Prosa. Die Prosa bedeutet etwas anderes, der einzelne Satz ist nichts, das Ganze ist es: Was hat man zu sagen, wie hat man darzustellen, wie treten die Figuren auf, wie kommen sie, wie gehen sie. Und das habe ich damals noch nicht verstanden, und ich habe deswegen meine ersten Geschichten in mancher Hinsicht verfehlt, weil ich immer noch gemeint habe, jeden Satz hinaufheben zu müssen."[4]

Fanny, die erste weibliche Protagonistin dieser anderen, neuen Prosa, entsteht im Jahr 1963, unmittelbar nach Bachmanns traumatischer Erfahrung mit Max Frischs Roman *Mein Name sei Gantenbein*, in dem sie sich und ihre Freunde verzerrt dargestellt sah. Fanny ist die Sekretärin des Wiener PEN-Clubs und eine „Wienerin". Dieser Ausdruck „eine Wienerin" wird nun für Ingeborg Bachmann ein wichtiger Begriff, um ihre neue Prosa zu beschreiben. Die ‚Wienerinnen' werden aus der Distanz beschrieben, „von außen", sie sind – und das ist sehr wichtig – tragische, aber zugleich auch *komische* Figuren. Später beginnt die Bachmann zwei Romane, die *nicht* um Wienerinnen, sondern um Kärntnerinnen kreisen, also expliziter Bachmanns Biographie nachzeichnen. Zuerst *Das Buch Franza,* das aber 1966 abgebrochen wird, um mit *Malina* zu beginnen, dem Werk, das im Jahr 1971 als erster Roman Ingeborg Bachmanns erscheinen wird. Die Arbeit an der Wienerin Fanny begann also Jahre *vor* der Konzeption von *Malina* und wurde fast im Geheimen fortgeführt. Schon im Frühjahr 1966 hatte sich die PEN-Club-Sekretärin Fanny zu einer berühmten Schauspielerin und zur Protagonistin der Erzählung *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann* verwandelt, und im Oktober desselben Jahres weitet sich die Erzählung aus zu einem „Buch", das nicht aus einer, sondern aus zwei parallel erzählten Geschichten bestehen soll, die Fannys und die der Hamburger Journalistin Eka von Kottwitz, von denen auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse im Oktober 1966 die Rede ist. Bachmann beschreibt also in Rom im Oktober 1966 etwas, was zur gleichen Zeit in Frankfurt stattfinden soll. Die wichtigsten Figuren dieses Romans werden in einem einleitenden Tableau vorgestellt. Auf dem Frankfurter Flughafen treffen sich Bachmanns Alter-Ego Malina, der junge Jonas (in dem Peter Handke zu erkennen ist), die Hamburger Journalistin Eka von Kottwitz (im Rollstuhl) mit ihrer komisch-weisen Schwägerin Baby, die nach Fanny die zweite „Wienerin" in Bachmanns Prosa ist. Dann kommt auch der „Mann von der Goldmann" in den Blick, d. h. der nach Wien re-migrierte Ernst Goldmann, „der sich sehr verändert hat" und nach Tel Aviv fliegt:

> „Zu Beginn der Frankfurter Buchmesse […], kurz nach der Ankunft des Flugs aus Wien, kam es auf dem Rhein-Main-Flughafen zu einem Zusammentreffen von [verschiedenen] Personen […].
>
> Aus der Paßkontrolle näherten sich zwei Männer, ein vierzigjähriger und ein einundzwanzigjähriger witzig aussehender Struwwelpeter, mit schwarzen Locken, die man besser gleich zu erkennen gibt, da es sich um das *junge steirische Genie Klaus Jonas* handelte, dessen Fotos jetzt in vielen Zeitungen und auf den Bildschirmen zu sehen waren, und Malina. Als Malina mit Jonas bei der Rolltreppe stand und sie auf ihre Koffer warteten, sah er weit hinten einen Rollstuhl und stand einen Moment verlegen da, denn er wußte jetzt nicht, ob er hingehen und die *Frau im Rollstuhl* begrüßen sollte, er hatte immerhin noch die Möglichkeit zu tun, als hätte er sie nicht gesehen. Außerdem erkannte er jetzt die *jüngere Frau*, die der Frau im Rollstuhl etwas aus der Handtasche nahm, und nun kam auch eine Stewardeß und wippte

4 Gerda Haller, Ingeborg Bachmann. Ein Tag wird kommen, Gespräche in Rom, mit einem Nachwort von Hans Höller, Salzburg, Wien 2004, 77.

> adrett und hilfsbereit vor den beiden Damen, und Malina sah plötzlich die Koffer auftauchen und entschied sich noch nicht.
> In dem Moment sah Jonas ihn an und sagte, haben Sie übrigens aufgepaßt, ich glaube, das war *Goldmann*. Ich kann mich auch irren, aber es ist schon möglich, weil er nach Tel Aviv fliegt, und ich habs einfach gehört, weil er dreimal gefragt hat. Ich meine, *der Mann von der Goldmann*. Malina sagte nichts darauf, er hatte Goldmann nicht gesehen, und er konnte jetzt Jonas nicht gut sagen, sagte es plötzlich und selber überrascht: So, er hat sich sehr verändert. Wenn Sie ihn erst jetzt kennengelernt haben, dann können Sie sich sicher nicht vorstellen, wie er war."[5]

Zwischen den Ständen der Buchmesse erzählt Malina dann Jonas die Geschichte von Fanny und die von Eka, zwei Frauen, die, wie die Bachmann selbst, durch die Indiskretion ihrer schriftstellernden Männer traumatisiert werden, Fanny von ihrem jugendlichen Geliebten, dem angehenden burgenländischen Schriftsteller Toni Marek, der sie und vor allem ihre Freunde in seinem ersten Roman bloßstellt, und Eka vom arrivierten deutschen Schriftsteller Jung, der – „eine moralische Instanz unsres Kontinents" – unschwer als Max Frisch zu erkennen ist. Beide Frauen haben sich in ihrer Männerwahl geirrt. Fannys gierige Liebe macht sie blind für Mareks einzige Gier, nämlich dank der Hilfe der berühmten Schauspielerin möglichst schnell in Wiens ‚guter Gesellschaft' aufgenommen zu werden und in Deutschland als Schriftsteller zu reüssieren. Eka übersieht, dass ihr Stil, ihre Art sich zu verhalten, zu bewegen, zu reden, und nicht zuletzt auch ihr literarischer und ethischer Geschmack eine ständige Irritation für den trotz allen Erfolgs unsicheren, kleinbürgerlichen Jung bedeuten. Beide, sowohl Jung als auch Marek, sind natürlich auf der Buchmesse präsent.

Der 2017 erschienene Band der Salzburger Bachmann-Edition *Das Buch Goldmann* ist der Versuch, den Roman zu rekonstruieren, den die Autorin nur nach dem später begonnenen Roman *Malina* publizieren wollte. Warum hat sie im Winter 1966/1967 dem Verlag nicht das schon weit fortgeschrittene Goldmann-Buch angeboten, sondern hat ein neues, *Malina*, angefangen? Sie hat dies sicherlich auch deswegen getan, weil ihr klar wurde, dass für einen großen deutschen Verlag (und vielleicht auch für das deutsche Publikum) ein auf ein liebendes Ich und dessen kalt rationales Alter-Ego zentrierter Roman wie *Malina* akzeptabler gewesen wäre als das um den deutschen Buchmarkt kreisende *Buch Goldmann*. Sie hoffte auf den Erfolg von *Malina*, um danach auch *Goldmann* bei Suhrkamp durchsetzen zu können. Im *Buch Goldmann* überschneiden sich also drei Themen: 1. das der „weiblichen Opfer", das hier aber, viel zentraler als in *Malina* und in *Das Buch Franza*, auch das Thema der Dummheit und Gier von Frauen ist, die an ihrem Desaster nicht unschuldig sind, 2. das der Perversionen des deutschen Buchmarktes, der von Indiskretionen lebt, und 3. das der schwierigen Rückkehr eines emigrierten Juden (Ernst Goldmann) nach Wien. Diese drei Themen sind miteinander verschränkt und es ist also fast komisch, wenn im Klappentext von *Das Buch Goldmann* die Frankfurter Buchmesse und die Erfahrungen der beiden Protagonistinnen mit dieser mörderischen Arena einfach weggelassen werden.

5 Ingeborg Bachmann, Das Buch Goldmann, hg. von Marie Luise Wandruszka, in: Ingeborg Bachmann. Werke und Briefe (Salzburger Bachmann Edition), hg. von Hans Höller und Irene Fußl, unter Mitarbeit von Silvia Bengesser und Martin Huber, Redaktion Raimund Fellinger, München-Zürich-Berlin 2017, 193 f., im Folgenden Seitenangaben im Text [Hervorhebungen der Verfasserin].

Gerechtigkeit und Rache

Ernst Goldmann und Fanny verlieren ihre Heiterkeit erst wenn die historisch verbrieften Verbrechen schon längst geschehen sind, wenn wieder die Normalität herrscht. Beide verlangen Gerechtigkeit: Goldmann – am Anfang erwägte die Autorin für ihn auch den Namen Wiesenthal – wird ein Erforscher von Nazi-Verbrechen, Fanny will sich rächen, will ihren jugendlichen, infamen Liebhaber Marek erschießen, und Malina, der Erzähler auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse, vollbringt diese Rache auf eine effizientere Weise für sie, indem er dem jungen Jonas den niederträchtigen Charakter seines Schriftstellerkollegen Marek enthüllt. Rache ist aktiv und eine Ressource, wenn der Täter sich keiner Schuld bewusst ist, nicht um Verzeihung bittet, oder eine andere Form der Bestrafung unmöglich ist.

Ingeborg Bachmann besaß Hannah Arendts *Vita activa*. Darin stellt diese apodiktisch fest:

> „Es gehört zu den elementaren Gegebenheiten im Bereich der menschlichen Angelegenheiten, daß wir außerstande sind zu verzeihen, wo uns nicht die Wahl gelassen ist, uns auch anders zu verhalten und gegebenenfalls zu bestrafen, und daß umgekehrt diejenigen Vergehen, die sich als unbestrafbar herausstellen, gemeinhin auch diejenigen sind, die wir außerstande sind zu vergeben."[6]

Auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse erklärt Malina dem jungen Revoluzzer Jonas, „der ein halbes Jahr zuvor mit einem Pamphlet die ganze etablierte Literatur vor dem Kopf gestoßen hatte" (138), den Zusammenhang zwischen seiner „alten" Sprache und seinen „alten" Begriffen":

> „denn Sie hören, ich gehorche einer alten [Sprache] und alten Begriffen, und ich wende mich zurück wie alle Leute, die auf das Geschehene schauen und erstarren, und vielleicht sagt Ihnen ein Engel rechtzeitig, schau nicht zurück, und dann werden Sie Frankfurt nicht sehen, das in Rauch und Schwefelgestank aufgeht, wie ich es heute […] aufgehen sehe, weil die Rache gekommen ist. Nicht die meine, denn ich bin ja gekommen, zu erzählen und nicht zu richten, aber in allen Erzählungen spukt das Richten mit und das Weinen im Rauch, wenn das zum Himmel steigt und erzählt wird." (165)

Das Richten und Weinen, die Leidenschaft dieses eben *doch* rächenden Malina des *Goldmann*-Buchs unterscheidet ihn radikal von seinem berühmteren kühlen Namensvetter, nämlich von dem Malina, den wir im *Buch Malina* finden.

Balzac und Dante

„Alte Sprache" und „alte Begriffe", das bezieht sich auf Balzac, Bachmanns Lieblingslektüre in den 60er-Jahren. Seine *Comédie humaine* will, wie deren Vorbild, Dantes *Divina Commedia*, ein Gerichtstag sein, will richtend eine Welt darstellen, die von der „Gier" regiert wird. Dante stößt schon zu Beginn seiner Reise auf eine magere Wölfin, deren Magerkeit Ausdruck ihrer unendliche Gier ist („di tutte brame carca nella sua magrezza."[7] Je mehr sie frisst, desto dünner wird sie, ein großartiges Bild für die Gier!). Balzac, stellt in seinem Roman *Verlorene Illusionen* dar, wie die

6 Hannah Arendt, Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben, München 1967, 307.
7 Dante Alighieri, Inferno I, vv. 49-50., in Stefan Georges Übertragung: „Und eine wölfin die mit allen gieren/ Beladen war trotz ihrer magren knochen".

Welt der Zeitungen von eben dieser Gier regiert wird. Es sind also sehr alte Begriffe, die aber immer noch gültig sind. Wenn Malina dasselbe wie Balzac an Hand der „kleinen Welt" des Buchmarkts der 60er-Jahre zeigt, so wird ein paar Jahre später der amerikanische Filmregisseur Robert Altman alle seine Filme in solch kleinen, von Gier bestimmten Welten ansiedeln. Die Welt von Hollywoods Filmstudios in *The Player*, der Country-Industrie in *Nashville* … Altman nennt das, was die Bachmann eine „kleine Welt" und „ein Schlachthaus" nennt, eine „Arena". Es ist dasselbe, und dahinter steht dieselbe Ambition, die Dante oder Balzac regierte, nämlich die Gegenwart zu begreifen und Möglichkeiten zu finden, in diesen Arenen zu leben und zu wirken, ohne sich ihnen auszuliefern.[8] Diese politische Ambition bestimmte auch Ingeborg Bachmann. Ihre spezifische Arena, der Buchmarkt, wurde dank des als Schock erlebten Erscheinens von Max Frischs Roman transparent und darstellbar. Wobei ihr eigenes Verhalten kritisierbar wurde, denn was Malina dem jungen Jonas als absurdes und dabei selbstzerstörerisches Agieren der Schriftsteller in Frankfurt zeigt, z. B. dass sie unentwegt Vorschüsse kassieren und sich damit in eine totale finanzielle Abhängigkeit von den Verlagen hinein manövrieren, dasselbe hatte auch Ingeborg Bachmann getan. Auch Malina ist ein Schriftsteller, doch er verfährt anders, er ist von keinem Verlag finanziell abhängig, als „Tarnung" arbeitet er im Heeresmuseum in Wien. Im Herbst 1966 ist er auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse, quasi um Studien für sein nächstes Buch zu betreiben, also für *Das Buch Goldmann.* Malina erklärt Jonas den Buchmarkt und erzählt von Schriftstellern ohne Charakter (auch die Formel „Talent und Charakter", dass also Talent allein nicht genügt, übernimmt Ingeborg Bachmann von Balzac), von Schriftstellern ohne wirkliches Interesse für die sie umgebende Welt, die deshalb ihr privates Leben, ihre Ehegeschichten als Thema bevorzugen und so die in Frankfurt unsichtbar bleibenden weiblichen Opfer produzieren (wie Eka und Fanny, aber es werden auch Eleonora Duse, Lady Byron, die Gräfin Tolstoi, die Frauen von Picasso und Marilyn Monroe genannt). Diese Opfer sind mitschuldig. Wenn die Bachmann dagegen von Kärntnerinnen schreibt, von Franza, oder vom weiblichen Ich im Roman *Malina*, scheint es ihr viel schwerer zu fallen, diese Frauen zu kritisieren. Im Unterschied zur „anstrengenden", „freudlosen" Arbeit mit den Kärntnerinnen war sie aber, wie sie selbst sagt, beim Schreiben der Fanny-Texte oder später der Wienerinnen-Erzählungen des *Simultan*-Bandes, immer glücklich.[9] Apologetische Selbstinszenierungen können halt paradoxerweise sehr anstrengend und sehr unerfreulich sein, während umgekehrt eine radikale (Selbst)kritik befreiend wirken kann. Also: die Geschichte einer Wienerin und die einer Hamburgerin. Trotzdem soll das Buch im Titel nur den Namen der einen haben, warum? Weil alles in Österreich, in Wien beginnt. Weil das die Welt ist, die die Autorin kennt, weil sie dort ihre prägendsten Jugendjahre verbracht hat, weil diese, wie sie sagt, ihr „Kapital" sind. Und weil sie, wieder wie sie selbst sagt, nur von Wien weiß, wie die verschiedensten Menschen dort sprechen.[10] Diese gesprochene Sprache soll nun, im Unterschied zu der ihrer Gedichte, die sie berühmt gemacht haben, ihre neue, vielleicht – wenn wir an die *Radiofamilie* der 50er-Jahre denken – nur wiederentdeckte Sprache sein.

8 Ein aktuelles Beispiel für eine mögliche Haltung in dieser Arena bietet die Erfolgsautorin Elena Ferrante, aus deren Werken und Schriften man ersehen kann, dass ihre Verweigerung, als identifizierbare Person im Literatur-Zirkus aufzutreten, sich auch der Kenntnis von Ingeborg Bachmanns Werk und Leben verdankt.

9 Bachmann, Das Buch Goldmann, Kommentar, 309-311.

10 Bachmann, Gespräche und Interviews, 141.

Nachkriegskatholizismus

Malina erzählt von Fanny Wischnewski, die im Nachkriegswien auf den amerikanischen Kulturoffizier Goldmann trifft, einen re-emigrierten Wiener Juden, und ihn heiratet. Später lassen sich die beiden im Einvernehmen scheiden, und danach verliebt sich Fanny in ihren unsäglichen Marek. Fannys ganze Geschichte spielt in Wien vom Kriegsende bis zu ihrem Tod, Mitte der 60er-Jahre. Wie setzt Ingeborg Bachmann die Akzente in ihrer Beschreibung der Wiener Nachkriegszeit?

> „Es war eine Zeit, in der die Kritik alle aufforderte, nachzuholen, dabei war es höchst seltsam, was gespielt und gelesen wurde, und während in einigen Studentengruppen Horváth von Nestroy ausprobiert wurde, lasen andre vor allem katholische Schriftsteller, als gäbe es einen Katholizismus nachzuholen, der doch nicht in sieben Jahren einfach verschwunden sein konnte, und jedenfalls war es ein neuer, und es gab Predigten am Sonntag, die man ganz gut Predigten für Intellektuelle oder für das bessere Wien nennen konnte, wo man Rouault und damit überhaupt moderne Kunst zuließ und sich so weit vorwagte, über Picasso zu reden, als wäre er die Hl. Therese von Avila.
> Zwischendurch gab es andauernd Auseinandersetzungen über Heidegger und Ernst Jünger, den Existenzialismus in Deutschland und Frankfurt, aber auch das war den Katholiken vorbehalten, die sich kokett angegriffen und ins Gespräch gezogen sahen, aber die Koketterie nahmen sie selber nicht wahr, und die Leute gaben sich auch alle Mühe, diese Artikel zu lesen und sie zu verstehen.“ (26 f.)

Dieselbe ironische Skepsis kann man auch in Hannah Arendts Einschätzung des religiösen Aufschwungs in der Nachkriegszeit finden. Der Wiener Nachkriegskatholizismus war wohl auch für Ingeborg Bachmann ein etwas sonderbares „gesellschaftliches Unternehmen“,[11] was sie aber nicht daran hinderte, sich für religiöse „Selbstdenker“ zu interessieren, wie Simone Weil, oder Alois Dempf, bei dem sie gerne promoviert hätte. Dieser ungewöhnliche Katholik hatte sich 1933 an einer Kampfschrift gegen Alfred Rosenbergs *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* beteiligt, gegen dessen abstruse Ideen auch sein 1934 erschienenes Buch über den von Rosenberg vereinnahmten mittelalterlichen Mystiker Meister Eckhart gerichtet war. Bei Eckhart konnte Ingeborg Bachmann das in ihrem, wie sie sagt, „schönsten Gedicht“, *Böhmen liegt am Meer*, dargestellte positive, „weltaufmachende“ (Hans Höller) „Zugrundegehen“ finden.

Theaterwelt und Wiener Gesellschaft

Die erste Fanny ist eine PEN-Club-Sekretärin, 1966 wird sie, dank Ernst Goldmann, eine berühmte Schauspielerin. Wien wird als eine Theaterstadt beschrieben, alle wichtigen Theater kommen vor: Burg- und Akademietheater, Josefstadt, Volkstheater und auch die kommunistische Scala, in der Schauspieler wie Karl Paryla, Otto Tausig, Therese Giehse auftraten und wo Klassiker wie Shakespeare, Lessing, Grillparzer, Wiener Volkstheater, wie Raimund und Nestroy, russische Autoren, wie Tschechow und Gorki, und auch Brecht aufgeführt wurden. Anfangs, in den unmittelbaren Nachkriegsjahren, scheint auch Goldmann nur vergessen zu wollen. Es

11 Hannah Arendt, Einige Fragen der Ethik. Vorlesung in vier Teilen (New School for Social Research, New York 1965). In: Hannah Arendt, Über das Böse. Eine Vorlesung zu Fragen der Ethik. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Jerome Kohn. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Ursula Ludz. Nachwort von Franziska Augstein. München, Zürich 2007, 7-150, hier 30.

scheint ihm, als amerikanischen Kulturoffizier, hauptsächlich darum zu gehen, an die Theaterwelt der Vorkriegszeit anschließen zu können. Er will aus seiner Fanny die perfekte Wienerin machen, sie lernt das von ihm, der

> „sich in Hollywood eine so genaue Vorstellung davon bewahrt oder erst gemacht haben mußte, daß es ihm gelang, aus einer etwas inkoloren Fanny den Inbegriff einer Wienerin zu machen, ihr die richtigen Pausen beizubringen, das Lässige, das Vague, das Merkwürdige, in dem sie es dann wirklich zu einer Perfektion brachte, die Goldmann dann aber nicht mehr gut als sein Werk würdigen konnte, weil er, als sein Ziel erreicht war, nicht mehr Fannys Mann war, und Fannys andre Männer von den Auswirkungen der Goldmannschen Schule zwar betroffen wurden, aber nicht wissen konnten, daß man das nicht am Reinhardt Seminar lernte und auch damit nicht direkt vom Himmel gesegnet war, aber an Fanny schien alles so natürlich und der Kern ihres Wesens zu sein, daß kein Mensch sich mehr Fanny als Flakhelferin hätte vorstellen können, nicht einmal ein Wort wie Flak hätte man sich aus ihrem Mund vorstellen können, sie hätte zumindest gesagt, Herrschaft, wie haben die damals gesagt, nun, du weißt schon, womit sie diese Flieger da herunterholen wollten, also so ein Dings.
> Was, gibts das heute noch? Ja wo denn?“ (267 f.)

Dank dieser Schule wird Fanny berühmt, doch diese Berühmtheit ist nicht von Dauer:

> „Es gab eine stillschweigende Übereinkunft, daß die Goldmann nicht zu kritisieren sei, aber auch eine, nach der man sich doch klar war, daß man sich eine schönere edlere Iphigenie nicht vorstellen konnte, aber ihr Griechischsein so damenhaft war, daß man darüber Goethe vergaß, und am besten war sie doch in Boulevardstücken wie ‚Danke für die wundervollen Rosen‘ und ähnlichen Stücken, wo in englischen Landhäusern Tee getrunken wurde, und das gefiel ausnehmend in Wien, wo man noch Neskaffee trank […].“ (263)

Fanny gehört zur Wiener sogenannten „guten Gesellschaft“, die sich im Salon der Antoinette Altenwyl trifft, und sich im Sommer im Salzkammergut, und im Winter in Kitzbühel oder Lech wiederfindet. (In der Darstellung dieses Ambientes ist Ingeborg Bachmann Meisterin, selbst der Roman *Malina* verdankt dieser Kunst wohl seine besten Seiten.) Zu dieser Gesellschaft gehören der aus dem Exil zurückgekehrte Ernst Goldmann, aber auch Namen prominenter Nationalsozialisten, wie Kaltenbrunner oder Ertel, werden genannt.

Fanny, ihre Mutter und die Tanten verdrängen die Nazizeit mit Wiener Eleganz. Aber auch Malinas Schwester hatte „keine Ahnung“ und betrachtete wohl, wie in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit Ingeborg Bachmann selbst, den Nationalsozialismus als ein „rein deutsches Phänomen“.[12] Auch in Fannys Familie gibt es verdeckte Schandtaten. Der Selbstmord ihres Vaters, 1938 beim Einmarsch der Deutschen, wird von Mutter und Tanten als Heldentat gefeiert:

Denn es hatte eben doch österreichische Offiziere gegeben, die nach Schuschniggs letzter Rede, es lebe Österreich, gewußt hatten, welche Konsequenzen sie zu ziehen hatten, er wollte nicht seine Leute opfern, er hatte sich selber geopfert (274).

Doch Fanny entdeckt das wahre Motiv: Selbstmord wegen „Schande“:

> „In Wirklichkeit war der Oberst Wischnewski ebenso wie Fey [Führer der austrofaschistischen Heimwehr, MLW] keineswegs ein Opfer gewesen und

12 Vgl. McVeigh, Ingeborg Bachmanns Wien, 194.

> so großer Patriot, sondern er hatte eine so zwielichtige Rolle gespielt bei dem Dollfußmord, und sein Selbstmord war keine Heldentat gewesen, sondern ein Akt der Verzweiflung, der Dissimulation, damit das nie an die Öffentlichkeit komme, welche drei- und vierfache Rolle Leute wie er in der ersten Republik gespielt hatten." (274)

Der Kalte Krieg und die unheiligen Allianzen

> „Zwanzig Jahre später erscheint es jedem lächerlich und unwahrscheinlich, wie Menschen sich in einer bestimmten historischen Situation verhalten haben, welchen Wert es etwa hatte, in den Ruinen von Wien am laufenden Band Claudel oder O'Neill zu spielen oder Eliot. Wie es aber eine offizielle geistige Vorbereitung gibt, so gibt es auch eine geheime in jeder Stadt, und man hätte damals wie zu jeder Zeit überall mehr auf die hören sollen, die *nicht* den Mund aufmachten." (263 f.)

Wenn Bachmann von einer geheimen „geistigen Vorbereitung" schreibt, so meint sie die auf den Kalten Krieg. Schon im sogenannten *Eugen-Roman*, in welchem auch Fanny zum ersten Mal vorkommt, gab es den Kommunisten Stepanek, der in einem beeindruckenden Monolog von seiner nach den ersten Nachkriegsjahren unhaltbar gewordenen Situation spricht. Ihm ist „das inzestuöse Leben" der Emigrantenzirkel in New York oder London ein Graus, doch in Wien lebt er nun in totaler Isolation, nur die „Ostdeutschen" drucken ihm hin und wieder einen Artikel, zuletzt „eine kleine Studie über Picasso".[13]

Der Kalte Krieg kann töten:

> „er wurde mit Worten gemacht und einigen tödlich ausgehenden Freundschaften, wie man später sehen wird, und man soll also nicht sagen, daß es kalte Kriege in der Zeit des permanenten Glaubenskriegs gebe, die keine Opfer forderten. Deutsch, der damals noch nicht wußte, daß er an die vordersten Linien geraten würde, saß noch einträchtig mit den Kramers beisammen, und niemand hätte gedacht, daß er zu Kramers Tod führen würde, d. h. daß man mit Worten töten könnte.
>
> Er schrieb aus Wien, man müsse unbedingt zurück, sei es aus New York oder aus der Schweiz, hier sei das Leben, hier sei eine herrliche Jugend, hier fange die Neue Zeit an, hier werde einem zwar nichts wiedergutgemacht, aber es sei die Wiedergutmachung. In New York und London las man diese Briefe mit spöttischen und sarkastischen Bemerkungen untermischt vor, aber hie und da tat einer unfreiwillig seine Wirkung, aus London reiste Herz zurück und Steckel kam auch wieder, er ließ sich anstecken von der Freude einer ganz kleinen Gruppe." (265)

Dieser Herz heißt im 1995 erschienenen *Todesarten*-Projekt noch Heer. Die Herausgeber dachten, es handele sich hierbei um den Historiker Friedrich Heer, der war aber im Krieg als deutscher Soldat in Norddeutschland stationiert gewesen. Im Typoskript steht „Her", das weist auf die vielleicht beste, brisant politische Erzählung des schon erwähnten frühen Bandes *Das Dreißigste Jahr*, auf *Unter Mördern und Irren.* Herz ist schon dort ein politisch rechts stehender Remigrant. Die Erzählung *Unter Mördern und Irren* zeigt, wie eine unheilige Allianz entsteht zwischen den ver-

13 Ingeborg Bachmann, „Todesarten"-Projekt. Kritische Ausgabe. Unter Leitung von Robert Pichl, hg. von Monika Albrecht und Dirk Göttsche. München, Zürich: 1995, Band I, 100-102.

schwiegenen Ex-Nazis und den gleichfalls, wenn auch aus anderen Gründen schweigenden rechtsstehenden Juden. Beide Fraktionen wollen nicht von der Nazizeit reden. So isolieren Herz, der im Dritten Reich fliehen musste, und die mit ihm im Zeichen des Kalten Kriegs alliierten ehemaligen Täter im Nachkriegswien, die beiden Jüngeren, Friedl und den Erzähler, die einen Neuanfang wollen. Zum Schluss der Erzählung wiederholt der Erzähler einen Ausdruck Friedls, dass die Opfer „zu nichts" sind und fügt hinzu: „Wer aber weiß das? Wer wagt das zu sagen?"[14] In dem parallel zu dieser Erzählung (konzipierten und abgebrochenen) Text *Auf das Opfer darf sich keiner berufen*, stehen provozierende Sätze wie:

> „Es ist nicht wahr, daß die Opfer mahnen, bezeugen, Zeugenschaft für etwas ablegen, das ist eine der furchtbarsten und gedankenlosesten, schwächsten Poetisierungen.
> Aber der Mensch, der nicht Opfer ist, ist im Zwielicht, er ist die zwielichtige Existenz par excellence, auch der beinahe zum Opfer gewordene [also Herz, MLW] geht mit seinen Irrtümern weiter, stiftet neue Irrtümer, er ist nicht „in der Wahrheit" […]. Auf das Opfer darf sich keiner berufen. Es ist Mißbrauch. Kein Land und keine Gruppe, keine Idee, darf sich auf ihre Toten berufen."[15]

Liebe im Postnazismus

Auch Fanny und Goldmann konnten nicht über die Nazizeit reden. Er gab es auf, aus ihr, aber auch aus ihrer Mutter und ihren Tanten „je einen Bericht über sieben Jahre Nazizeit herauszubekommen" (153 f.).

Zwischen Fanny und Goldmann passiert aber dann etwas Merkwürdiges. Ganz unvermutet lassen sich die beiden scheiden und feiern sehr elegant diese Scheidung mit ihren Freunden beim Heurigen. Ihre Bestürzung nach der Feier wird aber mit einer Eindringlichkeit dargestellt, die sich dem sehr ungewöhnlichen Stil einer Autorin verdankt, die keine Gefühle analysiert, sondern alles quasi von „außen" sieht und nur die Gesten und die Worte, die gesagt wurden, anführt:

> „Fannys Strahlen hielt an, bis sie mit Goldmann im Auto saß und er langsam mit dem Schlüssel hantierte, ihn verfehlte, es wieder versuchte. Verlaß mich nie, sagte Fanny leise.
> Aber Fanny, sagte Goldmann.
> Nie, bitte nie. Sie schluchzte plötzlich und lachte und zuhause fröstelte sie und ließ sich von ihm ins Bett bringen. Das wird eine Grippe, du, sagte sie, garantiert eine Grippe. Jetzt habe ich vergessen, meinen Herrn anzurufen. Hol ihn der Kuckuck, Goldmann ging ans Telefon und rief Milan an, berichtete ausführlich über Fannys erhöhte Temperatur und verabredete für sie und Milan einen späteren Zug nach Salzburg.
> In acht Tagen sind wir doch wieder zurück, sagte Fanny, bitte schau nicht so feierlich drein.
> Mir ist aber viel feierlicher zumute als am Hochzeitstag. Weißt du noch?
> Er versuchte zu scherzen, sie fingen miteinander zu spielen an, weißt du noch, sie wußte, er wußte, immer weißt du noch." (88 f.)

14 Ingeborg Bachmann, Erzählungen, in: Ingeborg Bachmann, Werke, hg. von Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, Clemens Münster, München, Zürich 1978, 2. Band, hier: 177, 186.

15 Ingeborg Bachmann, Kritische Schriften, hg. von Monika Albrecht und Dirk Göttsche, München, Zürich 2005, 351.

Dieses „weißt du noch, sie wußte, er wußte, immer weißt du noch" könnte man als das erfahrungsgesättigste Liebesgedicht Ingeborg Bachmanns bezeichnen. Dazu passt auch, was Fanny ihrer Freundin Klara erklärt:

> „Wir [Fanny und Goldmann, MLW] waren ganz anders, es war alles anders, als Ihr es begreifen könnt. Ja, ich sage eben Ihr, weil es mir paßt und weil es wahr ist. Wir waren gut zueinander. Sowas begreift eben niemand. Gutsein, man muß gutsein können, aber man kann eben nicht immer, unter lauter Hottentotten. Ernst ist kein Hottentott." (90)

Hottentotten, das sind nicht die Afrikaner, denen die Buren diesen verächtlich klingenden Namen verpassten, sondern Hottentotten sind Klara und die sog. gute Wiener Gesellschaft, die es anscheinend überhaupt nicht versteht, gut zu sein. Gut sein, besonders in dem, was man intime Beziehungen nennt, ist ein Gebot, das Ingeborg Bachmann nun, nach ihrem „Bruch", nach der Erfahrung mit *ihrer* „moralischen Instanz unsres Kontinents", in den von ihr so geliebten Libretti Hugo von Hofmannsthals (im *Rosenkavalier*, in *Arabella*) wiederfand. Fanny und Goldmann sind dazu fähig, und dennoch verlieren sie sich. Nach der Scheidung fühlt sich Goldmann in Wien nicht mehr „daheim", er ist, wie Fanny, „aus der Theaterwelt herausgefallen" (269), und beginnt sich für „das Jüdische" zu interessieren, ein Interesse, das dem Zentrum der Wiener Arena, der Gräfin Antoinette Altenwyl, nicht sympathisch ist:

> „ich hab so ein Gefühl, daß der Ernst von diesem ganzen nach Israelgehen und das mit dem Jüdischen, was er früher doch, bitte, überhaupt nicht gehabt hat, daß das mit der Maria ihrem Tod zusammenhängt und dieser ganzen Gräßlichkeit." [Mit der Maria, Malinas Schwester, hatte Goldmann eine Liaison gehabt, MLW] (186)

Man könnte aber auch denken, dass das kleine Trauma (die Scheidung) das größere, in der Nachkriegszeit verdrängte (das der Verfolgung, der Shoah) um so heftiger reaktiviert hat, heute würde man das eine „Retraumatisierung" nennen. Goldmann fährt immer mehr nach Israel und nimmt auch am Eichmann-Prozess teil.

> „sein wirkliches Exil fing nach einer mißlungenen Regie am Habimah Theater an, in Tel Aviv, und obwohl ihm dort alles genau so mißfiel, wie er es sich schon vorgestellt hatte, verwirrten ihn die jungen Israeli mehr als das Zusammentreffen mit seinen ehemaligen Mitschülern in Wien, unter denen er einmal gelitten hatte und in deren Clubs er nicht hineindurfte. Da er hier nicht hineindurfte, aus ganz andren Gründen, aus der Perspektive einer jungen Welt, in der er alt war, fing er an, sich damit zu beschäftigen […] und davon konnte er seiner Fanny nun nichts mehr sagen, auch nicht, daß er jetzt zu leiden anfing und jedes Buch, jedes Dokument ihm so ungeheuerlich vorkam, während das Vergessen sich ausbreitete und Israel ein Staat wie alle Staaten geworden war." (269 f.)

Ingeborg Bachmann spricht hier von etwas, was erst sehr viel später thematisiert werden wird, von Schriftstellern (ich denke z. B. an Aharon Appelfelds 1999 erschienene Biographie, in der es auch um die Schwierigkeiten deutschsprachiger Juden im Israel des Nachkriegs geht[16]) und von Wissenschaftlern, Wissenschaftlerinnen (wie

16 Aharon Appelfeld, Geschichte eines Lebens. Aus dem Hebräischen von Anne Birkenhauer, Reinbek bei Hamburg 2006, bes. 91, 129, 158 f., siehe dazu: Marianne Windsperger, Lebenswege in Traum(a)landschaften. Die Bukowina als Erinnerungslandschaft in ausgewählten Werken Aharon Appelfelds, Frankfurt a. M. u. a. 2009. Auch in der Wahl der stilistischen Mittel gibt es auffallende Analogien zwischen Appelfeld und der späten Bachmann, wie z. B. die Skepsis gegenüber „Tatsachenberichten" (Geschichte eines Lebens, 111, 185), und die Folgen des Wechsels von der Lyrik zur Prosa: „Die Prosa verlangt ihrem Wesen nach konkrete Dinge. Ergriffenheit und Ideen liebt sie nicht. Nur wenn diese aus etwas Konkretem hervorgehen, haben sie Bestand" (ebenda, 155). Ein Satz, der von Ingeborg Bachmann selbst sein könnte.

Anne Betten, Eva Thüne und andere), die sich mit der Traumaforschung, mit Interviews mit aus Europa nach Israel emigrierten Juden und deren Kindern befassen.[17] Bei dem letzten Zusammentreffen von Ernst und Fanny in Goldmanns Wiener Wohnung, spricht er „müde und ermüdend" von seiner Arbeit, sie starrt ihn an, ohne zu verstehen, will ihn fragen, was denn passiert sei:

> „aber er schien nicht einmal zu merken, daß ihr seine Beschäftigungen ungewohnt waren, mit den Judaica, und daß sie keinen Ernst Goldmann gekannt hatte, […] den Jude sein zu etwas verpflichtet oder getrieben hatte […] und er fragte auch nicht, verstehst du das, was mich beschäftigt, sondern das ging über sie hinweg […]" (91)

Fanny denkt, dass er, wie sie nach ihrem Marekdrama, „auch nichts mehr lieben konnte", und dass er „eines Tags aufgehört hatte, Fanny zu lieben, um sich den Toten zuzuwenden" (129). Er dagegen glaubt, sie sei weiterhin, wie zu seiner Zeit, „gottvoll leichtsinnig", und fragt sie „traurig" lächelnd nach ihrem „Rosenkavalier", nach Marek. „Das ist doch nicht wichtig" antwortet sie (271, 275 f.).

Fannys ganze Leidensgeschichte erscheint nun als ein Resultat einer unverzeihlichen Dummheit, ihrer gierigen Fixierung auf Marek. Dieselbe Erfahrung macht die Hamburgerin Eka, sie bittet ihren Bruder und ihre Schwägerin Baby um Verzeihung, dass sie sich wegen Jung aus dem Fenster gestürzt hatte, und nun im Rollstuhl lebt: „Ich habe einen irrsinnigen Blödsinn gemacht. Ich hätte früher etwas sagen müssen." Diese Erkenntnis impliziert eine radikale Kritik der Opfer-Mythologie, die im Roman *Malina* und im *Buch Franza* mit der Gleichsetzung von ermordeten Juden und an ihren Männern leidenden Frauen operiert, und die eine ganze Generation von Bachmannlesern und besonders Leserinnen faszinierte, obwohl nicht nur die *Goldmann*-Texte, sondern auch schon der kurz vor Bachmanns Unfalltod in Rom gedrehte Film von Gerda Haller,[18] eine ganz andere Ingeborg Bachmann vorgestellt hatten. Fanny glaubt also, dass Goldmann „nur mehr die Toten" liebe. Das stimmt aber nicht, er wird sie brauchen, rufen wollen, doch da wird sie schon tot sein (277). Beide sind auf ihren Tod fixiert, fast davon fasziniert und unfähig, auf den anderen, auf die andere zu hören:

> „Ich versteh dich nicht, sagte Fanny leise, und sie dachte, er versteht mich nicht. Er merkt wirklich nicht, warum ich zu ihm gekommen bin, zu wem sollt ich denn sonst noch gehen, wenn nicht zu ihm. […] Sie lächelte vage, das Gefühl, mit dir verheiratet zu sein, gewesen zu sein, das ist das einzige, was gehalten hat, sagte sie, weißt du das.
> Aber schau, Fanny, du warst doch immer frei, ich hab dich doch nie angebunden.
> Ja, leider nicht, sagte sie. Das wäre aber besser gewesen.
> Aber Fanny.
> Doch.
> Das ist lieb von dir, aber wir wollen doch darüber nicht mehr reden. Es tut mir leid, daß ich so gar keine Zeit habe, weil ich noch einen Besuch kriege und dann gleich zum Flugplatz muß, aber sag mir, wenn dir was fehlt."

Auffallend ist wieder eine nicht psychologische, ganz und gar nicht emphatische oder pathetische Sprache, sondern eine fast ungeduldige, irritierte Darstellung, die sich auf das „von außen" Wahrnehmbare beschränkt, (auch die Gedanken Fannys

17 Siehe z. B.: Simona Leonardi, Eva-Maria Thüne, Anne Betten (Hg.), Emotionsausdruck und Erzählstrategien in narrativen Interviews. Analysen zu Gesprächsaufnahmen mit jüdischen Emigranten, Würzburg 2016.

18 Gerda Haller, Ingeborg Bachmann im erstgeborenen Land, ORF 1973. Titel, seit der ORF-Sendung 1983: Ingeborg Bachmann in Italien.

werden wie etwas Gesagtes kommentarlos ‚zitiert'). Diese Irritation überträgt sich auf den Leser, die Leserin, man möchte fast einschreiten. Diese Seite gehört zu den eindringlichsten Texten des 20. Jahrhunderts.

Im folgenden, im letzten Typoskript zum Goldmann-Roman schreibt die Autorin, die „wirklichen" Geschichten seien unerzählbar, doch sie fährt fort:

> „man muß sich schon an das Handgreifliche halten und auf die Finger schauen, in die Augen zu sehen versuchen, die Sätze aufschreiben, die gesagt wurden, damit etwas davon herauskommt, damit eine Ahnung von dem wach wird, was wirklich geschehen ist."(277 f.)

Wenige „realistische" Schriftsteller und Schriftstellerinnen haben es – zu Bachmanns Zeiten und auch danach – geschafft, nicht in Seichtheit und Beliebigkeit zu enden. Ingeborg Bachmanns „andere" Poetik sollte der genauen, „handgreiflichen" (also weder „hochgetriebenen", noch sterilisierten) Darstellung einer als tragikomisch erfahrenen Welt dienen. Was sie wollte und wagte, ist ihr gelungen.

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SWL Reader

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A Personal Research Entanglement

The 'Intimate' Perpetrator

Abstract

Dealing with perpetrator research, and especially with documents produced by perpetrators of the Holocaust, can be an emotionally challenging enterprise. This essay explores issues of intimacy and detachment as a researcher when working with perpetrator ego documents and interviewing their children.

A few winters ago, I found a large set of private letters in a Munich archive, written by a zealous and fanatical SS member.[1] It is a convolute of approximately 500 letters, German Feldpostbriefe or wartime letters, as it were, and their analysis is the subject of my dissertation, which is still in the making. Hence, this essay will not be discussing the letters or their analysis, but rather highlight the meta-level of emotional implications that surrounded my personal entanglement as a researcher with a source – letters – that fostered seemingly 'intimate' knowledge of the author.

The fact that dealing with mass murder, its victims, and its perpetrators comes at a cost for researchers has been explored on many different occasions; such research "operates in a dense emotional and moral field"[2] and as such it is little surprising that it intrudes – emotionally and otherwise – on us, even when we insist it does not. Navigating the challenges between involvement and detachment is not an uncommon problem in academia in general, but even more so when studying the Holocaust or any other instance of mass murder and genocide.[3] I had encountered these taxing emotional dynamics before, as a researcher, but was taken somewhat by surprise by how difficult it would become this time around: Aside from working with material that deals with the victims of genocide, my primary research focus had now shifted to, exclusively, perpetrators of the Holocaust, more specifically the Waffen-SS.

Perpetrators of the Holocaust in Their Own Words

The letters touched upon here are all private letters that the Waffen-SS member in question had written to both his mother and his wife between 1939 and 1943. The author was himself actively engaged in the war as well as the perpetration of the Holocaust. As he was deeply antisemitic and anti-Slavic, as well as ideologically schooled after having voluntarily undergone the educational system of Hitler Youth and SS (*Junkerschule*), it was easy to feel repulsed by him. I discovered a man who was not only politically and ideologically unappealing, but who showed few other

1 Archives of the Institute for Contemporary History Munich, Feldpostbriefsammlung Maximilian G. 1939–1943, ED 885, Vols. 1–9.

2 Ugur Ü. Üngör, Studying Mass Murder, Oxford University Press' Academic Insights for the Thinking World, 8 June 2018, https://blog.oup.com/2018/06/studying-mass-murder/ (22 November 2019).

3 Ibid.

traits that would have rendered him likeable. Through his own writings, I seemed to unmask a man who even towards his mother and his wife, people he professed to love and admire, often appeared stern and unkind, inflexible, domineering, and unforgiving.

Automatically feeling such a strong antipathy towards this man, I had to be aware of my emotional reaction so as to not cloud my investigative mind or investigator's gaze. I observed and examined my source base and later the author's former childhood home and surely, in doing so, one may well interject that this already went hand in hand with a bias of sorts in that "an observer is more importantly one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations".[4] The Latin term 'observare' means "to conform one's action, to comply with, [or as in observing rules,] codes, regulations, and practices",[5] and for me this meant to be as objective or perhaps as non-judgmental as I could be, a staple of a researcher's approach. At least, this was my premise and my aim. Yet, as an observer, I was automatically rendered in a powerful position in that the observer subsumes and takes possession of the subject they gaze upon, as basic photography theory also explains.[6] Hence, in the end, I was not only subjective in my gaze, but I also filled it with emotion. I had to acknowledge this emotional bias, something I was only ready to admit over time. Working with personal correspondence of perpetrators over an extended period of time also meant becoming to a certain extent familiar with this SS man and becoming involved in his private life – with all its ups and downs. Such intimacy, as it showed him as a human being, was also an issue I struggled with: I felt his normalcy, the familiarity of emotions he spoke about to his wife, the mundaneness and everydayness of his life were detracting from his ideological zeal and his murderous activities.

There were many racist and antisemitic outbursts in his writings and it made reading his letters a deeply uncomfortable and emotionally challenging enterprise. What made it more difficult was that I could not step away from the letters or, by extension, from him. I had to keep going, reading, exploring, as, at the end of the exercise, a thesis was waiting to be written. I had little time for breaks and even when I did, I found his words, these scathing words, haunting me. This man, this historical actor who I had never met or seen, seemed omnipresent. I found myself speaking about the letters and about him not just to colleagues and supervisors at the university, but to friends, family, and acquaintances who, even when interested, soon tired of my research obsession and became exasperated. In a way, I found them mirroring my own feelings: I was both fascinated and exhausted, both academically intrigued and filled with a lingering reluctance to continue.

After a while, I found myself wondering why it was so hard for me to detach from my subject of study. After all, this was by no means the first time I had dealt with archival sources that laid bare hate speech, considering this field of study. Maybe it was simply that this was one of the biggest and therefore most time-consuming projects I had embarked upon so far. Maybe it was just that normal feeling of being overwhelmed that many PhD students experience at least once in their postgraduate career. To be sure, I was not the only researcher dealing with difficult biographies: Robert Gerwarth remarked on the difficulty between personal entanglement and

4 Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge 1992, 6.

5 Ibid.

6 Christina von Braun, Staged Authenticity. Femininity in Photography and Film, in: Jyoti Mistry/Antje Schuhmann (ed.), Gaze Regimes. Film and Feminisms in Africa, Wits 2015, 18-32, here 22; Crary, Techniques, 27.

objective distance in his biography on Reinhard Heydrich,[7] as did Catherine Epstein in her biography on Arthur Greiser,[8] noting also how the examination of personal letters lends a humanness to perpetrators that may seem difficult to integrate with the fact that they were involved in the execution of mass murder and policies of oppression and exploitation. Finally, Emily Robinson touched on a similar issue when she spoke about "the affective nature of the historical research process and in the historian's responses to 'pastness', to the otherness of historical distance".[9]

Emotionally Entangled

I felt I had been entirely 'reeled into' the past universe of my subject of study. This feeling was heightened by another discovery of sorts, about a year into my research. Her acquaintance would impact me immensely, albeit in a positive manner: It was the daughter of said Waffen-SS officer, who had given her father's letters to the archives almost a decade before. Meeting her added to the depth of my emotional investment, not because I disliked her, but because I felt obligated to her and because, almost instantly, we connected over a common enemy – her father.

The archives established our initial contact. Meeting her felt like a collision between past and present, as the first time I had encountered her was in an epistolary conversation between her parents, half a year before she was born in late 1943. I was reflecting on this sense of collision again when I carefully trudged along the icy and snowy sidewalk in the south of Munich, on my way to the house where the author of the letters I was examining had grown up. I was on my way to meet Louisa,[10] my interviewee for this study and the Waffen-SS officer's daughter, for the second time on a cold winter day in early January 2017. Just in time for the New Year, Bavaria was in the firm grip of a cold front, resulting in temperatures dropping to –20° C at night. More than a metre of snow and ice-packed streets made it difficult to move along quickly. The last time we had seen each other had been in August 2016, a swelteringly hot summer day. The contrast could not have been greater and, strangely, these opposite weather conditions reflected my fluctuating moods regarding the letters.

It had been a long and arduous academic journey from the day I first discovered the letters in the archives until this, our second meeting. I went to interview his daughter for the first time in early August 2016, and we would meet a total of three times until mid-2018. Louisa had kindly agreed to meet with me after I had contacted her first by mail before speaking to her twice on the phone. I remember having initially drafted four or five different letters, as I had been nervous to reach out. Would she turn me down? Had she given the letters to the archives and then decided she never wanted to hear of the matter again? After all, her father's criminal past could not have been an easy issue for her to work through growing up, even if she never met him in person, as he died at the front shortly before she was born. Or would the opposite be true? Was she maybe – like some children of Nazi perpetrators, whether openly or covertly, such as Heinrich Himmler's daughter, Gudrun

7 Robert Gerwarth, Hitler's Hangman. The Life of Heydrich, New Haven 2011, x.
8 Catherine Epstein, Model Nazi. Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland, Oxford 2010, 9-10.
9 Emily Robinson, Touching the Void. Affective History and the Impossible, in: Rethinking History 14 (2010) 4, 503-520, here 505.
10 I have changed the name here to protect my interviewee's privacy.

Burwitz,[11] or his adoptive son, Gerhard von der Ahé[12] – someone who had idolised her father beyond his death, or would she perhaps like Silke Sassen[13] or Heydrich's children who, through whatever means of justification and explanation they employ, have a hard time coming to terms with their fathers' crimes?

I realised with great relief, and somewhat foolishly, that I had worried in vain. My interviewee was enthusiastic about meeting me and was very accommodating to my request. A friendly and warm person, full of laughter and kindness and wit, she seemed like a potent antidote to the bleakness that usually surrounded my subject of study. She is an artist, creating pottery and sculptures, intricate works full of colours and floral patterns, golden leaves and animals adorning her art, and she has presented her work at various exhibitions across Bavaria. One of her works of art now sits in my Berlin apartment, a chocolate-coloured fruit bowl with large bright green gingko leaves imprinted into it. Already during our first telephone conversation, which had followed my letter, she had offered to show me further documents and even photographs relating to her father, and I quickly learnt that she, just like me, found this SS officer deeply unappealing. Even more so as a daughter, she was disappointed and upset at her father's misanthropy. Before turning the collection over to the archives, she informed me, she had read and sorted her father's letters and struggled with similar issues like myself, albeit on a much more personal level. She had, very consciously, decided to entrust the letters to the archives, as she wanted them to be accessible to researchers who, so she said, could maybe make more sense of them than she had managed to do.

We realised that we bonded over a shared disdain for her father, a man neither of us had ever met but whose writings gave a clear indication of who he had been. During every one of our meetings, Louisa invited me to her home, her father's childhood home and the house she inherited from her grandmother (her father's mother). She had grown up here after the war, living at times under one roof with her mother and grandmother. We would have coffee and cake, speak about current events, our respective families, and political issues. Then we would proceed to the interview part, as well as reviewing documents from her parents that she had not given to the archives. As invested in the project as myself, it seemed, she inquired about my progress and kept telling me not to give up. After all, she had entrusted me with letters and photos that documented a part of her family history that was difficult and no one else had seen so far. Her confidence in me motivated and touched me.

Set in the middle of what in the summer looked like an enchanted garden with wild roses, apple trees, and chamomile flowers, entering the house as a complete stranger was at first an unsettling and then deeply insightful experience. The interior was a fusion of modern and turn-of-the-twentieth-century furniture and paintings. I recognised, now with my own eyes, items in this room that I had found being described in the letters written 75 years earlier. At the far end, by the door onto the terrace, a photograph of a young smiling woman in her early twenties in a long white lace gown caught my attention. As I went around the living room, taking in my surroundings, I asked my interviewee whom the photo portrayed and she explained to me that it was her grandmother, one of the letter recipients. The picture had been taken in 1917 and showed her shortly before her wedding. After that, Louisa proceeded to allow me to have a look through two family photo albums, wherein every

11 Katrin Himmler/Michael Wildt (ed.), Himmler Privat. Briefe eines Massenmörders, Munich 2014, 350-351.
12 Ibid.
13 Marc Perry, Saskia Sassen's Missing Chapter, in: The Chronicle of Higher Education, 5 December 2014.

person I had gotten to know through their own writings appeared. These were photos that recounted the family narrative as weaved by the historical actors while they were still alive. Being able to attach faces to the names and exploring this photo narrative was important to gain a deeper sense of understanding, of familiarity, of intimacy perhaps.

It was these photos that really made me aware of the fact that I was now standing in the middle of the house in which every single person whose letters I had read over the past months had lived at one point in their lives. This realisation made me feel slightly uneasy, especially considering that this, too, was the house where said SS man had spent his childhood, as well as many months of rehabilitation and relaxation in between his many career stops within the SS and from where he had written volumes of letters to his future wife. Indeed, "the location authenticates the narrative, embodies it, makes it real, to the point where it threatens to re-engulf those who come to tell and to listen".[14]

As I sat in her living room, surrounded by photos, furniture, and the discussion about people I had, so far, only known from her father's private letters, I became aware that meeting Louisa – a person who had risen from a vague epistolary image to a real-life person – had brought about a powerful manifestation of "a feeling of emotional knowing", an emotional and subjective response to studying history, indeed a common response in researchers.[15] The journey that underpinned my research activities for my doctoral dissertation brought into the limelight, as it does for many historians, the emotional challenges of personal entanglement with our respective subject of examination. Where do we draw the line between personal investment and professional distance? How do we deal with and incorporate our biases and our emotions into our writing? Are we always aware of them? Most of the time, such emotional undercurrents do not make it into scholarly publications, despite the fact that they are such a common phenomenon. A case in point is that I, too, was advised to omit a discussion of the emotional and personal anecdotes behind the scenes of the research process from my dissertation. Nevertheless, the realities of "emotional labor"[16] and its consequences and implications are no less relevant and omnipresent and they must be addressed in order to ensure sufficient reflection when we deal with the intimacy generated through historical sources that uncover perpetrators of the Holocaust.

14 Marianne Hirsch/Leo Spitzer, cited in: Robinson, Touching the Void, 506.
15 Sheila Fitzpatrick, cited in: Robinson, Touching the Void, 510-511.
16 Erin Jessee, On Burnout, Trauma, and Self-Care with Erin Jessee, Oxford University Press' Academic Insights for the Thinking World, 10 November 2017, https://blog.oup.com/2017/11/on-burnout-trauma-erin-jessee/ (18 March 2019).

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Essay

Copy Editor:
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Stefan Gandler

Claude Lanzmanns *Shoah* und meine Generation in Alemania

Abstract

The movie "Shoah" from the intellectual, filmmaker, editor of *Les Temps Modernes* and former Résistance-fighter Claude Lanzmann, who recently passed away, presented for important parts of my generation in Germany a radical turning point. For the first time we had been able to conceive that the destruction of the European Jews took place almost in immediate geographic and historical neighbourhood. In one shot it got clear to us –who understood ourselves as student activists with a critical posture towards capitalism and domination– that in reality we hadn't known nothing about the Shoah.

Die ihrer selbst mächtige, zur Gewalt werdende Aufklärung selbst vermöchte
die Grenzen der Aufklärung zu durchbrechen.
(Max Horkheimer und Theodor W. Adorno,Dialektik der Aufklärung)

Die folgenden Linien habe ich auf Grundlage von etwas formuliert, für dessen Verständnis ich mehr als 20 Jahre benötigt habe: derjenige Intellektuelle, der in seinem Schaffen am meisten das verwirklicht hat, was Adorno und Horkheimer in ihrem oben zitierten Satz zum Ausdruck brachten, der am Ende ihrer „Elemente des Antisemitismus" steht und zugleich den Schlusssatz des Hauptteils ihrer *Dialektik der Aufklärung*[1] darstellt, ist Claude Lanzmann. Sein Film *Shoah* (1985), der wie kein anderes Werk des 20. Jahrhunderts die Augen dafür öffnet, was die kritische Theorie als *Zivilisationsbruch* bezeichnet hat, ist zugleich eine unvergleichliche *materielle* Kraft des erwähnten sich-selbst-überwindenden, emanzipatorischen und grenzendurchbrechenden Prozesses der Aufklärung.

Lanzmann sollte dafür auch hier anerkannt werden, in diesem schönen Land, das Mexiko ist, und das zudem vielen Verfolgten und Gegnern des Faschismus und des Nationalsozialismus Schutz geboten hat. Er sollte eine unumstrittene und verdiente Ehrung in dieser einzigartigen Nation erhalten, vorzugsweise in deren wichtigster wissenschaftlichen Institution; würde die Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) Claude Lanzmann posthum die Ehrendoktorwürde verleihen, so beehrten sich die UNAM und Lanzmann gegenseitig. Die nun folgenden Zeilen schrieb ich ursprünglich 2006 im Rahmen des letzten Mexikobesuchs Lanzmanns.

Vor *Shoah*

Als ich in München geboren wurde – jener Stadt, welche die Nationalsozialisten zur „Hauptstadt der Bewegung" erklärt hatten –, war der Nationalsozialismus gerade einmal 18 Jahre und einige Monate vorüber. Trotzdem lebte ich mehr als zwanzig

1 Theodor W. Adorno und Max Horkheimer, Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente, Frankfurt a. M. 2003.

Jahre in dem Glauben, der Nationalsozialismus sei bereits vor sehr langer Zeit zu Ende gegangen. Heute, da ich diese Zeilen schreibe, habe ich mehr Jahre auf dem Buckel, als zum Zeitpunkt meiner Geburt seit dem *Beginn* des Nationalsozialismus als Regierungsform Alemanias vergangen waren (42 bzw. 31 Jahre). Was ich damit sagen will ist, dass meine Generation in historischer Perspektive dem Nationalsozialismus näher steht, als der Generation die in diesen Tagen geboren wird. Aus aktueller Sicht lässt sich also sagen, dass wir integraler Bestandteil einer Epoche sind, die aus dem Nationalsozialismus hervorgegangen ist. Diese einleitende Überlegung, die auf den ersten Blick nicht mehr zu sein scheint als ein Spiel mit dem einen oder anderen Datum und Zahlen, ist viel mehr als das. Sie ist das Resultat eines langen Entfernungsprozesses vom alemanischen Alltagsleben und seiner postnationalsozialistischen gesellschaftlichen Beschaffenheit.

Der Bruch mit der falschen Idee, in einer vom Nationalsozialismus weit entfernten Zeit und an einem davon weit entfernten Ort zu leben, begann sich langsam zu entwickeln, als ich im Alter von 12 oder 13 Jahren in das Dachgeschoss des Rathauses des Dorfes, in dem ich damals lebte, stieg. Als Mitglied der Jugendfeuerwehr nahm ich an einer Übung teil, bei der wir uns vorstellten, dass das Rathaus, ein schönes, mehrere Jahrhunderte altes und, der Bauweise der Region entsprechend, mit einem steilen, bis zu fünf Meter hohem Satteldach errichtetem Gebäude, in Brand geraten war. Dort stieg ich im Rahmen der Feuerwehrübung hinauf.

Wir sollten, so lautete der Befehl, das vermeintliche Feuer dort oben löschen. Als ich mit zwei Gefährten den Dachboden betrat, der zuvor mit einem Schlüssel geöffnet worden war, um die Übung zu ermöglichen, sahen wir einen Raum voller Staub, den anscheinend seit einiger Zeit niemand mehr betreten hatte. Nachdem wir einige wenige Meter weit gegangen waren, nahm ich etwas wahr, dessen Bild sich mir derart eingeprägt hat, dass ich es bis heute vor mir sehen kann, wenn ich die Augen schließe: An einer Wand des Dachbodens angelehnt, standen etwa zwanzig Hakenkreuze, aus gestrichenem Holz, rund einen Meter hoch, mit viel Staub bedeckt, aber bestens erhalten. Als ich den Kopf ein wenig nach links drehte, sah ich nur unweit von ihnen ein weiteres, noch viel größeres, vier bis fünf Meter hohes Hakenkreuz, ebenfalls aus gestrichenem Holz. Zudem erblickte ich mehrere, teils zusammengerollte Hakenkreuzfahnen, an deren Anzahl ich mich nicht mehr erinnere.

Ich bin immer gerne auf die Dachböden der Gebäude gestiegen und habe nach aufregenden Dingen gesucht, aber dieser Fund war für mich absolut unerwartet. Ich hatte wegen dieser Dachbodenbesuche eine gewisse Fähigkeit entwickelt, die Jahresringe der Staubschichten zu schätzen und erkannte, dass diese Hakenkreuze vor nicht allzu langer Zeit das letzte Mal benutzt worden waren. Es war das erste Mal in meinem Leben, da mir gewahr wurde, dass der Nationalsozialismus zeitlich sehr nah war und dass er genau dort, wo ich in diesem Moment stand, existiert hatte.

Dem Leser oder der Leserin mögen diese Aussagen simpel und offensichtlich erscheinen, doch das waren sie ganz und gar nicht und sind es für den Großteil der alemanischen Bevölkerung bis heute nicht. Trotz der Mode in den vergangenen 15 Jahren, über den Nationalsozialismus zu sprechen und Filme und andere Werke über ihn zu erschaffen, besteht, sowohl im kollektiven Unterbewusstsein als auch der offiziellen Ideologie, die implizite Idee, dass der Nationalsozialismus etwas war, das zeitlich und räumlich nichts mit *unserer* Wirklichkeit in der República Federal Alemana (RFA) zu tun hat. Der Hakenkreuzfund blieb für lange Zeit ein isoliertes Ereignis in meinem Leben und nie wieder erwähnte ich es in Gesprächen mit den beiden Gefährten, die in diesem Moment an meiner Seite waren. Ich war, so sehe ich das heute, von der in den 1970er-Jahren in der RFA allgemein existierenden

Vereinbarung absorbiert,[2] dieses Thema – soweit als irgend möglich – nicht zu berühren.[3]

Das zweite Mal, dass das Thema in mein Leben trat, war, als unser Geschichtslehrer in der hessischen Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden sehr wütend wurde, als er ein anscheinend von einem meiner Mitschüler an die Tafel gemaltes Hakenkreuz erblickte. Obwohl ich mich für *kritisch* hielt, was beispielsweise autoritäres Verhalten einiger Lehrer und andere schulische Vorkommnisse betraf, die ich für ungerecht erachtete, hatte ich das Hakenkreuz nicht wirklich wahrgenommen, bis sich der Lehrer darüber aufregte. Er erinnerte an die Tatsache, dass es einige Schüler aus jüdischen Familien an der Schule gäbe, die sich beim Anblick des Hakenkreuzes zu tiefst verletzt fühlen könnten, weil nahe Familienangehörige von den Nationalsozialisten ermordet worden waren. Er begann uns von seiner eigenen Beteiligung am Nationalsozialismus innerhalb der Hitlerjugend und als Luftwaffenhelfer[4] während der letzten Kriegsjahre zu erzählen. Er erwähnte, dass er den Nationalsozialismus bis zu dem Tag unterstützte, als ein enger Freund im Krieg starb und er daraufhin allmählich begann, an den Nazis und ihrer Ideologie zu zweifeln, aber er viele Jahre brauchte, um die Schwere ihrer Verbrechen in vollem Maße zu verstehen. Es war er, der Lehrer Bickert, der mir, vierzehnjährig, etwas über den Nationalsozialismus zu verstehen gab. Später reichten einige Eltern unter verschiedenen Vorwänden formelle Beschwerde gegen ihn bei der Schulleitung ein, doch als es zu einem Treffen zwischen Eltern und Lehrern kam, wurde klar was Ersteren missfallen hatte: „das Übermaß an Zeit, das er im Geschichtsunterricht dem Thema Nationalsozialismus widmete". Wir hatten als Konsequenz auf den erwähnten Zwischenfall insgesamt vier oder fünf Unterrichtsstunden mit dem Thema verbracht.

Im Laufe der Jahre sah ich Teile der Fernsehserie *Holocaust* (1978)[5] und las einige kurze Artikel mit Bezug zum Thema Nationalsozialismus. Aber die erwähnte Distanz zum Thema bestand fort. Selbst als ich bereits als Philosophiestudent an der Universität Frankfurt Teil einer linken Studentengruppe namens Undogmatische Linke war, schienen mir andere Themen interessanter. Den abrupten Bruch mit dieser Haltung führte der Film *Shoah* von Claude Lanzmann herbei, der zu Beginn des Sommers 1987 zum ersten Mal in einem Frankfurter Kino gezeigt wurde. Eine Gruppe von Studenten und Nicht-Studenten hatte sich zusammengetan, um das Universitätskino *Kamera* wiederzubeleben, das einige Jahre zuvor vom Universitätspräsidenten unter dem Vorwand geschlossen worden war, „feuerpolizeilichen Bestimmungen" nicht zu entsprechen. Das Kino war 1968 und in den Jahren danach ein wichtiger Treffpunkt für Aktivisten und daher ein Ärgernis für die Frankfurter Universitätsleitung. Die *Pupille*, besagte Gruppe mit filmischen Interessen und unter

2 Der Versuch einiger Aktivisten und Beteiligter der alemanischen Studentenbewegung von 1968, die Eltern über ihre Teilnahme am Nationalsozialismus zu befragen, war sehr wichtig, hatte aber zugleich einen erstaunlich geringen Einfluss auf die alemanische Gesellschaft insgesamt.

3 Vgl.: Alexander und Margarete Mitscherlich, Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens, München 1967, insb. Kapitel I.: „Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern – womit zusammenhängt: eine deutsche Art zu lieben", 13-85.

4 Auch bekannt als „Flakhelfer": Kindersoldaten aus den Ober- und Mittelschulen, die von 1943 an ab dem 16. Lebensjahr in der Luftabwehr eingesetzt wurden.

5 Die US Fernsehserie Holocaust wurde im Januar 1979 von den öffentlich-rechtlichen deutschen Fernsehanstalten simultan in deren dritten Programmen ausgestrahlt und provozierten den ersten Schritt in Richtung eines Beginns der Infragestellung des, bis zu diesem Tage, fast vollständigen Tabus in Alemania in Bezug auf die Vernichtung der Europäischen Juden. Vgl.: Sandra Schulz, Film und Fernsehen als Medien der gesellschaftlichen Vergegenwärtigung des Holocaust. Die deutsche Erstausstrahlung der US-amerikanischen Fernsehserie ‚Holocaust' im Jahre 1979. In: Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung, 32 (2007) 1, 189-249; http://dx.doi.org/10.12759/hsr.32.2007.1.189-248.

anderem von Jürgen Franke mitgegründet, organisierte als eine ihrer ersten Aktivitäten einen durch den damals virulenten *Historikerstreit* inspirierten Filmzyklus. In diesem *Streit*, der in Wirklichkeit ein Austausch von in verschiedenen großen Zeitungen veröffentlichten Briefen war, versuchten einige der Regierung von Helmut Kohl nahestehende Historiker, die nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen und insbesondere die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden zu „historisieren" und somit zu relativieren.

Auf der einen Seite nahm, neben anderen, Ernst Nolte teil, der so weit ging, in dem Versuch, den Nationalsozialismus und seine Verbrechen zu exterritorialisieren, die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden zu einer „asiatischen Tat" zu erklären.[6] Auf der anderen Seite stand Jürgen Habermas, der sich beinahe als einziger gegen diese Verfälschung der historischen Wahrheit stellte. Habermas erzählte einer engen Freundin einmal, dass er aufgrund dieser Haltung mehrere Morddrohungen erhalten hatte. Der universitäre Filmclub *Pupille* organisierte diesen Zyklus daher, um der Tendenz, die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus einer *Revision zu unterziehen*, etwas entgegenzusetzen. Es wurden in diesem Rahmen mehrere sehr gute Filme gezeigt, die für intensive Momente des Nachdenkens im Publikum sorgten (wie zum Beispiel *Nacht und Nebel* von Alain Resnais oder *Komm und sieh* von Elem Klimow), doch werde ich nie den Moment vergessen, als wir die Vorführung von *Shoah* verließen.

Nach *Shoa*h

Für eine ganze Generation bedeutete der Film einen einzigartigen Bruch in ihrem Leben. Ich stimme vollends mit dem Urheber dieses Werkes überein, wenn er sagt „Ich habe in aller Bescheidenheit, aber auch mit Stolz wirklich geglaubt, dass es ein vor und ein nach *Shoah* gäbe".[7] Für uns, die wir ernsthafte Zweifel bezüglich der *Freundlichkeit* der aktuellen Gesellschaftsformation und ihrer zugehörigen kapitalistischen Reproduktionsform hatten, veränderte dieser Film radikal die Art und Weise den Nationalsozialismus zu sehen.

In gewisser Weise war es erst ab *Shoah*, dass wir anfingen, uns wirklich dem Thema der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden anzunähern. Vorher war es lediglich ein Element unter vielen der nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen, und diese ihrerseits die Spitze des Eisbergs der Zerstörungstendenz der kapitalistischen Reproduktionsform gewesen. Doch in Wirklichkeit waren unser Wissen und unsere Wahrnehmung des Genozids stark begrenzt gewesen. Im Gegensatz zu dem, wie wir uns selbst als linke Studenten wahrnahmen, waren wir im Großen und Ganzen von der allgemeinen Tendenz absorbiert worden, eine ‚gesunde' Distanz zu diesem dunkelsten Punkt nicht nur der alemanischen, sondern der gesamten Menschheitsgeschichte zu wahren.

6 Nolte verbreitete die ‚These', derzufolge der nationalsozialistische Genozid eine ‚vorauseilende Reaktion' auf die vermeintliche Gefahr einer ‚asiatischen Tat' (verstanden als eine der Sowjetunion und ihrer ‚jüdisch kommunistischen Führer') gegen ‚die Alemanen' gewesen war. Im Grunde genommen ist dies die alte nationalsozialistische Ideologie des ‚bedrohten Alemanias, das aus Gründen der Selbstverteidigung tötet und angreift', der Nolte in der Nachkriegsepoche der 1980er-Jahre einen ‚wissenschaftlichen' Anstrich geben wollte. Vgl.: Dan Diner (Hg.), Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zu Historisierung und Historikerstreit, Frankfurt a. M. 1987.

7 Claude Lanzmann, Ihr sollt nicht weinen. Einspruch gegen ‚Schindlers Liste', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Nr. 54, 5. März 1994, 27. Nachgedruckt in: Christoph Weiss, ‚Der gute Deutsche'. Dokumente zur Diskussion um Steven Spielbergs ‚Schindlers Liste' in Deutschland, St. Ingbert 1995, 173-178; http://partisan.myblog.de/partisan/art/1920887/Ihr-sollt-nicht-weinen.

Shoah sorgte dafür, dass ich im Sommer 1987, nachdem ich an einem Kongress junger Philosophen in Jabłonna nahe Warschau teilgenommen hatte, zwei ganze Tage lang das ehemalige Konzentrationslager Auschwitz, und vor allem Auschwitz II-Birkenau besuchte, wo sich bis heute die Überreste der größten Gaskammern befinden, die von den alemanischen Nationalsozialisten gebaut und dazu benutzt wurden, in jeder mehr als zwei tausend Menschen auf einmal zu töten.

Die ganze Zeit über, in der ich in Auschwitz und später in Treblinka war, dachte ich an *Shoah*. In gewisser Weise war es dieser Film, der mir diese Orte offenen Auges sehen liess. Während ich die Eisenbahngleise entlangging, die auf das Tor von Auschwitz-Birkenau zulaufen, dachte ich in jedem Moment an die Szenen des Films. Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass mein Leben, hätte ich diesen Film nicht mehrmals gesehen, ein ganz anderes gewesen wäre, wahrscheinlich würde ich immer noch in Alemania oder zumindest in Europa leben.

Mein erster – von Lanzmanns Film ‚angeleiteter' – Auschwitzbesuch hatte auch in sprachlicher Hinsicht eine große Wirkung auf mich. Im Museum, das sich in einem Teil des ehemaligen Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz I befindet, waren damals nicht alle erklärenden Texte vom Polnische ins Englische übersetzt, sodass ich einige deskriptiv-wissenschaftliche Teile nicht verstehen konnte. Was ich in jedem Winkel des Museums beim Blick in die Vitrinen aber sehr wohl verstand, waren die Originaldokumente der SS oder anderer alemanischer Instanzen. Als ich einige der Texte der Täter problemlos – da in meiner Muttersprache verfasst – las, und gleichzeitig nicht verstand, was die Wissenschaftler und die Leitung des Museums des Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz dazu geschrieben hatten, begann ich zu spüren, wie sich mir der Hals zuschnürte. Mit einem alemanischen Freund, mit dem ich zum Kongress und nach Auschwitz gereist war, fuhren wir am Abend des ersten Tages zum Hotel zurück, das uns die Organisatoren des Philosophiekongresses organisiert hatten und das sich rund 40 Kilometer entfernt befand. Während des gesamten Weges ging mir die Frage durch den Kopf, ob es mir immer noch möglich sein werde, Alemanisch zu sprechen, wie ich es bislang getan hatte. Diese Sprache, die bis heute diejenige ist, die ich am besten beherrsche, erlangte an diesem Tag eine völlig andere Bedeutung, als sie zuvor für mich gehabt hatte.

Ich weiß nicht, ob Claude Lanzmann mit einer solchen Sicht auf das Alemanische als Sprache einverstanden wäre, wenn man zum Beispiel bedenkt, dass er kurz nach der militärischen Niederlage des Nationalsozialismus in Alemania Philosophie studierte und lehrte. Zugleich aber weiß ich aufgrund seiner Weise es zu sprechen und zu schreiben, dass er das Alemanische auf eine ganz besondere Art beherrscht, die oft distanziert und ironisch ist, wobei er mittels des Tons in polemischer Absicht Bezug nimmt auf den nationalsozialisten Ursprung vieler Wörter des Alemanischen von heute. Im bereits zitierten Text spricht er beispielsweise von „[…] ‚Aktionen' im deutschen Sinne des Wortes", das heißt im Sinn der SS im Krakauer Ghetto.[8] Das auf alemanisch gesprochene Wort „Aktion" ist für Lanzmann in diesem Satz identisch mit dem euphemistischen Terminus der SS.

Lanzmann kennt Alemania, er lehrte an der Freien Universität Berlin in den ersten Jahren nach dem Ende des Nationalsozialismus; sein Film zeugt von keinerlei Hass gegenüber diesem Land und seinen Einwohnern und zugleich – vielleicht zum Teil deshalb – erinnert er uns in jedem Moment daran, dass die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden von Alemania aus und mit Alemanen auf allen Schlüsselposi-

8 Ebd.

tionen organisiert wurde. Er erinnert uns fortwährend daran, dass, wie Paul Celan sagt: „der Tod … ein Meister aus Deutschland" ist.[9]

Ich lernte Lanzmann 1998 in Mexiko persönlich kennen, als er zur Uraufführung der Spanisch untertitelten Version seines Hauptwerkes kam. Einige Jahre später sah ich ihn in Frankfurt wieder, als er *Sobibor, 14. Oktober 1943, 16:00 Uhr* präsentierte. Ich hielt mich dort anlässlich eines Forschungsjahres auf, und als Claude davon erfuhr, fragte er mich überrascht: „Und was machst Du denn hier?" Vielleicht ist er einer der wenigen Europäer, die verstehen können, dass es, nachdem man *Shoah* gesehen hat, nicht einfach ist, weiterhin in Alemania, und mit dem Alemanischen als Hauptsprache, zu leben.

Shoah hat die Welt verändert und hat Alemania verändert. Das Land war nach diesem Film ohne Zweifel nicht mehr dasselbe. Welcher alemanische Besucher einer Vorführung dieses einzigartigen kinematographischen Werkes wird die Szene vergessen können, in der Franz Suchomel, der SS-Unterscharführer in Treblinka auf Lanzmanns Bitten hin das „Treblinka-Lied", selbstverständlich auf Alemanisch, singt und als er es beendet sagt: „'s ist ein ‚Original'. Das kann kein Jude heute mehr"?[10]

Diese ‚Natürlichkeit', mit der der SS-Mann Suchomel die heutige Abwesenheit des Großteils der jüdischen Familien in Europa betrachtet, ist etwas, das wir sehr gut als die vorherrschende Form kennen, den Nationalsozialismus, den Genozid und ihre Konsequenzen zu ignorieren. Diese im Alltag allzu bekannte Haltung auf der Leinwand zu sehen, ausgesprochen von einem Alemanen, der persönlich an der Ermordung Hunderttausender Juden beteiligt war, machte uns auf einen Schlag verständlich, was die Ursache war für unsere Apathie und für unsere Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber dieser Abwesenheit und deren Ursprung.

Wiederaneignung der Gewalt durch die Unterdrückten

Aber warum hat *Shoah* in Alemania einen so starken Eindruck hinterlassen? Auf die Frage „Woran arbeiten Sie jetzt? ", die ihm 1992 die *tageszeitung* stellt, antwortete Lanzmann: „An dem letzten Teil einer Trilogie, zu der *Pourquoi Israel* und *Shoah* die ersten beiden Teile bilden. Es wird ein Film über die Wiederaneignung von Gewalt durch die Juden, gedreht hauptsächlich in Israel, werden. Der Holocaust war nicht nur ein Massaker an Unschuldigen, sondern auch an Wehrlosen. An Leuten, denen Jahrtausende lang das technische Wissen, der Gebrauch von Waffen und auch die psychische Bereitschaft, gewalttätig zu sein, unzugänglich war. Nun tun sie es aber, und das scheint ein echtes Problem für die Christenheit zu sein."[11] Diese *Wiederaneignung der Gewalt* durch die Unterdrückten und Ausgeschlossenen stellt immer ein Problem für diejenigen dar, die sich bereits daran *gewöhnt* haben, das Gewaltmonopol inne zu haben. Möglicherweise liegt hier ein kleiner Teil der Antwort auf unsere Frage, vielleicht trägt der Film *Shoah* diese Kraft der Wiederaneignung in sich. Er ist kein Akt der Gewalt, aber zugleich ist er es doch. Lediglich mit einer gewissen Ge-

9 Paul Celan, Todesfuge, in Der Sand aus den Urnen, Wien, 1948. Siehe auch: Paul Celan reading his own poem, Todesfuge; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVwLqEHDCQE.

10 Zitiert nach dem Audio von Shoah. Vgl. auch die Untertitel der französischen Originalversion von Shoah: „C'est un ‚original'. Plus un Juif ne connaît ça!" (Franz Suchomel, in: Claude Lanzmann, Shoah, Paris 1997, 155.)

11 Hier ist kein Warum. Mariam Niroumand sprach mit Claude Lanzmann, in: tageszeitung, Nr. 3688, 23. April 1992, 15; https://www.taz.de/Archiv-Suche/!1673021&s=Niroumand%2Blanzmann&SuchRahmen=Print/ (15. Februar 2019).

walt konnte er, soweit möglich, den einsamen Tod von Millionen Juden in den nationalsozialistischen Gaskammern dem Vergessen entreißen und, wie Lanzmann einmal sagte, sie nicht alleine lassen. Den SS-Unterscharführer Suchomel in die Irre zu führen, ihm sagend, dass sein Namen nicht enthüllt werden wird, und ihn mit einer versteckten Kamera zu filmen, ist ein gewisser Gewaltakt, wenn auch offensichtlich kein militärischer, so doch ein künstlerischer und psychologischer.[12]

In einem Interview bemerkte Lanzmann einmal, dass sein Kameramann, dessen Vater in Auschwitz ermordet worden war, ihn fragte wie er in der Lage sein könne, den SS-Mann Suchomel mit solch einer Ruhe zu interviewen (statt ihn umzubringen) und Lanzmann antwortete ihm: „Ich töte ihn mit der Kamera." Es ist genau dies, was Lanzmann auch mit vielen der Stereotypen und Tabus macht, die in Alemania und der Welt über den Nationalsozialismus und die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden existierten und bis heute existieren: Er hinterfragt diese nicht nur oder konfrontiert sie mit einer anderen Interpretation, sondern zerschmettert sie schlicht und einfach. In Worten des diskursiven Handelns gesprochen, beteiligt sich *Shoah* nicht an einem respektvollen Austausch von Ideen mit den omnipräsenten Lügen über den Nationalsozialismus und den Genozid, wie dies (bestenfalls) Spielfilme wie *Schindlers Liste* (1993) von Steven Spielberg oder *Der Pianist* (2002) von Roman Polanski versuchen, sondern zwingt sich ohne Gnade, und ohne um Erlaubnis gefragt zu haben, dem Zuschauer, beziehungsweise seiner unausweichlich begrenzten Vorstellungs- und Verständniskraft, auf.

Hier kommt dasjenige ins Spiel, was Lanzmann – Primo Levis Wiedergabe der Antwort eines SS-Mannes in Auschwitz auf seine Warumfrage zitierend – unübersetzt „Hier ist kein Warum" nennt. Lanzmann sagt dazu:

> „Vielleicht reicht es aus, die Fragestellung in der simpelsten Form zu formulieren, zu ergrübeln: ‚Warum wurden die Juden umgebracht?' Sie enthüllt auf Anhieb ihre Obszönität. Es gibt eine absolute Obszönität des Vorhabens zu verstehen. Nicht zu verstehen war mein eisernes Gesetz im Laufe all der Jahre der Erarbeitung und Realisierung von *Shoah*: Auf diese Weigerung habe ich hartnäckig mich versteift, als einzig mögliche Haltung, in zugleich ethischer als auch operativer Hinsicht. Diese Achtsamkeit, diese Scheuklappen, diese Blindheit waren für mich Existenzvoraussetzung des Schaffens. Blindheit muss hier als die reinste Form des Blicks verstanden werden, als die einzige Weise ihn nicht von der Wirklichkeit abzuwenden, die wortwörtlich erblindet. … Auf den Horror einen frontalen Blick zu richten, erfordert sich den Ablenkungen und Ausflüchten zu versagen, vor allem der ersten unter ihnen, der am falschesten zentralen, der Frage nach dem Warum".[13]

Gegenüber der absoluten Gewalt von Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor und den anderen nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungslagern, tritt etwas hervor, das dem glänzenden Eichmaß von Vernunft und Vorstellung entwischt. *Shoah* ist alles andere als absurdes Theater. Trotzdem öffnen seine, in ästhetischer Hinsicht absurden, Konfrontationen von Filmaufnahmen wunderschöner polnischer Wälder mit Beschrei-

12 „[Lanzmann:] Herr Suchomel, wir reden gar nicht über Sie. Wir reden nur über Treblinka, weil Sie ein sehr wichtiger Augenzeuge sind und Sie erklären können, was Treblinka war. [Suchomel:] Aber bitte nennen sie nicht meinen Namen. [Lanzmann:] Nein, nein, ich habe es versprochen." (Lanzmann, Shoah, Paris 1997, 84) (Übers.: Verfasser des Artikels.).

13 Claude Lanzmann, Hier ist kein Warum, in: Bernard Cuau, Michel Deguy u. a., Au sujet de Shoah, Paris 1990, 279. Lanzmann verwendet die Formulierung „Hier ist kein Warum" innerhalb des französisch-sprachigen Textes im deutschen Original, und übersetzt sie nur in Klammern für die Leserschaft: „Ici, il n'y a pas de pourqoui." (Ebd.)

bungen der wenigen *vom Tode Zurückgekehrten*, die mit ihren eigenen Augen das Sterben der ihren sahen, für das – aus Angst vor der unerträglichen historischen Wahrheit erblindeten – menschliche Vorstellungsvermögen einen unerwarteten Zwischenraum. Dieser noch so kleine Zwischenraum ist die Eingangstür zu etwas, was wir nie zuvor gesehen haben. Simone de Beauvoir erklärt dazu im Vorwort zum vollständigen Drucktext des Filmes:

> „Es ist nicht einfach, über *Shoah* zu sprechen. Dieser Film übt einen Zauber aus, und Zauber kann nicht erklärt werden. Nach dem Krieg haben wir eine grosse Zahl von Berichten über die Ghettos, über die Vernichtungslager gelesen; wir waren fassungslos. Doch heute, beim Sehen des außergewöhnlichen Films Claude Lanzmanns, merken wir, dass wir nichts gewusst haben."[14]

Wenige Kritiker des Films beziehen sich auf die Gewalt, die dieser Film für den Zuschauer bedeutet. Diese anzuerkennen würde möglicherweise bedeuten, ihre Furcht, und implizit die Notwendigkeit dieser ästhetischen Gewalt (nicht ästhetizistischen, wie es Simone de Beauvoir zu recht unterstreicht),[15] anzuerkennen. Davon verärgert, entscheiden sich mehrere von ihnen dagegen für eine äußerst perverse Projektion. Sie ‚entdecken' Lanzmanns Gewalt lediglich in der Szene, in welcher er den Friseur Abraham Bomba interviewt. Als dieser angesichts der Unerträglichkeit der Erinnerungen, die er vor der Kamera zu enthüllen versucht, an seine Grenzen kommt und die Aufnahme zu unterbrechen begehrt, bittet Lanzmann ihn vier Mal fortzufahren.[16] Diese – in mehreren Texten zu *Shoah* massiv kritisierte – methodische (und zugleich nur scheinbare) *Unbarmherzigkeit* Lanzmanns seinem Gesprächspartner gegenüber stört das Publikum nur insofern, als dass es sich fälschlich mit Bomba identifiziert. In der Folge *projiziert* es seinen eigenen Missmut gegenüber der Gewalt, die *Shoah* für viele Zuschauer darstellt, auf das ‚Opfer, das Lanzmann (angeblich) erneut viktimisiert', indem er das Interview nicht unterbricht.

Jedoch stört Claude Lanzmanns Handeln in dieser Szene den (alemanischen?) Zuschauer nicht aufgrund dessen standhaften Haltung gegenüber Abraham Bomba, der darum bittet, das Interview zu unterbrechen, ob des Unerträglichen das es für ihn darstellt, seine Erinnerungen in Bewegung zu setzen, sondern es stört den Kinobesucher aufgrund des *unangenehmen Augenblicks* den er selber durchmacht, wünschend dass Lanzmann ihm erlaube, den Bericht Bombas zu unterbrechen. Was Lanzmann von Nahem aus betrachtet erreicht, ist Folgendes: Er bringt Abraham Bomba dazu, für einen Moment in seinen ehemaligen Friseurberuf zurückzukehren, bloß um ihn in dieser Situation zu interviewen. Während Bomba einem Herrn die Haare schneidet, befragt Lanzmann ihn zu seinen Erinnerungen an den Aufenthalt in einem nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungslager; er lässt Bomba sich daran

14 Simone de Beauvoir, La mémoire de l'horreur, in: Claude Lanzmann, Shoah, 9-14, hier: 9. [Übers.: Verfasser. Original: „Il n'est pas facile de parler de Shoah. Il y a de la magie dans ce film, et la magie ne peut pas s'expliquer. Nous avons lu, après la guerre, des quantités de témoignages sur les ghettos, sur les camps d'extermination; nous étions bouleversés. Mais, en voyant aujourd'hui l'extraordinaire film de Claude Lanzmann, nous nous apercevons que nous n'avons rien su." (Ebd.)]

15 Ebd., 14. De Beauvoir schreibt: „Wie alle Zuschauer vermische ich die Vergangenheit mit der Gegenwart. Ich habe geäußert, dass die wundersame Seite von Shoah auf dieser Verwirrung beruht. Ich füge hinzu, dass ich mir niemlas eine solche Verbindung des Schreckens und der Schönheit unvorgestellt hätte. Wiewohl das eine nicht dazu dient, das andere zu verschleiern, es handelt sich nicht um Ästhetizismus, im Gegenteil: sie wird mit solch unnachgiebiger Strenge und Erfindungskraft erhellt, dass wir gewahr werden ein großes Werk zu kontemplieren. Ein wahres Meisterwerk." (Ebd., 13-14) [Übers.: Verfasser. Original: „Comme tous les spectateurs, je mêle le passé et le présent. J'ai dit que c'est dans cette confusion que réside le côté miraculeux de Shoah. J'ajouterai que jamais je n'aurais imaginé une pareille alliance de l'horreur et de la beauté. Certes, l'une ne sert pas à masquer l'autre, il ne s'agit pas d'esthétisme : au contraire, elle la met en lumière avec tant d'invention et de rigueur que nous avons conscience de contempler une grande œuvre. Un pur chef-d'œuvre." (Ebd.).]

16 Claude Lanzmann, Shoah, 168.

erinnern und erzählen, wie er die Haare der Frauen schnitt, kurz bevor sie in die Gaskammer kamen, oder manchmal in der Gaskammer selbst, bevor die Türen geschlossen wurden; er erreicht, dass Bomba sich daran erinnert, während er den Akt des Haareschneidens an einem Mann wiederholt, und erzählt, was einem anderen Frisör geschehen ist, der bei ihm war: als dieser gezwungen wurde, ihm nahestehenden Frauen das Haar zu schneiden, wollte er mit ihnen sterben. Diese Szene ist einer derjenigen, die sich uns am meisten ins Gedächtnis gebrannt haben, weil es Lanzmann auf perfekte Weise gelang, das *Kontinuum* der Geschichte zu unterbrechen und einen Moment der Vergangenheit unmittelbar, jenseits der Kontrolle der Zeicheninterpretation, mit dem *vom Tode Zurückgekehrten* im Heute zu konfrontieren. Diese Unterbrechung des *Geschichtskontinuums* – um in Walter Benjamins Begriffen zu sprechen – schließt auch den Zuschauer mit ein, der für einen, wenn auch nur kurzen, Moment die Empfindung der Zeit als homogene und unaufhaltsame verliert und dem sich in diesem Moment ein Zwischenraum öffnet, um etwas Vergangenes zu *sehen*, als ob es heute wäre.

Oder anders ausgedrückt: Der Zuschauer sieht plötzlich den *vom Tode Zurückgekehrten* in der Gaskammer, der den Frauen die Haare schneidet, Augenblicke bevor die Türen geschlossen werden; er sieht wie Bomba sich dort sieht, und damit etwas, was er nie zuvor mit anderen Mitteln geschafft hatte zu sehen oder wahrzunehmen.

Erinnern versus Verdrängen

Die Erinnerung, die sich in dieser, durch ihre ökonomische und gesellschaftliche Form korrumpierten, Gesellschaft allzu leicht korrumpieren lässt, findet einen Riss in der erbarmungslosen Maschinerie, die wir *Zeit* nennen. Und in diesem sehr kleinen Riss, den nur diejenigen sehen, die angesichts des Horrors, der sich in unserer *Vergangenheit* verbirgt, nicht schlagartig die Augen schließen, öffnet sich für kurze Momente, die eine Ewigkeit sind, ein Spielraum der Freiheit, welcher es der Erinnerung erlaubt, das hervorzuholen, was versunken und dem Vergessen verdammt war.[17]

Das Problem der Erinnerung ist radikal verschieden von dem des Verstehens. Die Erinnerung ist rückwärts gerichtet, während das Verstehen tendenziell nach vorne gerichtet ist. Die Erinnerung braucht weder eine Rechtfertigung für ihre Existenz, noch dafür, dass sie auf der respektvollen Achtung der Verdammten und Getöteten *von gestern* besteht. Das Verstehen will üblicherweise Schlüsse aus dem, was geschehen ist, ziehen, um auf die Zukunft ausgerichtete Handlungen *zu planen*. Auch wenn dies mit besten emanzipatorischen Intentionen unternommen werden kann, öffnet sich mit gewisser Notwendigkeit ein Abgrund zwischen der Erinnerung der Verdammten und jener Erinnerung, die ‚uns eine gute Lehre geben kann'. In dem Moment des *Pädagogisierens* der kollektiven und individuellen Erinnerung, wird sie diesen Zwecken untergeordnet, die der vorgeblichen Zukunft erspringen und letztlich Notwendigkeiten der herrschenden Gegenwart sind. Folglich lässt sich feststellen, dass solange die nicht-emanzipierte Gesellschaft existiert, die Erinnerung nur dann solidarisch mit den Ermordeten und Erniedrigten sein kann, solange sie sich nicht der Dynamik der Lehren, die von ihr erwartet werden, unterordnet.

17 Siehe dazu auch S.G., „Unterbrechung des Kontinuums der Geschichte bei Walter Benjamin", in: Ders., Frankfurter Fragmente. Essays zur kritischen Theorie, Frankfurt a. M./Berlin/Bern/Bruxelles/New York/Oxford/Wien, 2013, 43-80, hier: 55-56.

Daran *erinnern*, was im Nationalsozialismus geschehen ist, der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden gedenken, kann nicht nur nichts Neues für das bessere Verstehen der entsprechenden gesellschaftlichen Formation mit sich bringen, sondern sogar eine *Bremse* für dieses Verstehen sein. Erinnern wir uns an den Satz Walter Benjamins über die Revolutionen als Notbremse, die in diesem Zusammenhang auf neue Weise verstanden werden kann. „Marx sagt, die Revolutionen sind die Lokomotiven der Weltgeschichte. Aber vielleicht ist dem gänzlich anders. Vielleicht sind die Revolutionen der Griff des in diesem Zuge reisenden Menschengeschlechts nach der Notbremse."[18]

Die Bremse könnte hier nicht nur diejenige sein, die gewisse gesellschaftliche Prozesse verlangsamt, sondern diejenige die den Vormarsch der erklärenden Vernunft verzögert oder unterbricht. Damit soll nicht einem zweifelhaften Irrationalismus das Wort geredet werden, sondern vielmehr die in der *Dialektik der Aufklärung* Horkheimers und Adornos formulierte Idee aufgegriffen werden, dass die Vernunft selbst die zentrale Kraft ihrer eigenen Zerstörung sein kann.[19] Der Film *Shoah* trug ohne Zweifel etwas Essenzielles dazu bei, das ‚Verständnis' der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden als ‚asiatische Tat' (Nolte) sowie einige in der Linken zirkulierende, enorm vereinfachende ‚Erklärungen' zu bremsen, die versuchten, den Genozid in seiner Gesamtheit als etwas zu analysieren, das unmittelbar durch gewisse ökonomische Notwendigkeiten der herrschenden kapitalistischen Reproduktionsform hervorgerufen wurde.

Raul Hilberg, der Historiker der das Thema der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden am besten kennt,[20] weiß etwas davon, wenn er in seinen Vorträgen auf die Erfahrung hinwies, dass er, je mehr er über den Genozid und dessen Details wusste, immer weniger überzeugende Erklärungen für ihn fand.[21] Paradoxerweise ist es just diese Distanz zur Möglichkeit und vermeintlichen Notwendigkeit, ein ‚Verständnis' des nationalsozialistischen Genozids zu erlangen, die Hand in Hand mit der einzigartigen Wirkung geht, die *Shoah* in der Geschichte der kinematograpischen Werke zum Nationalsozialismus (und vielleicht aller derartiger Werken), und möglicherweise in der Geschichte des Films als solchem, gehabt hat. Etwas ähnliches wie das, was die Werke Lanzmanns und Hilbergs erfahren haben, trifft auch auf die Schriften von Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Neumann und Benjamin zu: Indem sie beim Verfassen ihrer Arbeiten eben nicht begierig ein möglichst unmittelbares politisches oder pädagogisches Ziel verfolgen, gelingt ihnen eine viel größere Wirkung als der großen Mehrheit der zeitgenössischen Werke. Während die kritische Theorie der wichtigste theoretische Impulsgeber der alemanischen Studentenbewegung war (der bis heute relevantesten gesellschaftlichen Bewegung des postnationalsozialistischen Alemanias), haben die Werke Lanzmanns und Hilbergs vielen Millionen Menschen die Augen geöffnet – und in vielen Fällen noch viel mehr als das. Indem sie ihre Werke nicht darauf ausrichten, Hilfsmittel für den Zuschauer oder Leser zwecks eines einfacheren *Verständnisses* der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden zu sein, haben sie zugleich ohne Zweifel mehr kritische Auseinandersetzungen über dieses Thema provoziert als jedweder andere filmische oder wissenschaftliche Beitrag.

18 Walter Benjamin, Anmerkungen zu den Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte, in: Ders., Gesammelte Schriften, hg. v. Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Band I.3, Frankfurt a. M. 1980, 1232.

19 Siehe Horkheimer und Adorno, Begriff der Aufklärung, in: Dies., Dialektik der Aufklärung, 9-49.

20 Siehe Raul Hilberg, Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden. Die Gesamtgeschichte des Holocaust, durchgesehene und erweiterte Neuausgabe, 3 Bde., Berlin/Frankfurt a. M. 2007.

21 Kommentar Raul Hilbergs während einer Unterhaltung beim Abendessen im Anschluss an seinen Vortrag an der Universität Frankfurt am Main im Jahr 1987.

Um zum Schluss dieses Textes zu kommen, möchte ich ein kleines abschließendes Beispiel zu den ausgeführten Gedanken geben, und damit auf das zu Beginn angesprochene Alemania im Jahr der dortigen ersten Aufführung von *Shoah* 1986/1987 zurückkommen. Nach der erwähnten großen Auswirkung dieses Films auf die Frankfurter Studentengeneration, die der bestehenden Gesellschaftsformation kritisch gegenüberstand, führten wir lange Diskussionen über das Thema Nationalsozialismus, insbesondere bezüglich seines zentralen Projektes, der Vernichtung der Juden, Sinti und Roma Europas.

Acht Monate nach der Frankfurter Premiere von *Shoah* in der *Camera* präsentierte der damalige, rigoros rechte Universitätspräsident den Studierenden eine neue Vortragsreihe, die mindestens zwei Jahre dauern sollte. Er beabsichtigte zu dieser Reihe, die „Beruf als Erfahrung" heißen sollte, mehrere bekannte alemanische „Wirtschaftsführer" einzuladen. Abgesehen von einer Ausnahme, einem relativ jungen General der Bundeswehr, hatten alle Referenten ihrer Karriere in der alemanischen Wirtschaft unter Hitler und mit direkter Hilfe der Nationalsozialisten begonnen. Sie alle hatten in zentralen Posten an der alemanischen Wirtschaft teilgenommen, die in dieser Zeit eine hoch autoritäre Struktur hatte, organisiert innerhalb pseudo-staatlicher Formen, die Franz Neumann im *Behemoth* als „totalitäre Monopolwirtschaft" analysiert hat.[22] Von Büros aus, die den Briefkopf des Reichswirtschaftsministeriums benutzten, organisierten sie alle Bereiche der alemanischen Kriegswirtschaft gemäß den Bedürfnissen der großen Monopole. Inspiriert von den Eindrücken aus *Shoah*, widmeten wir lange forschende Arbeitstage der Entschlüsselung der wirklichen Biografien der ersten Eingeladenen.

Unter Vorwänden gelang es uns, im Bundesarchiv Koblenz einige Ordner voller Dokumente der erwähnten pseudo-staatlichen Institutionen einzusehen, in denen die geladenen Vortragenden zentrale Stellen besetzt hatten. Obwohl die Dokumente offensichtlich ‚bereinigt' worden waren, fanden wir einige Schlüsseldaten über das Handeln der Eingeladenen während der Jahre 1933 bis 1945; eben jene, die laut Universitätspräsidenten Klaus Ring, als „Beispiel für die Jugend" dienen sollten.

Wir nahmen aufgrund ähnlicher vorangegangener Erfahrungen an, dass die Vortragenden ‚der Jugend' bei den Erzählungen ihres wundersamen Lebensweges die Jahre des Nationalsozialismus ‚vergessen' würden. Noch in den 1980er-Jahren begannen diese persönlichen Geschichten auf wundersame Weise immer am 8. Mai 1945. Davor hatte niemand der Alemanen, die wir aus dieser Generation kennengelernt haben, etwas getan, das es wert gewesen wäre, erinnert zu werden. Deshalb wollten wir wissen, was genau sie in ihren Vorträgen *nicht* erzählen würden. Auf Grundlage der im Bundesarchiv und einigen Büchern (darunter etliche, die nur unter strengen Auflagen in der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt a. M. konsultiert werden konnten)[23] gemachten Funde verbreiteten wir eine ungewöhn-

22 Franz L. Neumann. Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1944, Frankfurt a. M. 1984, 269-422. [Original: Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944, New York/London 1944.] Neumann war wichtigster Lehrer Raul Hilbergs und Betreuer dessen Doktorarbeit, welche die Grundlage späterer Studien war und in seinem Hauptwerk mündete: Raul Hilberg, Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden, Frankfurt a. M. 1990. 3 Bde. [Original: The destruction of the European Jews. New York 1985. 3 Bde.]

23 Insbesondere die Bücher über den ehemaligen Chef der Deutschen Bank, Hermann Josef Abs, oberster Finanzberater aller (west-) alemanischen Regierungen von Hitler bis Kohl, die im anderen Alemania veröffentlicht und auf Antrag seiner Anwälte verboten worden waren, befanden sich unter Verschluss und der Zugang zu ihnen war strengstens bewacht und limitiert. Unter anderem mussten wir uns schriftlich dazu verpflichten, den Inhalt, insbesondere in Bezug auf seine Tätigkeit als Finanzchef des nationalsozialistischen Regimes, nur mit seiner persönlichen Zustimmung zu veröffentlichen. Nur semiklandestine Methoden verwendend, konnten wir diese Bücher in der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek konsultieren.

lich lange Flugschrift im Folioformat und eng gesetzten Lettern, über die wirkliche Biografie des ersten eingeladenen „Wirtschaftsführers".[24]

Hans Lutz Merkle war zu dieser Zeit Chef der Firma Bosch und war während des letzten Jahres des Nationalsozialismus Hauptgeschäftsführer der „Reichsvereinigung Textilveredelung" gewesen, von der aus er die gesamte Textilproduktion in Alemania und den von den Nazis besetzten Ländern kontrollierte. Eine Angabe die wir finden konnten war, dass dieser Verband Sitze in allen Hauptstädten der besetzten Länder hatte und nur eine Zweigstelle in einer kleineren Stadt. Diese Zweigstelle fiel uns aufgrund ihrer geographischen Lage auf: Sie lag in derselben Region des besetzten Polens wie Auschwitz.

Die Verteilung der Flugblätter sorgte für einen großen Skandal an der Universität Frankfurt, ebenso wie die Anwesenheit von rund 60 kritischen Studenten beim Vortrag Merkles, die gekommen waren, um ihn nach seinen Jahren und Erfahrungen *vor* dem 8. Mai 1945 zu befragen. Da der Universitätspräsident nicht beabsichtigte, diese Fragen zu erlauben, aber zugleich die Anzahl nonkonformer Studenten gesehen hatte, ließ er die Polizei rufen. Diese erschien flugs mit einer Hundertschaft und drängte die *verdächtigen* Studenten aus dem Saal, sobald diese anfingen, die ersten *kritischen* Fragen zu stellen. Es war das erste Mal seit den turbulenten 1970er Jahren, dass an der Universität Frankfurt eine öffentliche Diskussion auf diese Weise aufgelöst wurde und selbst die konservative Presse (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), kritisierte den Universitätspräsidenten für dessen Vorgehensweise.

Das Ziel der Vortragsreihe war es,[25] mehreren alemanischen "Wirtschaftsführern" dabei zu helfen, just an der Universität Frankfurt, einer zentralen und einzigartigen – da von Anfang an liberalen – Bildungsinstitution Alemanias,[26] ihr Image reinzuwaschen. Der Versuch des Universitätspräsidenten, die Vortragsreihe mit einem zweiten Redner fortzusetzen, wurde von mehr als 200 Studierenden unterbrochen, angesichts derer der Eingeladene sich weigerte, Fragen zu seiner Nazivergangenheit zu beantworten. Nach diesem Vorfall schritt die hessische Landesregierung ein und zwang den Universitätspräsidenten dazu, dieses Projekt zur *wohlwollenden* Neuinterpretation der alemanischen Geschichte einzustellen.

Es ist nur schwer vorstellbar, dass es ohne Lanzmanns *Shoah* gelungen wäre, diesen wuchtigen Versuch zu verhindern, einen harmonischen Schlusspunkt unter die Erinnerung an den Nationalsozialismus und die Shoah (das geschichtliche Ereignis der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden trägt heute seinen Namen wegen des Films) zu setzen. Ein Versuch, der just in derjenigen Institution stattfinden sollte, aus der die Mitglieder der Frankfurter Schule und Begründer der kritischen Theorie 1933 vertrieben worden waren und deren Reputation in perverser Weise für diesen Zweck

24 Linke Liste an der Uni-Frankfurt, Das höchste Gut, was uns keine Macht der Welt rauben kann, ist reine Gesinnung, die ihren Ausdruck findet in gewissenhafter Pflichterfüllung [Flugschrift], Frankfurt a. M. 1988; https://de.scribd.com/doc/114421131/Merkle (16. Februar 2019).

25 Die Vortragsreihe wurde von Hans Georg Gadamer eröffnet, der 1987 bei einer vorherigen Einladung, an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main zu sprechen, in bezug auf den Nationalsozialismus in Alemania gesagt hatte: „Der akademische Unterricht an den Universitäten war erheblich weniger gestört oder verzerrt, als die Öffentlichkeit sich das heute vorstellt." (Hans-Georg Gadamer, Das Sein und das Nichts. In: Traugott König (Hg.), Sartre. Ein Kongress, Hamburg 1988, 40.) Als er dies an der Universität Frankfurt sagte, „vergaß" Gadamer völlig, dass das gesamte Institut für Sozialforschung sowie 30 Prozent aller Hochschullehrer die Universität und Alemania verlassen mussten, um ihr Leben zu retten. Zum größten Teil, weil sie Juden waren oder von den Nationalsozialisten als solche eingestuft wurden. Vgl: Linke Liste Uni Ffm/Fachschaft Philosophie/Fachschaft Gesellschaftswissenschaften, Über den diskreten Charme der alten Männer. ‚Beruf als Erfahrung' in der Diskussion. In: Uni-Report. Zeitung der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, 6. Juli 1988, 8; https://de.scribd.com/doc/151119388/Beruf-als-Erfahrung (1. Juli 2017).

26 Die 1914 gegründete erste Stiftungsuniversität Alemanias wurde von liberalen, zu einem großen Teil jüdischen, Frankfurter Bürgern gestiftet.

instrumentalisiert werden sollte. Der Schritt vom Mitglied der Jugendfeuerwehr, der nicht einmal verbal seine Verwunderung angesichts der Hakenkreuze im Dachgeschoss des Rathauses hatte ausdrücken können, zum Studenten, der sich aktiv an jener Unterbrechung der historischen Lüge über den Nationalsozialismus beteiligte, war nur möglich geworden durch *Shoah*.

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Essay

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Rabbinic Responsa as a Source for Learning about Religious Life during the Holocaust

Individual and Community Life

Abstract

Rabbinic responsa have been developing for many centuries. This body of literature does not record theoretical, systematic topics chosen by rabbis, but rather answers to questions posed to rabbis by persons dealing with various real-life situations they are facing. As such, it reflects the historical conditions of life in a given time and place and the issues the people were concerned with. Therefore, this literature can be viewed as a historical source, although it was not meant as such, albeit that it is therefore also often lacking basic historical details, such as the names of those involved and dates.

Also the Holocaust produced such literature, unique due to its extreme conditions. Even in the most difficult times in the ghettos and in the concentration camps, Jews sought spiritual religious guidance and turned to rabbis, who were expected to give immediate rulings on grievous issues dealing with life and death, often with no precedent, and with no possibility of looking up sources in books or consulting with other rabbis. Sometimes questions and answers were recorded during these difficult times, but in most cases they were noted down by survivors after liberation. Questions were asked after the end of the war as well, dealing with consequences of the Holocaust, and they also reflect those times.

Speaking here in Vienna, I would like to begin with two examples of geographical relevance. Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss, born in Eastern Europe in 1902, was a rabbi in Hungary and Romania before the war. During the Holocaust, he was in Hungarian forced labour camps and in hiding. After liberation, he continued to serve as a rabbi in Romania, and later in the United Kingdom and in Jerusalem. He was asked in 1951 about a man who in 1938 married a woman here in Vienna and claimed that it was a fictitious marriage to help the woman leave Vienna and enter France. According to the man, they never lived as husband and wife and, upon reaching Paris, they each went their separate ways, but with no official divorce. His question was whether it was permissible for him to marry again or whether it would be considered bigamy. Rabbi Weiss allowed the marriage.[1]

The second question was presented to Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Meisels, born in Hungary in 1901, who served there as a rabbi. During the war, he was sent to Auschwitz. After liberation, he served as rabbi for the survivors of Bergen Belsen and for the British Occupation Zone in Germany. Later, he was a rabbi in Chicago. He was asked in 1951 about a woman from Vienna whose husband was sent in 1941 from Vienna to a forced labour camp in Poland. She received a letter he sent from the camp in which

1 Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss, Minhat Yitzchak [Isaac's Gift], in: Responsa of the Holocaust (CD), Vol. 7, response 105, Machon Netivei ha'Halacha [Jewish Law Pathways Institute], Alon Shvut 2006.

he wrote how much he would like to see her and their daughter, but he described his condition as very bad, he had lost his eyesight and was suffering from starvation. She never heard from him again and all her attempts to gather information, for example from the Red Cross, were fruitless. She asked the rabbi, considering the number of years that had passed, whether it was permissible for her to remarry. Rabbi Meisels, together with other rabbis, allowed her to marry.[2]

Both examples just presented were asked after the war and dealt with its consequences, but reflected the conditions in Vienna: in 1938 a desire to emigrate and in 1941 deportations to camps.

Historical research should pay special attention to questions raised during the war. One individual very much involved with this responsa is Rabbi Ephraim Oshry. Rabbi Oshry was born in Lithuania in 1908 and studied in the famed Slobodka Yeshiva in a neighbourhood of Kaunas (Kovno). During the three-year Nazi occupation of Lithuania starting in June 1941, he was captive in the Kovno Ghetto. He was among the very few who succeeded to hide during the Nazi retreat in July 1944 and was liberated by the Red Army in early August. He was the rabbi of the small community of survivors until summer 1945 and then fled the communist regime, heading a yeshiva for boys who survived the Holocaust, first in Rome and later in Montreal. In 1952, he moved to New York and served there as a rabbi of a congregation.

Rabbi Oshry is well known for his writings. His best-known work is *Sheelot Utshovot Mimamakim* (Responsa from the Depths), a series of five volumes published over a twenty-year period from 1959 to 1979, including 111 religious questions presented to Rabbi Oshry with regard to the Holocaust.[3] Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm described this work as "the most voluminous and wide ranging of all […]. His responsa […] cover the entire gamut of Jewish law."[4] A condensed edition was published, and translated into English,[5] French, and Italian.

Of the 111 questions presented in the book, 62 were posed during the Nazi occupation in the Kovno Ghetto, while 47 others were posed after liberation, mostly during the period lasting from the summer of 1944 to the summer of 1945, during which Rabbi Oshry was the rabbi of the small congregation of survivors concentrated in Kovno. The remaining two questions are so general that it is not possible to determine the period in which they were asked. While noting down these questions, Rabbi Oshry added the necessary background information, including historical descriptions, thereby creating an important source about the Kovno Ghetto. Nevertheless, although the historical background added is important, the questions themselves tell the story of the appertaining life conditions. 19 questions deal with various religious aspects of forced labour, such as working on Shabbat. 17 questions deal with the conditions of hunger and consequently eating non-kosher food. 11 questions deal with the desecration of synagogues and Holy Scriptures. 24 questions deal with hiding among non-Jews and assuming a Christian identity, mostly regarding the hiding of children with non-Jewish families and the risk that they could be brought up as Christians. Rabbi Oshry ruled that it was permissible to hide children with Christian families, but it was forbidden to hide them with clergymen and mon-

2 Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Meisels, Binyan Zvi [Zvi's Structure], in: Responsa of the Holocaust Vol. 2, response 60.

3 For more details on Rabbi Oshry, see: Moshe Tarshansky, Poalo ha'Tzibori shel ha'Rav Ephraim Oshry ve'Hashivut Hiboru Sheelot u'Tshuvot Mimaamakim le'Gibush Narrative Historyographi-Dati le'Toldot ha'Shoah [The Communal Activity of Rabbi Ephraim Oshry and the Importance of his Responsa Mimaamakim for the Development of a Religious Historiographical Narrative of the Holocaust], (Dissertation), Ramat Gan 2016.

4 Editor's foreword, in: Irving J. Rosenbaum, The Holocaust and Halakhah, New York 1976, ix.

5 Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, Responsa from the Holocaust, translated by Y. Leiman, New York 1983.

asteries because of the latter's goal to raise the children into Christianity.[6] It is not known how many Jewish parents presented this question to Rabbi Oshry, but I would like to point out that the book *Smuggled in Potato Sacks*, which tells the stories of fifty children smuggled out of the Kovno Ghetto and hidden by non-Jews,[7] contains a big variety of stories but with one common denominator, namely that they all came from non-observant families. This underlines how troubled observant Jews were by the question: is it right to save children's lives at the cost of their Jewish souls, risking that they be raised as non-Jews and be lost forever from the Jewish nation?

There is a vast range of historical issues and stories to be found within this literature and, since the workshop of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies focussed on resilience and resistance as reflected in acts of living and learning, I would like to elaborate on some examples from the field of learning and learning groups.

In his work, Rabbi Oshry dealt with a question posed by a man in the ghetto in regard to a life-threatening situation. Rabbi Oshry wrote:

> "On […] August 26 1942 the German enemy issued an edict *forbidding* the Jews of the ghetto *to gather in synagogues* or in study halls […].
> Naftoli Weintraub, the Gabbai [the official in charge] of the Gapinovitch Shul [synagogue …] asked me whether Torah law obligated him to risk his life to pray with his daily Minyan [a quorum of ten observant Jews] and […] for Torah study?"

Rabbi Oshry ruled that while it was not obligatory to risk one's life for the purpose of praying or learning with a group, it was not forbidden either and was therefore not considered suicide: It was permissible and meritorious for those who chose to do so.[8]

A totally different situation was described by Rabbi Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg. Born in Russia in 1885, he studied in the Lithuanian yeshivas and, during the First World War, he moved to Germany, where he headed the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin until it was closed by the Nazis during the November Pogrom in 1938. During the war, he was imprisoned in various ghettos and camps. After liberation, he served as a rabbi in Switzerland. He wrote that during Nazi rule in Germany, a decree forbade Jews to gather in public halls. They were confined to the limits of their synagogues, where they were allowed to gather. Rabbi Weinberg was asked whether it was permissible to conduct secular cultural activities, lectures, and concerts in the synagogues, or whether it would be considered a desecration of these holy places. It was clear that in those difficult times cultural activities were an important source of encouragement for the suffering. The date the question was presented is not mentioned, but we can deduce that it was at an early stage of Nazi rule in Germany and seemingly before the November Pogrom. Rabbi Weinberg answered that it was permissible to hold general lectures in synagogues and that they should preferably start with a short sermon, but that concerts were forbidden, with the exception of religious music.[9] In this context, I would like to add that a concert was organised in the Kovno Ghetto and that due to the lack of an appropriate public hall, it took place in the former yeshiva study hall. This secular use of a holy place was subject to criticism by some.[10]

6 Ibid., 123-124.
7 Solomon Abramovich/Yakov Zilberg (ed.), Yaldei ha'Mistor. Hamishim Sipurim shel Yaldei Ghetto Kovnah [Smuggled in Potato Sacks. 50 Stories of the Hidden Children of the Kaunas Ghetto], Tel Aviv 2013.
8 Oshry, Responsa, 78-80.
9 Rabbi Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg, Sridei Eish [Remnants from Fire], in: Responsa of the Holocaust, Vol. 1, response 16.
10 L. Garfunkel, Kovnah ha'Yehudit b'Hurbanah [The Destruction of Kovno's Jewry], Jerusalem 1959, 296-299.

Returning to Rabbi Oshry in the Kovno Ghetto, he was the only rabbi among approximately a dozen speakers who lectured in the ghetto to the general public. The topic of his lecture was "Natural Sciences in the Literature of the Sages". Rabbi Oshry was also part of a staff of rabbis who taught religious studies to a group of dozens of boys who gathered daily after performing forced labour. The group was called *Tiferet Bachurim* (Glorious Boys). In a letter sent to Rabbi Oshry in 1960, Dov Liphshitz, a former student of this group, wrote that in the ghetto "the only ray of light was Tiferet Bachurim". As Rabbi Oshry mentioned in his responsa, this group found an abandoned basement inside the ghetto, refurbished it, and held a celebration one evening dedicating the building as their Beit Midrash or house of learning.[11] Rabbi Oshry, in another, historical book, *The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry*, offered a more elaborate description:

> "On July 28 1942 we celebrated the dedication […] All the factions in the ghetto recognized and praised this achievement […] The speakers at the dedication were Rabbi […] Skaruta, myself, and representatives of the Jewish Council [Ältestenrat]. The dedication celebration was joyful."[12]

At an early stage of my research, I pointed out the possible linkage between the dedication of the learning hall in July and the Nazi decree mentioned above from August, forbidding gathering for learning or prayers. I suggested that the Nazis had perhaps heard about what was taking place and realized the strength and inspiration the Jews absorbed from organised communal learning. They viewed this not as a mere act of resilience, but as an act of resistance, and in retaliation they issued the prohibition. I must mention that in my continued research I found a copy of an invitation to a *Tiferet Bachurim* celebration. The date which appears clearly is summer 1943, ten months after the Nazi decree was issued. Seemingly, Rabbi Oshry made a mistake regarding the year, and my theory regarding linkage between the dedication and the decree was baseless. On the other hand, it proves that even after the Nazis put out a decree forbidding communal learning, there were many who decided to risk their lives and continue to do so.[13]

Rabbi Oshry listed five questions presented to him by this group of students. One question was by a boy named Meir Abelow, who asked the following:

> "Abelow […] sought ways […] to fulfill the mitzva [commandment] of tzitzis [the fringes attached to four-cornered garments]. There were no tzitzis available in the ghetto, and […] there was no way […] to obtain […] tzitzis […] from any other place […].
>
> Abelow had found a way […]. [H]e worked in one of the *Werkstaten* [workshops] […] and there was much wool available there, he planned to steal some strands of wool […] and bring them into the ghetto for the purpose of spinning them for tzitzis. His precise questions were: […] Is it permissible to fulfil the mitzvah with tzitzis made from this stolen wool?"

The basis of this question is the general ruling that stolen objects cannot be used to fulfil mitzvot or commandments.

Rabbi Oshry explained that the youngsters at Tiferet Bachurim were especially anxious to fulfil the mitzvah of tzitzis properly, because they did not know what was in store for them. They therefore wished to wear tzitzis at all times so that if they were taken to be killed, they would be buried wearing tzitzis in accordance with

11 Tarshansky, Communal Activity, 24-36.
12 Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry, translated by Y. Leiman, New York 1995, 88.
13 Tarshansky, Communal Activity, 207-209.

Jewish burial customs. Rabbi Oshry's ruling was that it was permissible to use the stolen wool and he mentioned that Abelow's mother spun tzitzis for all the boys as well as for other Jews and that this brought great joy to the members of Tiferet Bachurim.[14]

Another example deals with psychological resilience. This is not a life or death situation, but rather one of the small acts of resistance which carry a powerful significance. Rabbi Oshry describes the following:

> "Before the Jewish slave laborers were led off to work, the Germans would line them up for a head count to make sure everyone was present. During the count, […] the workers were ordered to stand hatless and […] were forbidden to greet the German guards …
>
> During my studies with the Tiferet Bachurim group, I explained that all of us shared the responsibility to inspire our fellow-Jews […]. [S]omething as simple as one Jew greeting his fellow-Jew would strengthen our broken spirits and inspire us to keep on living […].
>
> So we undertook to say 'Sholom' [Hebrew: hello, usually spelt "Shalom"] whenever we saw each other since it was a word the Germans would not be likely to construe as a greeting […].
>
> One of the students, Meir Abelow […] asked 'since Sholom is one of the names of G-D, how can we say his name during the head count while standing bareheaded?'"

We are accustomed to use the word Shalom freely in the Hebrew language, but those boys raised the relevant religious doubt. Rabbi Oshry ruled that it was permissible to utter Shalom while being bareheaded. And he concluded: "The Jews undergoing a head count […] were not only to be allowed to greet each other with the word Sholom despite their bare heads, but even encouraged to do so in order to retain an element of normalcy and inspire each other under those subhuman conditions."[15]

Although Rabbi Oshry's writings are the most extensive, writings of other rabbis are of vital importance as well. Rabbi Zvi Meisels of Hungary, mentioned above, collected various writings of rabbis who perished in the Holocaust and in the introduction he listed his personal experiences from that period, including a number of questions he dealt with during his captivity in Auschwitz. These few questions are extremely important because they are among the very few responsa listed from concentration camps, reflecting their extreme conditions.

I would like to conclude with one example from Rabbi Meisels' responsa. In the autumn of 1944, a selection took place in Auschwitz among a group of a few thousand teenage Hungarian Jewish boys. The SS physician Josef Mengele set up a wooden beam under which the boys were marched in single file. 1,400 of the shorter and seemingly weaker boys who did not reach the beam were separated from the others and assigned to separate barracks under strong guard. The boys realised that they were considered too small for forced labour and had been slated for death. Rabbi Meisels recorded that he was approached by a man whose son was among those condemned to death. The father mentioned that he had the necessary funds to bribe the guards to release his son and he asked the rabbi if it was permissible to do so, considering that another boy would be sent to the condemned barracks in order to have the total number add up. Rabbi Meisels avoided answering. In response, the father said

14 Oshry, Responsa, 97-98.
15 Ibid., 111-112.

that if the Rabbi could not give an affirmative answer, he realised that it was not allowed and would sacrifice his son.[16]

Among those boys were some of Rabbi Meisels' students whom he had taught in his yeshiva in Hungary and, in the following question, Rabbi Meisels described how he was approached by one of them, a boy by the name of Akiva Mann. Akiva was very troubled and asked what would happen to his friend Moishe Rosenberg who was among those condemned to death? Rabbi Meisels replied: What can we do?

> "'Do you have a specific idea of what to do to save him?'
> 'Yes,' he answered me, 'I have enough money to ransom him.'
> I commented, 'But surely you know that ransoming him would be at the expense of another boy's life, since the quota has to be filled. How can we take responsibility to permit such an exchange?' And he replied, 'I have a suggestion for that too.'
> 'What is your proposal, please tell me,' I said, and he answered me with great emotion, 'The suggestion is that I will take his place. I will gladly sacrifice myself on his behalf!' When I heard this, I rebuked him and said, 'By no means will I permit you to do such a thing, to place yourself in danger; the halacha [Jewish law] is that your life takes precedence over the life of your fellow man.' At that point, he left my side.
> But a few moments later he returned and said, 'Rabbi […] I have decided to do it and take his place […].'
> I objected and said […] 'What is the difference in the Heavens, if you are killed or he is?'
> Akiva answered this with a tear-filled voice. 'Of course there is a difference between myself and Moishele,' he cried. 'Moishele is a true Torah scholar; the entire world will benefit from him while I, I am only a worthless ignoramus …'
> I was shocked. I felt that hearing this dear boy's arguments and crying would soon paralyze my heart. Nevertheless, by no means did I give him my consent and I admonished him again. And after a lot of pleading and begging he walked away from me disappointed."[17]

This example shows how even in the darkest times, the captive Jews did not lose hope and continued believing in a better future. Akiva Mann believed that better times would come in which the Jewish nation could benefit much from his learned friend Moishe Rosenberg. Akiva viewed the learning of the Holy Scriptures as the basis of existence of the Jewish nation and felt that his inferior learning abilities were a justified reason to *sacrifice his own life* in an attempt to save his learned friend.

In conclusion, the examples presented are merely a very small portion of historical stories found within the responsa written by various rabbis. This literature is an important source that can be utilised for historical research. In some cases, this literature may include unique information not to be found elsewhere, since people are sometimes willing to confide to their religious spiritual leaders various dilemmas they prefer not telling others.

As presented here, even during those tragic times in pre-war Germany, in ghettos, and in camps, Jews made every effort to continue diligent learning of the Torah and observance of religious commandments and moral values. They turned to their

16 Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Meisels, Mekadshei Hashem [Sanctifiers of God], Vol. 1, Chicago 1955, 8.
17 Ibid., 9 (translated by Shira Leibowitz Schmidt).

rabbis for guidance in day-to-day ritual matters, as in matters of life and death. Frequently, observing those day-to-day rituals involved life and death.

I personally would like to ask those involved from where they drew the necessary powers to do such glorious acts during such dark times? However, since this is impossible, I can only mention what Rabbi Oshry wrote repeatedly: that they did not need external powers in order to commit those religious or moral acts. On the contrary, it was those acts that granted them the powers necessary to withstand those tragic conditions and atrocities.[18]

Lecture in the workshop "Resilience and Resistance. Living and Learning under Inhuman Conditions" 6 November 2018, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI).

18 Oshry, Responsa, x, xiii.

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Event

Copy Editor:
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Szilvia Czingel

Recipes for Survival

Survival Strategies in the Lichtenwörth Concentration Camp

Abstract

In 2013, the Centropa Foundation published a special kind of cookbook. It was written in the Lichtenwörth camp by five friends, one of whom was Hédi Weisz. Why were these recipes never cooked? Why did these friends never meet again after the war? How could one survive the twentieth century? Can one kill with love? What is the hardest to live with: a Yiddish mom in early marriage, a concentration camp, communism, or the new republic of Hungary?

Layered savoy cabbage from Cluj, walnut rolls, potato doughnuts, hazelnut meringues, lungwurst, batter-dipped deep-fried cauliflower, veal roast, aspic, orange sticks, Gerbaud cake, false bone marrow with eggs, stuffed gooseneck – once well-known delicacies. Modern variations of these recipes are often presented by star chefs in various cooking shows, in cookbooks, and among the recipes of popular food bloggers. At first glance, the names suggest the world of kitchens of the bourgeoisie before the Second World War. However, they share something special and gruesome.

These recipes were written in the women's hut of the concentration camp in Lichtenwörth by five prisoners deported from Budapest, on the verge of death, suffering from typhus, fleas, and lice, starving, thin as skeletons. The recipes were discovered 62 years later by accident. The recipe book was saved for posterity by the only survivor.[1]

In 2007, in a second-floor apartment of a building on Károly Boulevard in Budapest, someone was baking flodni[2] when small pieces of yellowed paper dropped to the floor from between the pages of a cookbook. The old pieces of paper were hiding the horrible legacy of the Holocaust. This is the first time that the history of these 149 recipes written from memory on blue notepaper with a pencil stub of only a couple of millimetres and later with a piece of coal has been made public.

Studying these recipes gives us a chance to look at the history of the twentieth century from a special perspective. They reveal everything from Hungarian gastronomy before the Second World War to the tragic events of the Holocaust while at the same time showing us how it is possible to set up survival strategies in irrational situations, as happened in Lichtenwörth. There were five women of different ages and

1 After 15 October 1944, the German occupation of Hungary, and the Arrow Cross takeover, even Jewish women were ordered to work on fortifications around Budapest. At the beginning of November, the Red Army launched another offensive against the capital. In this changed situation, the deportation plans "had to be sped up" and many transports were directed on foot towards Hegyeshalom at the Austrian border. These marches were terribly cruel and resulted in an unprecedentedly high death rate. Until the Soviet occupation of Budapest (beginning on 18 January 1945), about 98,000 of the capital's Jews lost their lives in further marches and in train transports, as well as at the hands of Arrow Cross extermination squads, from starvation and disease, and suicide. Some of the victims were simply shot and thrown into the Danube.

2 Traditional Hungarian Jewish cake. Flodni was originally a popular cake of Eastern European Jewish families.

Hedvig Endrei and Szilvia Czingel.

situations: the wife of an upholsterer, a hat maker, an eiderdown maker, a housewife, and one of the beautiful models of Klara Rothschild's salon, Jewish women leaving on foot from the Óbuda brick factory towards Austria who later, suffering from hunger, would write the recipe book of "memories". Writing the recipes was a form of resistance, a chance for survival.

Hedvig Endrei was an engaging, talkative subject. Her makeup, perfume, and elegant costume were still an essential part of her life even at the age of 92. Her apartment on Károly Boulevard, where she has lived since 1941, is just as charming. On the table covered with a white tablecloth there are always porcelain cups, silver teaspoons, and biscuits; even the unexpected guest gets a treat. Family pictures hang on the wall; Hedvig was the last member of her family.[3]

From Salty Coffee to Meringues – How the Recipe Book was Born

There were about 2,500 prisoners, mainly women, who arrived at the camp at Lichtenwörth in December 1944. The camp was built on the grounds of a dilapidated brick factory and the prisoners spent the whole winter in unheated huts lying on straw full of lice or on the bare concrete.

Hard physical forced labour, starvation, cold, beatings, and other forms of torture were worse in Lichtenwörth compared to other camps. Systematic starvation dominated as the main means of mass extermination. The prisoners were often denied food for two to three days in a row, once even for five days, which was equal to mass execution. Pneumonia, dysentery, diphtheria, typhus, and starvation raged through Lichtenwörth. The camp stank, it was cold and filthy, and teeming with mice, rats, and fleas.

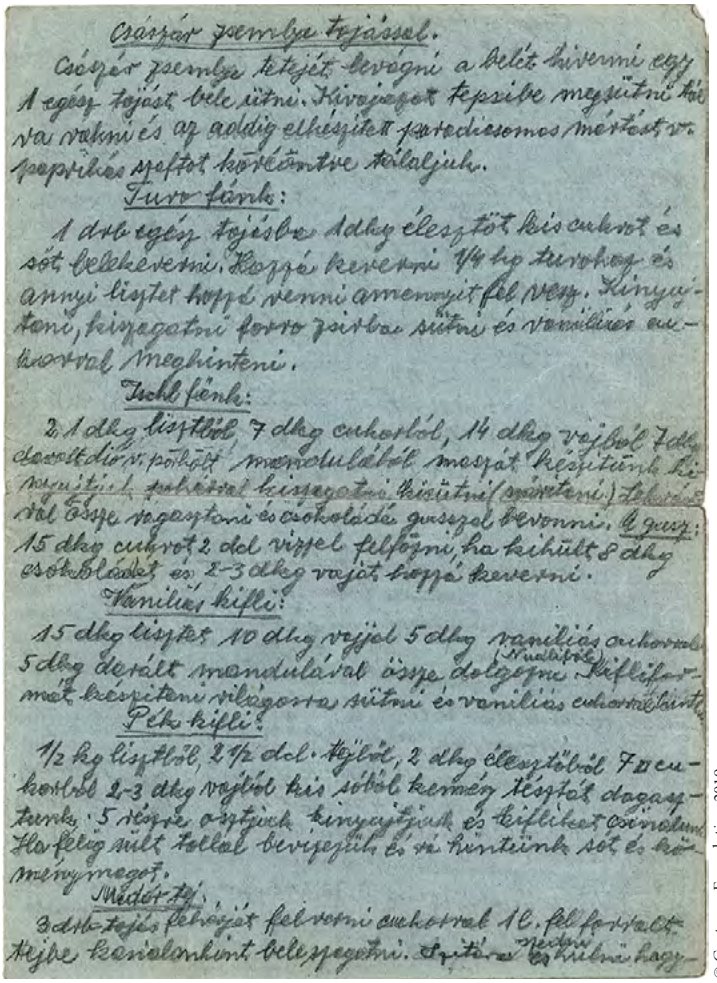
Food in the concentration camps was usually very poor and prisoners were not given food at regular times. In the mornings, they got a cup of very weak coffee without milk and sugar which many of the prisoners called "salty" coffee because of its

3 Interview with Hedvig (Weisz) Endrei by Szilvia Czingel, Budapest 2006 (if not stated otherwise all quotations are from this interview).

bitter taste; at noon they were usually given a bowl of soup made with potato peels or mangelwurzel, and the same again for dinner. Food was not given at regular times and they often did not get anything for dinner except a soup-like liquid. When it was accompanied by a slice of dry black bread, it was considered a feast.

How the Story of the Recipe Book Began According to the Survivor

> "The five of us wrote a cookbook in the camp. The cookbook was made because the five of us women, who became friends there, were all housewives and we regularly cooked. In Lichtenwörth, we were very hungry already, we always talked about food. I took letter-paper along and envelopes and pencil, thinking that I would write home. That is why I had this, what they had not taken away, and we wrote the recipes on this letter paper.
> Every one of us dictated simple recipes that we had made at home, how much flour, how much of this, how much of that was called for. I did not know the proportions very well, because when I asked my mother she always told me a little bit of this, a little bit of that, she always told me so. These had all been tried, they were 'tried' recipes. We wrote all these by memory, we did not have a cookbook with us. We wrote this book daily. We wrote with very small letters, so that more would fit on the paper."


Császár zsemlye tojással.
Császár zsemlye tetejét levágni a belét kivenni egy 1 egész tojást bele ütni. Kívajaport tepsibe megsütni tá va vakni és az addig elkészitett paradicsomos mértet v. paprikás szeftet körülöntve tálaljuk.
Turó fánk:
1 db egész tojásba 4 dkg élesztőt kis cukrot és sót belkeverni. Hozzá keverni 1/4 kg turóhagy és annyi lisztet hozzá venni amennyit fel vesz. Kinyújtani, kizsegatni forro zsirba sütni és vanilias cukorral meghinteni.
Tuchl fánk:
2 1 dkg lisztből 7 dkg cukorból, 14 dkg vajból 7 dkg darált dió v. pokló mandulából mazsát készitünk kinyujtjuk 1 pohárral kizsegatni kisütni (sütni) tekercsel össze vagyontni és csokoládé gusszal bevonni. Gusz: 15 dkg cukrot 2 dcl vizzel felfőzni ha kihült 8 dkg csokoládé és 2-3 dkg vajat hozzá keverni.
Vanilias kifli:
15 dkg lisztet 10 dkg vajjal 5 dkg vanilias cukorral 5 dkg darált mandulával össze dolgozni (munálni) kiflicsomót készitni világosra sütni és vanilias cukormelléket.
Pék kifli:
1/2 kg lisztből, 2 1/2 dcl tejből, 2 dkg élesztőből 7 dkg cukorból 2-3 dkg vajból kis sóból kemény tésztát dagasztunk, 5 részre osztjuk kinyujtjuk és kiflicket csinálunk. Ha felig ült tollal bevezzük és ki hintünk sót és köménymagot.
Méder tej.
3 db tojás fehérjét fel verni cukorral 1 l. fel forralt tejbe kanalankint belezegetni. Ezután méder kihűlni hagy-

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The recipes – excerpt.

In most of the concentration camps, prisoners were deprived of everything including letter paper and pens. This makes it even more touching how they managed to hide a couple of these sheets, cover them with recipes, and bring them home in a rather roundabout way. The recipe writing had its precise ritual, built into the concentration camp's daily routines. Writing was usually preceded by washing in the unheated bath of the factory building, where eighty people had to wash themselves together, followed by a search for lice and the removal of fleas from their clothes. This is how circumstances were described:

> "The situation was that we got up early in the morning so that we could wash. The factory had a shower for 80 persons, and there were 3000 of us. There was a long pipe and there were faucets on it at a certain distance from each other and a tub in front of it. We stood in line there at 6 in the morning in order to get in, one had to go on time, because they often turned off the water after a while. We washed our clothes there. We took the string out of our backpacks and we dried our clothes on it. Men, women, we bathed together, there was no time for us to look at each other, to be ashamed. We were happy that we got in.
>
> When we had washed, we started searching for lice, there were many lice and fleas. Sometimes we did not wash for weeks, when there were bombings, because they always turned off the water at that time. Not everyone had a small-toothed comb, but I did, because my mother was a hairdresser. She somehow instinctively packed this for me. It was very useful there. After having washed, we usually went outside into the courtyard. We were only allowed to go next to the factory building and everyone combed her hair with it. There were body lice, too, of course, and we searched for those, too. This was a daily routine. Then we got dressed and laid a blanket on the ground and sat next to the wall, where we either wrote the recipes, or later we knit. This was also a routine."

Studying the recipe book in detail, there are three striking things to note on the first reading. There are no soups or vegetable dishes like *főzelék* among the recipes, even though soups are very typical of Central and Eastern European cuisine. On the other hand, there are surprisingly many sweets and cakes. There is no reference to the basic regulations of kosher cooking, which forbids the use of lard or pork. This is not a coincidence. As I was told by Mrs Istvánné Endrei who saved the recipe book, the prisoners got nothing but soup in Lichtenwörth and they were so disgusted that it did not even cross their minds to include soups in the recipe book. Instead, there are several high-energy sweets and heavy, fatty meat dishes. Since the recipes were written under special circumstances, we must treat them with caution. Each recipe bears the influence of Hungarian or Central and Eastern European cuisine and there are typical Jewish dishes, too, such as stuffed gooseneck.

This is what our storyteller recalls about the writing and the afterlife of the recipes:

> "I wrote the recipes, because the paper and the pencil were also mine. That is how I got to keep them. The entire recipe collection became mine. Someone else of the five dictated the recipe each time. I do not remember dictating, I only wrote, with very small letters so that the paper would last. It did not matter what kind of recipes we wrote down. Whatever came to mind. Recipes for making spices, sweet and salty cookies, meats, sauces, and such food. There are many dishes with potatoes and meat among them, and cookies. Not many soups, perhaps because we had had enough of them. If someone looks at the recipes, there are mainly filling and 'fattening' dishes in them. This was not conscious of course. There is no system in the recipes, we wrote them down as

> they came to us. We wrote every day, 1-2 hours a day. We talked, too, in the meantime of course. This was also a way of having fun and time went by easier. I do not know whose idea this was. I kept all of it, we did not divide it among each other. I do not remember whether I cooked from it, probably not."

The five prisoners writing the recipes were saved in the last minute, on 2 April 1945, when the Red Army liberated the camp. When the Russian soldiers arrived, they told everybody to leave the camp as fast as they could before the Nazis came back. They arrived with sidecar motorcycles, opened the gates of the camp with the tips of their bayonets, and then they moved on. The prisoners, all in a very bad state, started to come slowly out of the huts, at least those who were able to stand on their feet, and headed directly towards the food storage room. There was a lot of food in the storeroom, mainly long-lasting food such as margarine, sugar, and jam. The food was guarded by the so-called 'Jupos' (Jewish Police), Jews who had been appointed to perform certain surveillance and police tasks over their fellow prisoners in the Nazi labour camps. According to survivors, the storeroom was full of packed cheese, luncheon meats, and sausages, as well as the margarine, sugar, and jam. The liberated prisoners tried to get some food from this pantry. They were so hungry that some of them scraped the margarine with their hands. The 'Jupos' tried to protect the pantry, wanting to keep the food for themselves. They did not help the prisoners trying to enter the pantry, on the contrary. The prisoners hated the 'Jupos' just as much as they hated the Nazis, as they were almost as vicious as the Nazis. This is how the story continues:

> "There was a rush and a fight, people tried to get hold of everything that was in the sacks. They ripped them and the sugar and flour was spilled everywhere. They tried to gather it in their boots and everywhere. There was a 'Jupo', the son of the owner of the Heidecker factory. They made fences and spring mattresses. They trampled on him, because he slipped on the sugar. He died there. There was an ad I remember, a man jumped from one bed to the other and the ad went like this: 'Whether this way or that way, always to Heidecker.' This was their advertisement. We, who could move, gathered a lot of food and took it to those who could not leave the camp. They died there, because they ate too much. And we left, all five of us, but three fell ill of typhus."

After their long starvation, the prisoners could not digest the sudden, large amount of food and many died in the moment of their escape.

Those who were able left the camp to go home, as did the authors of the recipes. All five of them left the camp but three contracted typhus on the way. Two made it to Budapest. The journey lasted two weeks, with the protagonists of our story made it mainly on foot to the market hall on Vámház Street. From there, they crawled on their knees, both weak and thin to the bone, until they finally arrived home in Károly Street and Pozsonyi Street. The recipe book was hidden in one of their pockets all the way. The recipes saved their lives: While writing them the women prisoners were thinking about their families, they were together with them in their imagination. Talking about the recipes recalled family stories and the hope of seeing their loved ones again kept them alive. The recipes gave strength and hope, hope for the families torn apart to be reunited again.

Recipe writing became a 'trend' in Lichtenwörth: There was another recipe collection written by deported Polish women.[4]

4 Silva de Cara (ed.), In Memory's Kitchen. A Legacy from the Women of Terezin, Lanham 2006. Used by permission of the Jewish Museum of Prague; Joanne Caras, Holocaust Survivor Cookbook. Collected From Around the World, Port St. Lucie 2007.

Looking back at our historical heritage, if we recall the times and the places in Central Europe and in Hungary where our ancestors spent the most dreadful century in the history of humankind – the twentieth – we find barracks guarded by armed men, huts and battlefield bunkers, districts assigned for soldiers, war prisoners or civilians, shelter cellars, forced labour, and concentration camps.

The question arises: What kinds of regular activities could make the months or years spent under armed guard more tolerable? How could people make use of the tiny fragments of free choice they had left? Some people remember rare possibilities for sports, self-organised shows, or music events, but these occasional social events in camps or barracks were possible only under less rigorous circumstances. Among the individual activities one could do to overcome the aimlessness of everyday life in camps and prisons, relatively few had the possibility of reading regularly or writing a diary, conducting photography, or playing cards or chess – depending on their circumstances or rank. For common soldiers, doing crafts was more typical, when material and tools were available. This is how the various wood carvings, metal keepsakes, miniature ships built in bottles during long years of captivity, small but nevertheless grandiose matchstick buildings, liqueur glass sets decorated with goldsmith's work by soldiers during the war using the copper cartridge cases of 20-millimetre bullets, needlework made by soldiers in the 1950s, or rasped and polished aluminium souvenirs were made.[5]

Prisoners of the concentration camps, especially those deported because of their Jewish origin, had much more restricted possibilities. In their case, we are talking about younger and middle-aged men and women fit for work, since children, mothers with small children, and the elderly were usually sent to extermination camps, where they were killed. Survivors from the camps talk and write about activities they tried to pursue in stolen moments, minutes spent in hiding with something that made them feel worthy as before, something they could gather energy from in order to survive. Since they had almost no access to tools, it was mostly meaningful conversations that the prisoners could engage in to encourage each other. They could tell stories or anecdotes to each other in the evenings in smaller audiences or, if there were performers who volunteered, they could find occasions for thematic lectures or discussions in science or arts or acting and singing performances.[6]

Because of the poor meals and continuous starvation, a great part of people's dreams and conversations centred on eating. This was the case even for the soldiers, who were not starving but who were given monotonous, poor-quality food, and especially prisoners of war, for whom daydreaming and picturing specific dishes in their imagination could happen more often and more openly than thinking of a missing partner, children, or relatives. Encouraging or at times provoking their companions in distress by recalling their favourite goose thigh, stuffed cabbage, poppy-seed and honey pastry, and other delicacies before going to sleep was an everyday activity. However, Hedvig Weisz and her fellow prisoners were exemplary with the virtually creative gastronomic activity of dictating and writing down the recipes and cooking methods of homemade dishes based on precise memories and their imagination.

5 Museum of Military History of Budapest. Permanent exhibitions: From the Piave to the Don, from the Don to the Danube. Hungary's Military History 1918–1948 and Deported – Far from Home. Hungarian Soldiers in Soviet Captivity 1941–1955.

6 Zsolt K. Horváth, Zum Foto eines Arbeitsdienstlers, in: S:I.M.O.N.: Nur eine Quelle … Im Gedenken an den ungarischen Holocaust, 2014/1, 230-234, https://simon-previous-issues.vwi.ac.at/index.php/13-issues/2014/89-2014-1-events-eine-quelle; István Balogh (ed.), Tevan Rezső katonatiszt első világháborús naplója [Rezső Tevan's Diary from the First World War], Budapest 2014; Ernő Hermann, Hadifogolynapló 1914–1918 [Prisoner's Diary from the First World War], Budapest 2015; László Bartók, Egy hadfi naplója [Soldier's Diary from the First World War], Budapest 2015.

Virág Németh & András Borgula

Recipes for Survival

Based on a Book by Szilvia Czingel

Heidi: Add as much flour as it needs. Right, but how much is that exactly?
Eva: I just told you. As much as it needs.
Heidi: But how much is that for a pound of potatoes? Ten ounces? Two pounds?
Eva: I cannot give you an exact measurement, just write 'as much as it needs'.
Judge it by the eye … that is … if you ever cook again …
(Lichtenwörth camp, December 1944)

In 2013, the Centropa Foundation published a special kind of cookbook. It was written in the Lichtenwörth camp by five friends, one of whom was Hédi Weisz. Why were these recipes never cooked? Why did these friends never meet again after the war? How could one survive the twentieth century? Can one kill with love? What is the hardest to live with: a Yiddish mom in early marriage, a concentration camp, communism, or the new republic of Hungary?

This is the story of Hédi Weisz, a young Hungarian Jewish woman, born in 1920 in Budapest who lived until the age of 90. Szilvia Czingel, who works as a researcher at Centropa, conducted a life history interview with her. During one of their meetings, a couple of old pieces of paper fell out of a cookbook. It turned out that these were "recipes for survival".

When Ms. Czingel published her book, András Borgula, the art director of Golem Theater (the only Jewish theatre company in Hungary), immediately fell in love with the story. He and his permanent collaborator, Virág Németh, decided to write a play

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based on Hédi's story. However, they did not want to write a "simple Holocaust tale", so they tried to use every significant episode of her life, from childhood to old age. A wonderful Hungarian actress, Mari Nagy, played Hédi in all ages, which made the performance very special.

The writers met with other survivors and their families. These meetings were so inspirational that they made the story a little different from reality – especially the episodes in the concentration camp. They wanted a story about life and not about death, so they added a man to the story. You can fall in love under any circumstances, you can be jealous, you can be excited, you can be enamoured, you can even be bored in a camp. Especially in a camp.

The play is a reminiscence, the old Hédi recalling her memories. She holds a dinner party, where she begins to telling stories. This is why the creators "cooked up" something special: For every period of her life, she serves a meal to the audience. In

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her monologues, she tells her story, but her version is often different from reality. She is old, her memory is not the best anymore – or is she lying, because she is ashamed of the past? The scenes between the monologues show the truth – a truth about a twentieth-century woman, who survived through the decades, and had a memorable and meaningful life.

Lectures in the theatre performance at the Volkstheater Vienna, 11 November 2018, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI).

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Event

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Tim Corbett

Marianne Windsperger

Rezension von *Auf den Ruinen der Imperien*

Erzählte Grenzräume in der mittel- und osteuropäischen Literatur nach 1989

Dass die Imperien des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts in den mittel- bzw. osteuropäischen Literaturen und den historischen und literarischen Narrativen über diese Räume ihre Spuren hinterlassen haben, ist in den Kulturwissenschaften bereits gut erforscht, nicht zuletzt haben dazu unterschiedliche Forschungsprojekte an Universitäten in Österreich und Deutschland beigetragen (z. B. Doktoratskolleg *Das österreichische Galizien und sein multikulturelles Erbe* an der Universität Wien und diverse Forschungsprojekte zu mittel- und osteuropäischen Literatur an der Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder).

Zugleich rückte gerade in den letzten Jahren die Grenze als Forschungsparadigma und zentraler Beobachtungsraum, als „contact zone" bzw. dritter Raum, in den Fokus vieler kulturwissenschaftlicher, historischer und empirischer Untersuchungen. Die vieldiskutierten Grenzräume nimmt dieser Band in den Blick und fragt nun nach dem Nachleben bzw. den Spuren der Imperien in den unterschiedlichen Literaturen.

Somit erstreckt sich der in den Beiträgen betrachtete Zeitraum vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis hin zu der Neuordnung Europas nach 1989. Als Orientierungs- oder Umbruchsjahre werden in den einleitenden Worten von Andree Michaelis-König die Jahre 1918, 1945 sowie 1989 genannt, wohlwissend, dass sich diese Jahre jeweils zu Zeiträumen ausdehnten. Der Fokus auf die Betrachtung von literarischen Texten nach 1989 – wie der Titel es verspricht – wird aber im Band durch unterschiedliche Verknüpfungen mit der Vergangenheit aufgebrochen.

Dass die Neuordnung von Grenzen sich immer konkret auf das Leben der Menschen in den Regionen auswirkt, muss nicht weiter betont werden, so sind es doch die Grenzräume, die die Erschütterungen, die mit dem Zerfall von Herrschaftsbereichen einhergehen, am heftigsten spüren, die durch erzwungene Migration, Vertreibungen und ‚Umsiedlungen' immer wieder neu erfunden werden und gerade deshalb als Projektionsflächen und als Imaginationsräume an Bedeutung gewinnen. Regionen, die in den Blick gerückt werden, sind bereits gut erforschte kulturelle Räume wie das ehemalige Galizien und die Bukowina genauso wie in den Kulturwissenschaften bisher weniger präsente Regionen (z. B. das Grenzland Belarus) oder auch verinnerlichte Grenz- und Sprachräume (deutsch-jüdisch-slawisch).

Ievgeniia Voloshchuk behandelt in ihrem Beitrag das Nachleben von Josef Roths Poetik in den Texten des ukrainischen Schriftstellers Juri Andruchowytsch. Das Schreiben dieser beiden Autoren bezeichnet sie als „Schreiben auf den Ruinen der Imperien" (32). Wichtig erscheint Voloshchuk, dass Städten in den Texten beider Autoren eine zentrale Rolle als „Gegengewicht zu den monochromen nationalen Zonen auf der europäischen Karte der Zwischenkriegszeit und zum anderen als Ansätze eines künftigen neuen Europa" (45) zukommt. Diese Städte – einst und jetzt – sind es also, die in der Poetik der beiden Autoren „einen aus bunten literarischen Fäden gewobenen Teppich des kollektiven Imaginären" (46) entstehen lassen.

Erika Martin widmet sich in ihrem Beitrag den Werken zweier Autoren, die sie als „postimperiale" Autoren bezeichnet. Andrzej Stasiuk und Jurij Andruchowytsch setzen den osteuropäischen Raum als einen von Rissen durchzogenen dem glatten Westen entgegen und verwandeln diesen zur Spielfläche postmoderner Schreibstrategien. In diesem Beitrag wird deutlich, wie sehr diese Autoren durch den Einsatz von Elementen des magischen Realismus und dem Stilmittel der Ironie einen bestimmten Literaturmarkt bedienen und an einer Fiktionalisierung des Ostens mitschreiben.

Anna Pastuzka widmet sich in ihrem Beitrag Hanna Kralls und Andrzej Stasiuks Gedächtnistopographien, denen sie mit den Begriffen „kontaminierte Landschaften" (Martin Pollack) bzw. „Bloodlands" (Tymothy Snyder) nachspürt. In der Analyse der Werke geht es ihr darum, jene Umschlagmomente zu identifizieren, in denen in die kontemplative Landschaftsbeschreibung das Entsetzen und Grauen dringt. Durch ihre Spurenlektüre zeigt sie, dass jenes Gebilde, das wir als kollektives Gedächtnis kennen und beschreiben, aus unterschiedlichen Narrativen besteht, aus dem manche als prägend hervortreten und andere verschwinden. Das Besondere der polnischen Literatur sieht Pastuzka darin, dass sie sowohl die Stimmen der jüdischen Opfer als auch die Stimmen der ZeugInnen beinhaltet.

Johannes Kleine beschäftigt sich in seinem Beitrag mit dem tschechischen Autor Jan Faktor, den er in jenem literarischen Mitteleuropa verortet, in dem er auch Katja Petrowskaja und Vladimir Vertlib beheimatet sieht. Ein wichtiger Punkt, den Kleine hervorhebt, ist die mit den Beschreibungen des versunkenen Kakaniens verbundene Ironie, die Faktors Werk auszeichnet, und die wohl auch als Teil seiner Poetik des Verfalls verstanden werden muss. Zudem durchziehen Faktors Texte auch Verweise auf das Jiddische, auf jene Sprache, die mit dem Holocaust den Großteil ihrer SprecherInnen verloren hat. Mit diesen Sprachspuren tritt nicht nur die verdrängte jüdische Herkunft der ProtagonistInnen an die Oberfläche, sondern auch die Ereignisse der Shoah. Die zahlreichen Bezüge auf das Jiddische verweisen gleichzeitig auf die verlorene Mehrsprachigkeit Europas, die gerade die im Band diskutierten Lebenswelten und Literaturen Ost- und Mitteleuropas prägte.

Dynamiken der Grenzziehung und -verschiebungen stehen im Zentrum des von Jolanta Pacyniak verfassten Beitrags: Die Autorin geht der Frage nach, wie Grenzverschiebungen in den Romanen von Olga Tokarczuk, Joanna Bator und Żanna Sloniowska über in die Erzählung integrierte Dinge vermittelt werden. In allen drei Texten geht es um Familiengeschichten, die Bindestrich-Identitäten hervorbringen (deutsch-polnisch-ukrainisch). Vertreibungen und ‚Umsiedlungen', Prozesse der Aneignung von konkreten Orten und die damit einhergehende Umdeutung und Neu-Semantisierung von Orten sind zentrale Elemente der Erzählungen. Durch Prozesse des Verfalls treten jedoch die verdeckten Bedeutungen, die überschriebenen Geschichten wieder zu Tage. Anhand der Dinge, die in den Texten eine Rolle spielen, wird die Kontingenz familialer Konstruktionen und nationaler Zugehörigkeiten beleuchtet. So tauchen in den Erzählungen plötzlich deutsche oder jüdische Verwandte auf und lassen die Gewaltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts in den familialen Raum eindringen.

Um die Bukowina als Erinnerungsort geht es in dem Beitrag Maryna Orlovas, die die Texte von Maria Matios analysiert. In ihren Romanen verbindet die ukrainische Autorin und Literaturwissenschaftlerin Volksglauben und mythologische Erzählungen über die Region Bukowina mit der Vielstimmigkeit dieser Landschaft heute.

Der ungarischen Provinz in der Literatur nach 1990 spürt Peter Varga nach. Bis 1989 herrschte in Ungarn eine zentralistische und damit uniforme Erinnerungs-

politik, Literatur musste daher lange Zeit die Rolle der Aufarbeitung der Geschichte übernehmen, da man diese immer als Fiktion abtun konnte, so der Autor. Varga lenkt sein Hauptaugenmerk auf Texte, die die Beteiligung der deutschsprachigen Minderheiten an Deportationen und die Erfahrungen der Zwangsumsiedlungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg thematisieren. In seinem Versuch, seine Textlektüren durch Traumatheorien zu untermauern, werden jedoch neuere erinnerungstheoretische oder psychologische Ansätze nicht berücksichtigt und wirken wenig fundiert. Dass Literatur tabuisierte Geschichten an die Oberfläche zu holen vermag, die im kollektiven Gedächtnis keinen Platz finden, ist eine wichtige These dieses Beitrags, aber auch des gesamten Bandes.

Alexander Chertenko wendet sich in seinem Artikel mit dem bezeichnenden Titel „Namenlose Schanze" dem Topos bzw. Grenzraum Belarus zu und stellt fest, dass der Raum Minsk sowohl vom Westen als auch vom Osten als Grenzraum konstruiert wird und daher abgelöst vom realen Ort existiert. Postkoloniale Theorien und die damit einhergehenden Forschungskonjunkturen haben dazu geführt, dass Osteuropa von der Landkarte der Wissenschaft verschwunden ist, so der Autor. Chertenko argumentiert, dass die Postmoderne mit ihrem Spiel der Identitäten gerade in Osteuropa zum Spielzeug und Schreibverfahren nationaler und nationalistischer Diskurse geworden ist. In fast unheimlicher Weise spiegelt die Literatur hier also jene Entwicklungen in Europa wider, die heute die Nachrichten dominieren. Europa schreibt mit an der Rekonstruktion eines „unkritisch verstandenen Eigenen" (202).

Der Band schließt mit zwei Beiträgen, die das Schreiben der Literatur-Nobelpreisträgerin Herta Müller im Spannungsfeld zwischen Heimatliteratur und transnationaler Literatur diskutieren: Anna-Maria Schlupp fragt danach, wie mit Blick auf Herta Müllers Texte der Begriff der „Heimatliteratur" verstanden und konzeptualisiert bzw. hinterfragt werden kann. Welche Fremd- und Eigenbilder sind in den Texten zu finden? Wie grenzen sich die Deutschsprachigen von den RumänInnen ab und wie werden Erstere als TäterInnen und Leidtragende des Zweiten Weltkriegs konstruiert? Fazit dieser Analyse ist, dass im Grenzraum des Banats neue Inselidentitäten entstehen, dass kein Miteinander stattfindet, sondern dass selbst der Inzest der Verbindung mit Fremden vorgezogen wird. Diese Inselidentitäten der Banater Schwaben wirken fort, selbst wenn diese nach Deutschland emigrieren, um sich von den anderen ImmigrantInnen abzugrenzen.

Tamila Kyrylova richtet den Blick auf das Randgebiet des Banats, um die deutsch-rumänische Literatur, aber vor allem das Schreiben Herta Müllers als transnationale Literatur zu verstehen. Mithilfe gendertheoretischer Zugänge fragt Kyrylova nach dem fragmentarischen Lebensnarrativ Herta Müllers. Indem sie den Bewegungen der Protagonistin nachgeht, zeigt sie, wie sehr die Politik den privaten Raum durchdringt. Grundsätzlich ist die Hinwendung zu den konkreten Schreibweisen und poetologischen Verfahren in diesem Beitrag zu begrüßen, jedoch schlägt die Autorin allzu oft eine psychologisierende Lesart ein, die die Texte vielleicht zu eng mit der Biografie Herta Müllers verknüpft.

Der 2018 im Neofelis-Verlag erschienene Band *Auf den Ruinen der Imperien* bietet einen dichten und umfassenden Überblick über die Literaturlandschaften im Osten Europas, die mit Hilfe zahlreicher Förderprogramme (Stipendien, Übersetzungen, Preise und Literaturmessen) in Deutschland und Österreich immer mehr rezipiert werden. Wichtig wäre daher auch ein Beitrag gewesen, der genau diese Vermittlungsinstanzen der Literaturproduktion untersucht und Fragen nach dem Lesepublikum stellt.

Die theoretischen Reflexionen in den Beiträgen, aber vor allem die sehr ausführliche Einleitung, liefern zudem ein Glossar jener Begriffe und Metaphern, die Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft aus und über Grenzräume heute prägen. Letztendlich sind es vor allem kontroversielle Beiträge wie jener von Alexander Chertenko, die dazu anregen, über die Re-Nationalisierung eines zu oft als multikulturell idealisierten Mitteleuropas nachzudenken. Kunst und Literatur – zumeist verstanden als Ort des Gemeinsamen und der Offenheit – werden zu Stätten neuer Nationalismen und Schreiben mit an Prozessen der Exklusion und an der Erfindung neuer Inselidentitäten. Auch um diese Entwicklungen zu verstehen, lohnt sich ein Blick auf die Grenzräume Mittel- und Osteuropas im langen 20. Jahrhundert.

Andree Michaelis-König (Hrsg.)
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Reviews

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